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SWALLOW BARN,

OR

A SOJOURN IN THE OLD DOMINION.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

By John Paul Jones.

And, for to pass the time, this book shall be pleasant to read in.
But for to give faith and believe that all is true that is contained
thesin, ye be at your own liberty.

Prologue to the Morte D'Arthur.

VOL. I.

PHILADELPHIA :

CAREY & LEA, CHESTNUT STREET.

.....
1832.

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Q. BROWN-GUODE COLLECTION

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NOV 18 1832

TO WILLIAM WIRT, ESQ.

DEAR SIR,

I HAVE two reasons for desiring to inscribe this book to you. The first is, that you are likely to be on a much better footing with posterity than may ever be my fortune; seeing that, some years gone by, you carelessly sat down and wrote a little book, which has, doubtless, surprised yourself by the rapidity with which it has risen to be a classic in our country. I have sat down as carelessly, to a like undertaking, but stand sadly in want of the wings that have borne your name to an enviable eminence. It is natural, therefore, that I should desire your good-will with the next generation.

My second reason is, that I have some claim upon your favour in the attempt to sketch the features of the Old Dominion, to whose soil and hearts your fame and feelings are kindred. In these pages you may recognize, perhaps, some old friends, or, at least, some of their customary haunts; and I hope, on that

score, to find grace in your eyes, however I may lack it in the eyes of others.

I might add another reason, but that is almost too personal to be mentioned here: It is concerned with an affectionate regard for the purity and worth of your character, with your genius, your valuable attainments, your many excellent actions, and, above all, with your art of embellishing and endearing the relations of private life. These topics are not to be discussed to your ear,—and not, I hope, (to their full extent,) for a long time, to that of the public.

Accept, therefore, this first-fruit of the labours (I ought rather to say, of the idleness) of your trusty friend,

MARK LITTLETON.

April 21, 1832.

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PREFACE.

I HAVE had great difficulty to prevent myself from writing a novel. The reader will perceive that the author of these sketches left his home to pass a few weeks in the Old Dominion, having a purpose to portray the impressions which the scenery and the people of that region made upon him, in detached pictures brought together with no other connexion than that of time and place. He soon found himself, however, engaged in the adventures of domestic history, which wrought so pleasantly upon him, and presented such a variety of persons and characters to his notice, that he could not forbear to describe what he saw. His book therefore, in spite of himself, has ended in a vein altogether different from that in which it set out. There is a rivulet of story wandering through a broad meadow of episode. Or, I might truly say, it is a

book of episodes, with an occasional digression into the plot. However repugnant this plan of writing may be to the canons of criticism, yet it may, perhaps, amuse the reader even more than one less exceptionable.

The country and the people are at least truly described; although it will be seen that my book has but little philosophy to recommend it, and much less of depth of observation. In truth, I have only perfunctorily skimmed over the surface of a limited society, which was both rich in the qualities that afford delight, and abundant in the materials to compensate the study of its peculiarities. If my book be too much in the mirthful mood, it is because the ordinary actions of men, in their household intercourse, have naturally a humorous or comic character. The passions that are exhibited in such scenes are moderate and amiable; and a true narrative of what is amiable in personal history is apt to be tinged with the hue of a lurking and subdued humour. • The under-currents of country-life are grotesque, peculiar and amusing, and it only requires an attentive observer to make an agreeable book by describing them. I do not think any one will say that my pictures are exaggerated or false in their proportions; because I have not striven to produce effect: they will, doubtless, be found insufficient in many respects, and I may be open

to the charge of having made them flat and insipid. I confess the incompetency of my hand to do what, perhaps, my reader has a right to require from one who professes a design to amuse him. Still I may have furnished some entertainment, and that is what I chiefly aimed at, although negligently and unskillfully.

As to the events I have recounted, upon what assurance I have given them to the world, how I came to do so, and with what license I have used names to bring them into the public eye, those are matters betwixt me and my friends, concerning which my reader would forget himself if he should be over-curious. His search therein will give him but little content; and if I am driven into straits in that regard, I shelter myself behind the motto on my title-page, the only one I have used in this book. Why should I not have my privilege as well as another?

If this my first venture should do well, my reader shall hear of me anon, and much more, I hope, to his liking: if disaster await it, I am not so bound to its fortunes but that I can still sleep quietly as the best who doze over my pages.

The author of the *Seven Champions* has forestalled all I have left to say; and I therefore take the freedom to conclude in his words:

“Gentle readers,—in kindness accept of my labours,

and be not like the chattering cranes nor Momus' mates, that carp at every thing. What the simple say, I care not; what the spiteful speak, I pass not: only the censure of the conceited I stand unto; that is the mark I aym at, whose good likings if I obtain, I have won my race."

MARK LITTLETON.

INTRODUCTORY EPISTLE.

TO ZACHARY HUDDLESTONE, ESQ.

PRESTON RIDGE, NEW YORK.

DEAR ZACK,

I CAN imagine your surprise upon the receipt of this, when you first discover that I have really reached the Old Dominion. To requite you for my stealing off so quietly, I hold myself bound to an explanation, and, in revenge for your past friendship, to inflict upon you a full, true, and particular account of all my doings, or rather my seeings and thinkings, up to this present writing. You know my cousin Ned Hazard has been often urging it upon me,—so often that he began to grow sick of it,—as a sort of family duty, to come and spend some little fragment of my life amongst my Virginia relations, and I have broken so many promises on that score, that, in truth, I began to grow ashamed of myself.

Upon the first of this month a letter from Ned reached me at Longsides, on the North River, where I then was with my mother and sisters. Ned's usual tone of correspondence is that of easy, confiding intimacy, mixed up, now and then, with a slashing raillery against some imputed foibles, upon

which, as they were altogether imaginary, I could afford to take his sarcasm in good part. But in this epistle he assumed a new ground, giving me some home thrusts, chiding me roundly for certain waxing *bachelorisms*, as he called them, and intimating that a crust was evidently hardening upon me. A plague upon the fellow! You know, Zachary, that neither of us is so many years ahead of him.—My reckoning takes in but five years, eleven months and fifteen days—and certainly, not so much by my looks.—He insinuated that I had arrived at that inveteracy of opinion for which travel was the only cure; and that, in especial, I had fallen into some unseemly prejudices against the Old Dominion which were unbecoming the character of a philosopher, to which, he affirmed, I had set up pretensions; and then came a most hyperbolical inuendo,—that he had good reason to know that I was revolving the revival of a stale adventure in the war of Cupid, in which I had been aforetime egregiously baffled, “at Rhodes, at Cyprus, and on other grounds.” Any reasonable man would say, that was absurd on his own showing. The letter grew more provoking—it flouted my opinions, laughed at my particularity, caricatured and derided my figure for its leanness, set at nought my complexion, satirized my temper, and gave me over corporally and spiritually to the great bear-herd, as one predestined to all kinds of ill luck with the women, and to be led for ever as an ape. His epistle, however, wound up like a sermon, in a perfect concord of sweet sounds, beseeching me to forego my idle

purpose; (Cupid, forsooth!) to weed out all my prejudicate affections, as well touching the Old Dominion as the other conceits of my vain philosophy, and to hie me, with such speed as my convenience might serve withal, to Swallow Barn, where he made bold to pledge me an entertainment worthy of my labour.

It was a brave offer, and discreetly to be perpended. I balanced the matter, in my usual see-saw fashion, for several days. It does mostly fall out, my dear Zack (to speak philosophically), that this machine of man is pulled in such contrary ways, by inclinations and appetites setting diversely, that it shall go well with him if he be not altogether balanced into a pernicious equilibrium of absolute rest. I had a great account to run up against my resolution. Longsides has so many conveniences; and the servants have fallen so well into my habitudes; and my arm-chair had such an essential adaptation to my felicity; and even my razors were on such a stationary foundation—one for every day of the week—as to render it impossible to embark them on a journey; and my laundress had just begun to comprehend, after a severe indoctrination, the precise quantum of starch, and the proper breadth of fold, for my cravat; to say nothing of the letters to write, and the books to read, and all the other little cares that make up the sum of immobility in a man who does not care much about seeing the world; so that, in faith, Zachary, I had a serious matter of it. And then, after all, I was, in fact, plighted to my sister Louisa to go with her up the river, you know where. This,

between you and me, was the very thing that brought down the beam. That futile, nonsensical flirtation! But for this fantastic conceit crossing my mind with the bitterness of its folly, I should indubitably have staid at home.

There are some junctures in love and war both, where your lying is your only game; for as to equivocating, or putting the question upon an *if* or a *but*, it is a downright confession. If I had refused Ned's summons, not a whole legion of devils could have driven it out of his riveted belief, that I had been kept at home by that maggot of the brain which he called a love affair. And then I should never have heard the end of it!

"I'll set that matter right at least," quoth I, as I folded up his letter. "Ned has reason too," said I, suddenly struck with the novelty of the proposed journey, which began to show in a pleasant light upon my imagination, as things are apt to do, when a man has once relieved his mind from a state of doubt:—"One ought to travel before he makes up his opinion: there are two sides to every question, and the world is right or wrong; I'm sure I don't know which. Your traveller is a man of privileges and authoritative, and looks well in the multitude: a man of mark, and authentic as a witness. And as for the Old Dominion, I'll warrant me it's a right jolly old place, with a good many years on its head yet, or I am mistaken—By cock and pye, I'll go and see it!—What ho! my tablets,"——

Behold me now in the full career of my voyage of

discovery, exploring the James River in the steam-boat, on a clear, hot fifteenth of June, and looking with a sagacious perspicacity upon the commonest sights of this terra incognita. I gazed upon the receding headlands far sternward, and then upon the sedgy banks where the cattle were standing leg-deep in the water to get rid of the flies: and ever and anon, as we followed the sinuosities of the river, some sweeping eminence came into view, and on the crown thereof was seen a plain, many-windowed edifice of brick, with low wings, old, ample and stately, looking over its wide and sun-burnt domain in solitary silence: and there were the piney promontories, into whose shade we sometimes glided so close that one might have almost jumped on shore, where the wave struck the beach with a sullen plash: and there were the decayed fences jutting beyond the bank into the water, as if they had come down the hill too fast to stop themselves. All these things struck my fancy, as peculiar to the region.

It is wonderful to think how much more distinct are the impressions of a man who travels pen in hand, than those of a mere business voyager. Even the crows, as we sometimes scared them from their banquets with our noisy enginery, seemed to have a more voluble, and, I may say, eloquent caw here in Virginia, than in the dialectic climates of the North. You would have laughed to see into what a state of lady-like rapture I had worked myself, in my eagerness to get a peep at James Town, with all my effervescence of romance kindled up by the re-

noun of the unmatched Smith. The steward of the boat pointed it out when we had nearly passed it—and lo! there it was—an old steeple, a barren fallow, some melancholy heifers, a blasted pine, and, on its top, a desolate hawk's nest. What a splendid field for the fancy! What a *carte blanche* for a painter! With how many things might this little spot be filled!

What time bright Phœbus—you see that James Town has made me poetical—had thrown the reins upon his horse's neck, and got down from his chafed saddle in the western country, like a tired mail carrier, our boat was safely moored at Rocket's, and I entered Richmond between hawk and buzzard—the very best hour, I maintain, out of the twenty-four, for a picturesque tourist. At that hour, it may be affirmed generally, that Nature is an absolute liar. The landscape becomes like one of Hubbard's cuttings—every thing jet black against a bright horizon: nothing to be seen but profiles, with all the shabby fillings-up kept dark. Shockoe Hill was crested with what seemed palaces embowered in groves and gardens of richest shade; the chimneys numberless, like minarets; and the Parthenon of Virginia, on its appropriate summit, stood in another Acropolis, tracing its broad pediment upon the sky in exaggerated lines. There, too, was the rush of waters tumbling around enchanted islands, and flashing dimly on the sight. The hum of a city fell upon my ear; the streets looked long and the houses high, and every thing brought upon my mind that misty impression

which, Burke says, is an ingredient of the sublime, and which, I say, every stranger feels on entering a city at twilight.

I was set down at "The Union," where, for the first hour, being intent upon my creature comforts, my time passed well enough. The abrupt transition from long continued motion to a state of rest makes almost every man sad, exactly as sudden speed makes us joyous; and for this reason, I take it, your traveller in a strange place is, for a space after his halt, a sullen, if not a melancholy animal. The proofs of this were all around me; for here was I—not an unpractised traveller either—at my first resting place after four days of accelerated progression, for the first time in my life in Richmond, in a large hotel, without one cognizable face before me, full of excellent feelings, without a power of utterance. What would I have given for thee, or Jones, or even long Dick Hardesty! In that ludicrous conflict between the social nature of the man and his outward circumstances, which every light-hearted voyager feels in such a situation as mine, I grew desponding. Talk not to me of the comfort of mine own inn! I hold it a thing altogether insufficient. A burlesque solitariness sealed up the fountains of speech, of the crowd who were seated at the supper table; and the same uneasy sensation of pent-up sympathies was to be seen in the groups that peopled the purlieus of the hotel. A square lamp that hung midway over the hall, was just lit up, and a few insulated beings were sauntering backward and forward in its light: some

loitered in pairs, in low and reserved conversation; others stalked alone in incommunicable ruminations, with shaded brows, and their hands behind their backs. One or two stood at the door humming familiar catches and old madrigals, in thoughtful medleys, as they gazed up and down the street, now clamorous with the din of carts, and the gossip of serving-maids, discordant apprentice boys, and over-contented blacks. Some sat on the pavement, leaning their chairs against the wall, and puffing segars in imperturbable silence: all composing an orderly and disconsolate little republic of humoursome spirits, most pitifully out of tune.

I was glad to take refuge in an idle occupation; so I strolled about the city. The streets, by degrees, grew less frequented. Family parties were gathered about their doors, to take the evening breeze. The moon shone bright upon some beves of active children, who played at racing games upon the pavements. On one side of the street, a contumacious clarionet screamed a harsh bravado to a thorough-going violin, that on the opposite side, in an illuminated barber-shop, struggled in the contortions of a Virginia reel. And, at intervals, strutted past a careering, saucy negro, with marvellous lips, whistling to the top of his bent, and throwing into shade halloo of schoolboy, scream of clarionet, and screech of fiddle.—

Towards midnight a thunder gust arose, accompanied with sharp lightning, and the morning broke upon me in all the luxuriance of a cool and delicious at-

mosphere. You must know that when I left home, my purpose was to make my way direct to Swallow Barn. Now, what think you of my skill as a traveller, when I tell you, that until I woke in Richmond on this enchanting morning, it never once occurred to me to inquire where this same Swallow Barn was! I knew that it was in Virginia, and somewhere about the James River, and therefore I instinctively wandered to Richmond; but now, while making my toilet, my thoughts being naturally bent upon my next movement, it very reasonably occurred to me that I must have passed my proper destination the day before, and, full of this thought, I found myself humming the line from an old song, which runs, "Pray what the devil brings you here!" The communicative and obliging bar-keeper of the Union soon put me right. He knew Ned Hazard as a frequent visiter of Richmond, and his advice was, that I should take the same boat in which I came, and shape my course back as far as City Point, where he assured me that I might find some conveyance to Swallow Barn, which lay still farther down the river, and that, at all events, "go where I would, I could not go wrong in Virginia." What think you of that? Now I hold that to be, upon personal experience, as true a word as ever was set down in a traveller's breviary. There is not a by-path in Virginia that will take a gentleman who has time on his hands, in a wrong direction. This I say in honest compliment to a state that is full to the brim of right good fellows.

The boat was not to return for two days, and I there-

fore employed the interval in looking about the city. Don't be frightened!—for I neither visited hospitals, nor schools, nor libraries, and therefore will not play the tourist with you: but if you wish to see a beautiful little city, built up of rich and tasteful villas, and embellished with all the varieties of town and country, scattered with a refined and exquisite skill—come and look at Shockoe Hill in the month of June.—You may believe, then, I did not regret my aberration.

At the appointed day I re-embarked, and in due time was put down at City Point. Here some further delay awaited me. This is not the land of hackney coaches, and I found myself somewhat embarrassed in procuring an onward conveyance. At a small house, to which I was conducted, I made my wishes known, and the proprietor kindly volunteered his services to set me forward. It was a matter of some consideration. The day was well advanced, and it was as much as could be done to reach Swallow Barn that night. An equipage, however, was at last procured for me, and off I went. You would have laughed “sans intermission” a good hour, if you had seen me upon the road. I was set up in an old sulky, of a dingy hue, without springs, with its body sunk between a pair of unusually high wheels, that gave it something of a French shrug. It was drawn by an asthmatic, superannuated racer, with a huge Roman nose and a most sorrowful countenance. His sides were piteously scalded with the traces, and his harness, partly of rope and partly of

leather thongs, corresponded with the sobriety of his character. He had fine long legs, however, and got over the ground with surprising alacrity. At a respectful distance behind me trotted the most venerable of outriders—an old free negro, formerly a retainer in some of the feudal establishments of the low country. His name was Scipio, and his face, which was principally made up of a pair of lips hanging below a pair of nostrils, was well set off with a head of silver wool that bespoke a volume of gravity. He had, from some aristocratic conceit of elegance, indued himself for my service in a cast-off dragoon cap, stripped of its bear skin; a ragged remnant of a regimental coat, still jagged with some points of tarnished scarlet; and a pair of coarse linen trowsers, barely reaching the ankles, beneath which two bony feet occupied shoes, each of the superficies and figure of a hoe, and on one of these was whimsically buckled a rusty spur. His horse was a short, thick-set pony, with an amazingly rough trot, which kept Scipio's legs in a state of constant warfare against the animal's sides, whilst the old fellow bounced up and down in his saddle with the ambitious ostentation of a groom in the vigour of manhood, and proud of his horsemanship.

Scipio frequently succeeded, by dint of hard spurring, to get close enough to me to open a conversation, which he conducted with such a deferential courtesy and formal politeness, as greatly to enhance my opinion of his breeding. His face was lighted up with a lambent smile, and he touched his hat with an antique

grace at every accost ; the tone of his voice was mild and subdued, and in short, Scipio, though black, had all the unction of an old gentleman. He had a great deal to say of the "palmy days" of Virginia, and the generations that in his time had been broken up, or, what in his conception was equivalent, had gone "over the mountain." He expatiated, with a wonderful relish, upon the splendours of the old fashioned style in that part of the country; and told me very pathetically, how the estates were cut up, and what old people had died of, and how much he felt himself alone in the present times—which particulars he interlarded with sundry sage remarks importing an affectionate attachment to the old school, of which he considered himself no unworthy survivor. He concluded these disquisitions with a reflection that amused me by its profundity—and which doubtless he picked up from some popular orator: "When they change the circumstance, they alter the case." My expression of assent to this aphorism awoke all his vanity;—for, after pondering a moment upon it, he shook his head archly, as he added,—“People think old Scipio a fool, because he’s got no sense,”—and, thereupon, the old fellow laughed till the tears came into his eyes.

In this kind of colloquy we made some twenty miles before the shades of evening overtook us, and Scipio now informed me that we might soon expect to reach Swallow Barn. The road was smooth, and canopied with dark foliage, and, as the last blush of twilight faded away, we swept rapidly round the

head of a swamp, where a thousand frogs were celebrating their vespers, and soon after reached the gate of the court-yard. Lights were glimmering through different apertures, and several stacks of chimneys were visible above the horizon; the whole mass being magnified into the dimensions of a great castle. Some half dozen dogs bounding to the gate, brought a host of servants to receive me, as I alighted at the door.

Cousins count in Virginia, and have great privileges. Here was I in the midst of a host of them. Frank Meriwether met me as cordially as if we had spent our whole lives together, and my cousin Lucretia, his wife, came up and kissed me in the genuine country fashion:—of course, I repeated the ceremony towards all the female branches that fell in my way, and by the by, the girls are pretty enough to make the ceremony interesting, although I think they consider me somewhat oldish. As to Ned Hazard, I need not tell you he is the quintessence of good humour, and received me with that famous hearty honesty of his, which you would have predicted.

At the moment of my arrival, a part of the family were strewed over the steps of a little porch at the front door, basking in the moonlight; and before them a troop of children, white and black, trundled hoops across the court-yard, followed by a pack of companionable curs, who seemed to have a part of the game; whilst a piano within the house served as an orchestra to the players. My arrival produced a sensation that stopped all this, and I was hurried by a kind of tumultuary welcome into the parlour.

If you have the patience to read this long epistle to the end, I would like to give you a picture of the family as it appeared to me that night; but if you are already fatigued with my gossip, as I have good reason to fear, why you may e'en skip this, and go about your more important duties. But it is not often you may meet such scenes, and as they produce some kindly impressions, I think it worth while to note this.

The parlour was one of those specimens of architecture of which there are not many survivors, and in another half century, they will, perhaps, be extinct. The walls were of panelled wood; of a greenish white, with small windows seated in deep embrasures, and the mantel was high, embellished with heavy mouldings that extended up to the cornice of the room, in a figure resembling a square fortified according to Vauban. In one corner stood a tall, triangular cupboard, and opposite to it a clock equally tall, with a healthy, saucy-faced full moon peering above the dial plate. A broad sofa ranged along the wall, and was kept in countenance by a legion of leather-bottomed chairs, which sprawled their bandy-legs to a perilous compass, like a high Dutch skater squaring the yard. A huge table occupied the middle of the room, whereon reposed a service of stately China, and a dozen covers flanking some lodgments of sweetmeats, and divers curiously wrought pyramids of butter tottering on pedestals of ice. In the midst of this array, like a lordly fortress, was placed an immense bowl of milk, surrounded by

a circumvallation of silver goblets, reflecting their images on the polished board, as so many *El Dorados* in a fairy Archipelago. An uncarpeted floor glistened with a dim, but spotless lustre, in token of careful housekeeping: and around the walls were hung, in grotesque frames, some time-worn portraits, protruding their pale faces through thickets of priggish curls.

The sounding of a bell was the signal for our evening repast, and produced an instant movement in the apartment. My cousin *Lucretia* had already taken the seat of worship behind a steaming urn and a strutting coffee-pot of chased silver, that had the air of a cock about to crow,—it was so erect. A little rosy gentleman, the reverend *Mr. Chub*, (a tutor in the family,) said a hasty and half-smothered grace, and then we all arranged ourselves at the table. An aged dame in spectacles, with the mannerly silence of a dependant, placed herself in a post at the board, that enabled her to hold in check some little moppets who were perched on high chairs, with bibs under their chins, and two bare-footed boys, who had just burst into the room, overheated with play. A vacant seat remained, that, after a few moments, was occupied by a tall spinster, with a sentimental mien, who glided into the parlour with some stir. She was another cousin, *Zachary*, according to the *Virginia* rule of consanguinity, who was introduced to me as *Miss Prudence Meriwether*;—a sister of *Frank's*, and as for her age,—that's neither here nor there.

The evening went off, as you might guess, with abundance of plain good feeling, and unaffected enjoyment. The ladies soon fell into their domestic occupations, and the parson smoked his pipe in silence at the window. The young progeny teased "uncle Ned" with importunate questions, or played at bo-peep at the parlour door, casting sly looks at me, from whence they slipt off, with a laugh, whenever they caught my eye. At last, growing tired, they rushed with one accord upon Hazard, flinging themselves across his knees, pulling his skirts, or clambering over the back of his chair, until worn out by sport, they dropped successively upon the floor, in such childish slumber, that not even their nurses woke them when they were picked up like sacks, and carried off to bed upon the shoulders.

It was not long before the rest of us followed, and I found myself luxuriating in a comfortable bed that would have accommodated a platoon. Here, listening to the tree frog and the owl, I dropped into a profound slumber, and knew nothing more of this under world, until the sun shining through my window, and the voluble note of the mocking bird, recalled me to the enjoyment of nature and the morning breeze.

And so, Zachary, you have all my adventures up to the moment of my arrival. For the future, do not expect that I mean to make you the victim of my garrulity. I admit there is something tyrannical in these special appeals to the patience of a friend, so I shall henceforth set down, in a random way, all that interests me during my present visit, and when I

have made a book of it, my dear friend, you may read it or not, just as you like. It may be some time before we meet, and till then be assured I wear you in my "heart of hearts."

Yours ever,
MARK LITTLETON.

Swallow Barn, June 20th, 1829.

CHAPTER I.**SWALLOW BARN.**

SWALLOW BARN is an aristocratical old edifice, that squats, like a brooding hen, on the southern bank of the James River. It is quietly seated, with its vassal out-buildings, in a kind of shady pocket or nook, formed by a sweep of the stream, on a gentle acclivity thinly sprinkled with oaks, whose magnificent branches afford habitation and defence to an antique colony of owls.

This time-honoured mansion was the residence of the family of Hazards ; but in the present generation the spells of love and mortgage conspired to translate the possession to Frank Meriwether, who having married Lucretia, the eldest daughter of my late uncle, Walter Hazard, and lifted some gentlemanlike incumbrances that had been silently brooding upon the domain along with the owls, was thus inducted into the proprietary rights. The adjacency of his own estate gave a territorial feature to this alliance, of which the fruits were no less discernible in the multiplication of negroes, cattle and poultry, than in a flourishing clan of Meriwethers.

The buildings illustrate three epochs in the his-

tory of the family. The main structure is upwards of a century old; one story high, with thick brick walls, and a double-faced roof, resembling a ship, bottom upwards; this is perforated with small dormant windows, that have some such expression as belongs to a face without eye-brows. To this is added a more modern tenement of wood, which might have had its date about the time of the Revolution: it has shrunk a little at the joints, and left some cranies, through which the winds whisper all night long. The last member of the domicil is an upstart fabric of later times, that seems to be ill at ease in this antiquated society, and awkwardly overlooks the ancestral edifice, with the air of a grenadier recruit posted behind a testy little veteran corporal. The traditions of the house ascribe the existence of this erection to a certain family divan, where—say the chronicles—the salic law was set at nought, and some pungent matters of style were considered. It has an unfinished drawing-room, possessing an ambitious air of fashion, with a marble mantel, high ceilings, and large folding doors; but being yet unplastered, and without paint, it has somewhat of a melancholy aspect, and may be compared to an unlucky bark lifted by an extraordinary tide upon a sand-bank: it is useful as a memento to all aspiring householders against a premature zeal to make a show in the world, and the indiscretion of admitting females into cabinet councils.

These three masses compose an irregular pile, in

which the two last described constituents are obsequiously stationed in the rear, like serving-men by the chair of a gouty old gentleman, supporting the squat and frowning little mansion which, but for the family pride, would have been long since given over to the accommodation of the guardian birds of the place.

The great hall door is an ancient piece of walnut work, that has grown too heavy for its hinges, and by its daily travel has furrowed the floor with a deep quadrant, over which it has a very uneasy journey. It is shaded by a narrow porch, with a carved pediment, upheld by massive columns of wood sadly split by the sun. A court-yard, in front of this, of a semi-circular shape, bounded by a white paling, and having a gravel road leading from a large and variously latticed gate-way around a grass plot, is embellished by a superannuated willow, that stretches forth its arms, clothed with its pendant drapery, like a reverend priest pronouncing a benediction. A bridle-rack stands on the outer side of the gate, and near it a ragged, horse-eaten plum tree casts its skeleton shadow upon the dust.

Some lombardy poplars, springing above a mass of shrubbery, partially screen various supernumerary buildings around the mansion. Amongst these is to be seen the gable end of a stable, with the date of its erection stiffly emblazoned in black bricks near the upper angle, in figures set in after the fashion of the work in a girl's sampler. In the same quarter a pigeon box, reared on a post, and resembling a huge tee-totum, is visible, and about its several doors and

windows, a family of pragmatical pigeons are generally strutting, bridling and bragging at each other from sunrise until dark.

Appendant to this homestead is an extensive tract of land that stretches for some three or four miles along the river, presenting alternately abrupt promontories mantled with pine and dwarf oak, and small inlets terminating in swamps. Some sparse portions of forest vary the landscape, which, for the most part, exhibits a succession of fields clothed with a diminutive growth of Indian corn, patches of cotton or parched tobacco plants, and the occasional varieties of stubble and fallow grounds. These are surrounded with worm fences of shrunken chesnut, where lizards and ground squirrels are perpetually running races along the rails.

At a short distance from the mansion a brook glides at a snail's pace towards the river, holding its course through a wilderness of alder and laurel, and forming little islets covered with a damp moss. Across this stream is thrown a rough bridge, and not far below, an aged sycamore twists its complex roots about a spring, at the point of confluence of which and the brook, a squadron of ducks have a cruising ground, where they may be seen at any time of the day turning up their tails to the skies, like unfortunate gun boats driven by the head in a gale. Immediately on the margin, at this spot, the family linen is usually spread out by some sturdy negro women, who chant shrill ditties over their wash tubs, and keep up a spirited attack, both of tongue and hand,

upon sundry little besmirched and bow-legged blacks, that are continually making somersets on the grass, or mischievously waddling across the clothes laid out to bleach.

Beyond the bridge, at some distance, stands a prominent object in this picture—the most time-worn and venerable appendage to the establishment:—a huge, crazy and disjointed barn, with an immense roof hanging in penthouse fashion almost to the ground, and thatched a foot thick, with sun-burnt straw, that reaches below the eaves in ragged flakes, giving it an air of drowsy decrepitude. The rude enclosure surrounding this antiquated magazine is strewn knee-deep with litter, from the midst of which arises a long rack, resembling a *chevaux de frise*, which is ordinarily filled with fodder. This is the customary lounge of four or five gaunt oxen, who keep up a sort of imperturbable companionship with a sickly-looking wagon that protrudes its parched tongue, and droops its rusty swingle-trees in the hot sunshine, with the air of a dispirited and forlorn invalid awaiting the attack of a tertian ague: While, beneath the sheds, the long face of a plough horse may be seen, peering through the dark window of the stable, with a spectral melancholy; his glassy eye moving silently across the gloom, and the profound stillness of his habitation now and then interrupted only by his sepulchral and hoarse cough. There are also some sociable carts under the same sheds, with their shafts against the wall, which seem to have a free and

easy air, like a set of roysters taking their ease in a tavern porch.

Sometimes a clownish colt, with long fetlocks and dishevelled mane, and a thousand burs in his tail, stalks about this region; but as it seems to be forbidden ground to all his tribe, he is likely very soon to encounter his natural enemy in some of the young negroes, upon which event he makes a rapid retreat, not without an uncouth display of his heels in passing; and bounds off towards the brook, where he stops and looks back with a saucy defiance, and, after affecting to drink for a moment, gallops away, with a hideous whinnowing, to the fields.

CHAPTER II.**A COUNTRY GENTLEMAN.**

FRANK MERIWETHER is now in the meridian of life;—somewhere close upon forty-five. Good cheer and a good temper both tell well upon him. The first has given him a comfortable full figure, and the latter certain easy, contemplative habits, that incline him to be lazy and philosophical. He has the substantial planter look that belongs to a gentleman who lives on his estate, and is not much vexed with the crosses of life.

I think he prides himself on his personal appearance, for he has a handsome face, with a dark blue eye, and a high forehead that is scantily embellished with some silver-tipped locks, that, I observe, he cherishes for their rarity: besides, he is growing manifestly attentive to his dress, and carries himself erect, with some secret consciousness that his person is not bad. It is pleasant to see him when he has ordered his horse for a ride into the neighbourhood, or across to the Court House. On such occasions, he is apt to make his appearance in a coat of blue broadcloth, astonishingly new and glossy, and with a redundant supply of plaited ruffle strutting through the folds of a Marseilles waistcoat: a worshipful

finish is given to this costume by a large straw hat, lined with green silk. There is a magisterial fulness in his garments that betokens condition in the world, and a heavy bunch of seals, suspended by a chain of gold, jingles as he moves, pronouncing him a man of superfluities.

It is considered rather extraordinary that he has never set up for Congress: but the truth is, he is an unambitious man, and has a great dislike to currying favour—as he calls it. And, besides, he is thoroughly convinced that there will always be men enough in Virginia willing to serve the people, and therefore does not see why he should trouble his head about it. Some years ago, however, there was really an impression that he meant to come out. By some sudden whim, he took it into his head to visit Washington during the session of Congress, and returned, after a fortnight, very seriously distempered with politics. He told curious anecdotes of certain secret intrigues which had been discovered in the affairs of the capital, gave a pretty clear insight into the views of some deep laid combinations, and became, all at once, painfully florid in his discourse, and dogmatical to a degree that made his wife stare. Fortunately, this orgasm soon subsided, and Frank relapsed into an indolent gentleman of the opposition; but it had the effect to give a much more decided cast to his studies, for he forthwith discarded the Whig, and took to the *Enquirer*, like a man who was not to be disturbed by doubts; and as it was morally impossible to believe what was written on both sides, to

prevent his mind from being abused, he, from this time forward, gave an implicit assent to all the facts that set against Mr. Adams. The consequence of this straight forward and confiding deportment was an unsolicited and complimentary notice of him by the executive of the state. He was put into the commission of the peace, and having thus become a public man against his will, his opinions were observed to undergo some essential changes. He now thinks that a good citizen ought neither to solicit nor decline office; that the magistracy of Virginia is the sturdiest pillar that supports the fabric of the constitution; and that the people, "though in their opinions they may be mistaken, in their sentiments they are never wrong,"—with some other such dogmas, that, a few years ago, he did not hold in very good repute. In this temper, he has of late embarked upon the mill-pond of county affairs, and, notwithstanding his amiable and respectful republicanism, I am told he keeps the peace as if he commanded a garrison, and administers justice like a *cadi*.

He has some claim to supremacy in this last department; for during three years of his life he smoked segars in a lawyer's office at Richmond; sometimes looked into Blackstone and the Revised Code; was a member of a debating society that ate oysters once a week during the winter; and wore six cravats and a pair of yellow-topped boots as a blood of the metropolis. Having in this way qualified himself for the pursuits of agriculture, he came to his estate a very model of landed gentlemen. Since that time

his avocations have had a certain literary tincture ; for having settled himself down as a married man, and got rid of his superfluous foppery, he rambled with wonderful assiduity through a wilderness of romances, poems and dissertations, which are now collected in his library, and, with their battered blue covers, present a lively type of an army of continentals at the close of the war, or a hospital of veteran invalids. These have all, at last, given way to the newspapers—a miscellaneous study very enticing to gentlemen in the country—that have rendered Meriwether a most discomfiting antagonist in the way of dates and names.

He has great sauvity of manners, and a genuine benevolence of disposition, that makes him fond of having his friends about him ; and it is particularly gratifying to him to pick up any genteel stranger within the purlieus of Swallow Barn, and put him to the proof of a week's hospitality, if it be only for the pleasure of exercising his rhetoric upon him. He is a kind master, and considerate towards his dependants, for which reason, although he owns many slaves, they hold him in profound reverence, and are very happy under his dominion. All these circumstances make Swallow Barn a very agreeable place, and it is accordingly frequented by an extensive range of his acquaintances.

There is one quality in Frank that stands above the rest. He is a thorough-bred Virginian, and consequently does not travel much from home, except to make an excursion to Richmond, which he consi-

ders emphatically as the centre of civilization. Now and then, he has gone beyond the mountain, but the upper country is not much to his taste, and in his estimation only to be resorted to when the fever makes it imprudent to remain upon the tide. He thinks lightly of the mercantile interest, and in fact undervalues the manners of the cities generally;—he believes that their inhabitants are all hollow hearted and insincere, and altogether wanting in that substantial intelligence and honesty that he affirms to be characteristic of the country. He is a great admirer of the genius of Virginia, and is frequent in his commendation of a toast in which the state is compared to the mother of the Gracchi:—indeed, it is a familiar thing with him to speak of the aristocracy of talent as only inferior to that of the landed interest,—the idea of a freeholder inferring to his mind a certain constitutional pre-eminence in all the virtues of citizenship, as a matter of course.

The solitary elevation of a country gentleman, well to do in the world, begets some magnificent notions. He becomes as infallible as the Pope; gradually acquires a habit of making long speeches; is apt to be impatient of contradiction, and is always very touchy on the point of honour. There is nothing more conclusive than a rich man's logic any where, but in the country, amongst his dependants, it flows with the smooth and unresisted course of a gentle stream irrigating a verdant meadow, and depositing its mud in fertilizing luxuriance. Meriwether's sayings, about Swallow Barn, import absolute

verity—but I have discovered that they are not so current out of his jurisdiction. Indeed, every now and then, we have some obstinate discussions when any of the neighbouring potentates, who stand in the same sphere with Frank, come to the house; for these worthies have opinions of their own, and nothing can be more dogged than the conflict between them. They sometimes fire away at each other with a most amiable and unconvinced hardihood for a whole evening, bandying interjections, and making bows, and saying shrewd things with all the courtesy imaginable: but for unextinguishable pertinacity in argument, and utter impregnability of belief, there is no disputant like your country gentleman who reads the newspapers. When one of these discussions fairly gets under weigh, it never comes to an anchor again of its own accord—it is either blown out so far to sea as to be given up for lost, or puts into port in distress for want of documents,—or is upset by a call for the boot-jack and slippers—which is something like the previous question in Congress.

If my worthy cousin be somewhat over-argumentative as a politician, he restores the equilibrium of his character by a considerate coolness in religious matters. He piques himself upon being a high-churchman, but he is only a rare frequenter of places of worship, and very seldom permits himself to get into a dispute upon points of faith. If Mr. Chub, the Presbyterian tutor in the family, ever succeeds in drawing him into this field, as he occasionally has the address to do, Meriwether is sure to fly the

course :—he gets puzzled with scripture names, and makes some odd mistakes between Peter and Paul, and then generally turns the parson over to his wife, who, he says, has an astonishing memory.

Meriwether is a great breeder of blooded horses ; and, ever since the celebrated race between Eclipse and Henry, he has taken to this occupation with a renewed zeal, as a matter affecting the reputation of the state. It is delightful to hear him expatiate upon the value, importance, and patriotic bearing of this employment, and to listen to all his technical lore touching the mystery of horse-craft. He has some fine colts in training, that are committed to the care of a pragmatical old negro, named Carey, who, in his reverence for the occupation, is the perfect shadow of his master. He and Frank hold grave and momentous consultations upon the affairs of the stable, in such a sagacious strain of equal debate, that it would puzzle a spectator to tell which was the leading member in the council. Carey thinks he knows a great deal more upon the subject than his master, and their frequent intercourse has begot a familiarity in the old negro that is almost fatal to Meriwether's supremacy. The old man feels himself authorized to maintain his positions according to the freest parliamentary form, and sometimes with a violence of asseveration that compels his master to abandon his ground, purely out of faint-heartedness. Meriwether gets a little nettled by Carey's doggedness, but generally turns it off in a laugh. I was in the stable with him, a few mornings after my arrival, when he

ventured to expostulate with the venerable groom upon a professional point, but the controversy terminated in its customary way. "Who sot you up, Master Frank, to tell me how to fodder that 'ere cretur, when I as good as nursed you on my knee?" "Well, tie up your tongue, you old mastiff," replied Frank, as he walked out of the stable, "and cease growling, since you will have it your own way;"—and then, as we left the old man's presence, he added, with an affectionate chuckle—"a faithful old cur, too, that licks my hand out of pure honesty; he has not many years left, and it does no harm to humour him!"

CHAPTER III.

FAMILY PORTRAITS.

WHILST Frank Meriwether amuses himself with his quiddities, and floats through life upon the current of his humour, his dame, my excellent cousin Lucretia, takes charge of the household affairs, as one who has a reputation to stake upon her administration. She has made it a perfect science, and great is her fame in the dispensation thereof!

They who have visited Swallow Barn will long remember the morning stir, of which the murmurs arose even unto the chambers, and fell upon the ears of the sleepers;—the dry-rubbing of floors, and even the waxing of the same until they were like ice;—and the grinding of coffee mills;—and the gibber of ducks, and chickens, and turkeys; and all the multitudinous concert of homely sounds. And then, her breakfasts! I do not wish to be counted extravagant, but a small regiment might march in upon her without disappointment; and I would put them for excellence and variety against any thing that ever was served upon platter. Moreover, all things go like clock-work. She rises with the lark, and infuses an early vigour into the whole household. And yet she

is a thin woman to look upon, and a feeble ; with a sallow complexion, and a pair of animated black eyes that impart a portion of fire to a countenance otherwise demure from the paths worn across it, in the frequent travel of a low country ague. But, although her life has been somewhat saddened by such visitations, my cousin is too spirited a woman to give up to them ; for she is therapeutical in her constitution, and considers herself a full match for any reasonable tertian in the world. Indeed, I have sometimes thought that she took more pride in her leech-craft than becomes a Christian woman : she is even a little vain-glorious. For, to say nothing of her skill in compounding simples, she has occasionally brought down upon her head the sober remonstrances of her husband, by her pertinacious faith in the efficacy of certain spells in cases of intermittent. But there is no reasoning against her experience. She can enumerate the cases—"and men may say what they choose about its being contrary to reason, and all that :—it is their way! But seeing is believing—nine scoops of water in the hollow of the hand, from the sycamore spring, for three mornings, before sunrise, and a cup of strong coffee with lemon juice, will break an ague, try it when you will." In short, as Frank says, "Lucretia will die in that creed."

I am occasionally up early enough to be witness to her morning regimen, which, to my mind, is rather tyrannically enforced against the youngsters of her numerous family, both white and black. She is in the habit of preparing some death-routing de-

coction for them, in a small pitcher, and administering it to the whole squadron in succession, who severally swallow the dose with a most ineffectual effort at repudiation, and gallop off, with faces all rue and wormwood.

Every thing at Swallow Barn, that falls within the superintendence of my cousin Lucretia, is a pattern of industry. In fact, I consider her the very priestess of the American system, for, with her, the protection of manufactures is even more of a passion than a principle. Every here and there, over the estate, may be seen rising in humble guise above the shrubbery, the rude chimney of a log cabin, where all the livelong day the plaintive moaning of the spinning-wheel rises fitfully upon the breeze, like the fancied notes of a hobgoblin, as they are sometimes imitated in the stories with which we frighten children. In these laboratories the negro women are employed in preparing yarn for the loom, from which is produced not only a comfortable supply of winter clothing for the working people, but some excellent carpets for the house.

It is refreshing to behold how affectionately vain our good hostess is of Frank, and what deference she shows to his judgment in all matters, except those that belong to the home department ;—for there she is, confessedly and without appeal, the paramount power. It seems to be a dogma with her, that he is the very “first man in Virginia,” an expression that in this region has grown into an emphatic provincialism. Frank, in return, is a devout admirer of

her accomplishments, and although he does not pretend to an ear for music, he is in raptures at her skill on the harpsichord, when she plays at night for the children to dance ; and he sometimes sets her to singing 'The Twins of Latona,' and 'Old Towler,' and 'The Rose Tree in Full Bearing' (she does not study the modern music), for the entertainment of his company. On these occasions he stands by the instrument, and nods his head, as if he comprehended the airs.

She is a fruitful vessel, and seldom fails in her annual tribute to the honours of the family ; and, sooth to say, Frank is reputed to be somewhat restiff under these multiplying blessings. They have two lovely girls, just verging towards womanhood, who attract a supreme regard in the household, and to whom Frank is perfectly devoted. Next to these is a boy,—a shrewd, mischievous imp, that curvetts about the house, 'a chartered libertine.' He is a little wiry fellow near thirteen, that is known altogether by the nick-name of Rip, and has a scape-grace countenance, full of freckles and deviltry : the eyes are somewhat greenish, and the mouth opens alarmingly wide upon a tumultuous array of discoloured teeth. His whole air is that of an untrimmed colt, torn down and disorderly ; and I most usually find him with the bosom of his shirt bagged out, so as to form a great pocket, where he carries apples or green walnuts, and sometimes pebbles, with which he is famous for pelting the fowls.

I must digress, to say a word about Rip's head-

gear. He wears a non-descript skull-cap, which, I conjecture from some equivocal signs, had once been a fur hat, but which must have taken a degree in fifty other callings; for I see it daily employed in the most foreign services. Sometimes it is a drinking-vessel, and then Rip pinches it up like a cocked hat; sometimes it is devoted to push-pin, and then it is cuffed cruelly on both sides; and sometimes it is turned into a basket, to carry eggs from the hen-roosts. It finds hard service at hat-ball, where, like a plastic statesman, it is popular for its pliability. It is tossed in the air on all occasions of rejoicing; and now and then serves for a gauntlet—and is flung with energy upon the ground, on the eve of a battle: And it is kicked occasionally through the school yard, after the fashion of a bladder. It wears a singular exterior, having a row of holes cut below the crown, or rather the apex, (for it is pyramidal in shape,) to make it cool, as Rip explains it, in hot weather. The only rest that it enjoys through the day, as far as I have been able to perceive, is during school hours, and then it is thrust between a desk and a bulk-head, three inches apart, where it generally envelopes in its folds a handful of hickory-nuts or marbles. This covering falls down—for it has no lining—like an extinguisher over Rip's head, which is uncommonly small and round, and garnished with a tangled mop of hair. To prevent the frequent recurrence of this accident, Rip has pursed it up with a hat-band of twine.

From Rip the rest of the progeny descend on the scale, in regular gradations, like the keys of a Pandean pipe, and with the same variety of intonations, until the series is terminated in a chubby, dough-faced infant, not above three months old.

This little infantry is under the care of mistress Barbara Winkle, an antique retainer of the family, who attends them at bed and board,—and every morning takes the whole bevy, one by one, and plunges them into a large tub of cold water; after which, they are laid out on the floor to dry, like young frogs on the margin of a pool; and then she dresses and combs them with a scrupulous rigour, they making, all the while, terribly wry faces. The faithful dame, as she turns them on her knee, sings some approved lullabies in a querulous tone of voice, accompanied by a soothing recitative, which, I have occasionally observed, is apt to be chanted in rather an angry and shrill key.

This mistress Barbara is a functionary of high rank in the family, and of great privileges, from having exercised her office through a preceding generation at Swallow Barn. She is particularly important when there are any festive preparations on foot; and there is then evidently an enhancement of her official gravity. She glides up and down stairs with surprising alacrity, amidst an exceeding din of keys; and may be found one moment whipping-cream, and another, whipping some unlucky scullion boy; clattering eggs in a bowl, scolding servants, and scream-

ing at Rip, who is perpetually in her way, amongst the sweetmeats: All of which matters, though enacted with a vinegar aspect, it is easy to see are very agreeable to her self-love.

She is truly what may be termed a bustling old lady, and has a most despotic rule over all the subordinates of the family. There is no reverence like that of children for potentates of this description. Her very glance has in it something disconcerting to the young fry; and they will twist their dumpling faces into every conceivable expression of grief, before they will dare to squall out in her presence. Even Rip is afraid of her. "When the old woman's mad, she is a horse to whip!" he told Ned and myself one morning, upon our questioning him as to the particulars of an uproar in which he had been the principal actor. These exercises on the part of the old lady are neither rare nor unwholesome, and are winked at by the higher authorities.

Mrs. Winkle's complexion is the true parchment, and her voice is somewhat cracked. She takes Scotch snuff from a silver box, and wears a pair of horn spectacles, which give effect to the peculiar peakedness of her nose. On days of state she appears in all the rich coxcombrity of the olden time; her gown being of an obsolete fashion, sprinkled with roses and sun-flowers, and her lizard arms encased in tight sleeves as far as the elbow, where they are met by silken gloves without fingers. A starched tucker is pin-

ned, with a pedantic precision, across her breast ; and a prim cap of muslin, puckered into a point with a grotesque conceit, adorns her head.—Take her altogether, she looks very stately and bitter. Then, when she walks, it is inconceivable how aristocratically she rustles,—especially on a Sunday.

CHAPTER IV.

FAMILY PARAGONS.

MY picture of the family would be incomplete if I did not give a conspicuous place to my two young cousins Lucy and Victorine. It is true, they are cousins only in the second remove, but I have become sufficiently naturalized to this soil to perceive the full value of the relation; and as they acknowledge it very affectionately to me—for I was promoted to “cousin Mark” almost in the first hour after my arrival,—I should be unreasonably reluctant not to assert the full right of blood. Lucy tells me she is *only* fifteen, and is careful to add that she is one year and one month older than Vic, “for all that Vic is taller than she.” Now Lucy is a little fairy in shape, with blue eyes and light hair, and partially freckled and sunburnt,—being a very pretty likeness of Rip, who I have said is an imp of homeliness,—a fact which all experience shows is quite consistent with the highest beauty. Victorine is almost a head taller, and possesses a stronger frame. She differs, too, from her sister by her jet black eyes and dark hair;—though they resemble each other in the wholesome tan which exposure to the atmosphere has spread alike over the cheeks of both.

These two girls have been educated at home, and have grown up together with an almost inseparable instinct. Their parents, according to the common notions of such indulgences, have done every thing to spoil them, but, as yet, completely without effect. I cannot, however, help thinking, that it is a popular error to believe that freedom is not fully compatible with the finest nurture of the affections. A kindly nature will most generally expand in the direction of the charities, and its currents will flow in a channel of virtue unless solicited out of their track by evil enticements. Though the vigilance which is necessary to separate the young mind from what is likely to deceive it, does necessarily contract the theatre upon which the propensities of the pupil are allowed to range, it is not in any degree restrictive of her freedom whilst she is ignorant that there is any thing forbidden. The opportunity which is afforded by a country life of maintaining this unconscious restraint, constitutes its principal preference over the city, in the education of a young female. There is nothing more lovely to my imagination than the picture of an artless girl, tranquilly gliding onwards to womanhood in the seclusion of the parent bower; invigorated in the affections by the ceaseless caresses of her nearest kindred, and her taste receiving its daily hue from the fresh and exquisite colours of nature, as she seesthem in the grove and fountain and varying skies, remote from the tawdry artifices of a compact and crowded society: Her first lessons of love imbued from the lips of a mother; her only lore taught her

at that fire-side which has been from infancy her citadel of happiness; her emotions allowed to pursue their unchecked wanderings through all *her* world, bounded, as she believes it to be, by the objects with which she has always been familiar; and her rambles limited to "her ancient neighbourhood," like the flights of a dove in its native valley.

Lucy and Victorine present a beautiful archetype of this picture. Meriwether has the tenderest fondness for them; and my cousin Lucretia has cherished in them that kind of intimacy with their parents that has more of the intercourse of equals than the subordination of children. Towards each other these two girls manifest a gentleness that is the perfection of harmony;

— Where e'er they went, like Juno's swans,
Still they went coupled and inseparable.

Their tempers, nevertheless, are somewhat in contrast. Lucy is rather meditative for her age,—calm and almost matronly. Thought seems to repose like sleep upon her countenance, except when it is warmed by the lively play of feelings that flicker across it, like breezes upon the surface of a lake. She is attached to books, and, following the instinct of her peculiar temperament, her mind has early wandered through the mysterious marvels of fiction, which have impressed a certain trace of superstition upon her infant character. Victorine is more intrepid than her elder sister, and attracts a universal regard, by that buoyant jollity of disposition which, in a young girl, is the index both of innocence and af-

fection. They both, however, pursue the same studies;—and I often see them sitting together at their common tasks, poring upon the same book, with their arms around each other's waists. Almost every evening—and often without any any others of the family—they walk out for exercise along the by-paths upon the river bank. In these excursions they are attended by two large white pointers, that gambol around them in all manner of fantastic play, soliciting the applause of their pretty mistresses by the gallant assiduities that belong to the race of these noble animals.

Meriwether is accustomed to have the girls read to him some portion of every day, and by this requisition, which he puts upon the ground of a personal favour, has beguiled them into graver studies than are generally appropriated to the sex. It is delightful to observe what an unwearying devotion they bestow upon a labour which they think gives pleasure to the father. He, of course, looks upon them as the most gifted creatures in existence; and, truly, I am almost a convert to his opinion!

A window in the upper story of one of the wings of the building, overlooks a flower garden; and around this window grows a profusion of creeping vine, which is trained to diffuse itself with an architectural precision along the wall towards the roof; and it is evident that the disciplined plant dares not throw out a leaf or a tendril awry. It is a prim, pendent, virgin plant, with icy leaves of perdurable green without a flower to give variety to its trimmed

complexion, except where here and there the parasite rose has surreptitiously stolen in amongst its plexures, and peeps forth from beneath its sober tapestry. In this window, about noon-tide, may be daily seen, just visible from within the chamber, the profuse tresses of a head of sandy hair, scrupulously adjusted in glossy volume; and ever and anon, as it moves to some slow impulse, is disclosed a studious brow of fairest white. And sometimes, more fully revealed, may be seen the entire head of a 'lady bright,' as she seems intent upon a book. The lady Prudence sits in her bower, and thoughtfully pursues some theme of romance in the delicious realm of poesy,—or, with pencil and brush, shapes and gilds the gaudy wings of her painted butterflies, or, peradventure, enricheth her album with dainty sonnets. And sometimes, in listless musing, she rests her chin upon her gem-bedizened hand, and fixes her soft blue eye upon the flower beds, where the humming bird is poised before the honeysuckle, or the finical wren prates lovingly to his dame. But, howsoever engaged, it is a dedicated hour, and 'the ladie' is in her secret bower. I have said profanely, once before, that 'a tall spinster' sat at the family board—and now, here she sits in her morning guise, silent and alone, pondering over uncreated things, and turning up her imaginative eye to the cerulean deeps.

Prudence is the only sister of Frank Meriwether, and, like most only sisters, holds a sort of consecrated

place amongst the household idols. But time, which notches his eras upon mortal forms, with as little mercy as if they were mere sticks, has calendared the stages of his journey in some delicate touches, even upon this goodly page, and has published the fact, that Prudence Meriwether has now arrived at that isthmus of life, in which her pretensions to count with old or young are equally doubtful. It is settled, however, she has reached all the discretion she will ever possess. What boots it that she is arrayed in an urgent vivacity of manner, and an air of thoughtless joy? Is it not manifestly overdone? and are there not, as plain as the veteran of the scythe could draw them, certain sober lines, creeping from the mouth cheek-ward, that betoken sedate rumination? and will not every astute, good-humoured bachelor see that she has come to that mellow time, when a woman is especially captivating to him, because she is more complaisant, and bears her virtues more meekly? For myself, I speak experimentally in behalf of the brotherhood, and declare it is even so.

The lady in question has undoubtedly thought very gravely over the important concerns that belong to her estate, and is fast coming to the conclusion, that her destiny hereafter is likely to be exercised in the cares of a single and unlorded dowry. She has given several indications of this. I find that of late she talks peremptorily of her decided preference for the maiden state, and has taken up some newfangled notions of the unworthiness of the male sex. She

hints, now and then, at some cast-off flirtations of hers, in which she had the credit, a few years ago, of disconcerting some spruce gallants of the country. But all this I consider a mere feint, like that of a politic commander, who, having made a disastrous campaign, puts his reputation in repair by the fame of his early conquests.

There are other fearful prognostics of this temper dawning upon her manners. She has grown inveterately charitable, and addicts herself to matters that, but a short time ago, were clean out of sight. Her views have gradually become more comprehensive; and her pursuits have something of the diffusiveness of a public functionary. For example, she is known to be the principal founder of three Sunday Schools in the neighbourhood; is supposed to have pensioned out several poor families; besides being a stirring advocate of the scheme for colonizing the negroes, and a patroness of sundry Tract Societies;—to say nothing of even a supererogatory zeal for the suppression of intemperance in the lower sections of Virginia. These acts cause her to be regarded as a very model of piety; and I have heard it whispered, that the flattery she has received from divers young ministers on this score, has actually set her to writing a book in imitation of mistress Hannah More,—which, however, I set down for pure scandal.

One thing is certain,—Prudence is more romantic than she used to be;—for about sun-set, she often wanders forth alone, to a sequestered part of the

grove, and stalks with a stately and philosophic pace amongst the old oaks, unbonneted, in a rapturous contemplation of the radiant tints of evening; and then, in her boudoir may be found exquisite sketches from her pencil, of forms of love and beauty—gallant knights, and old castles, and pensive ladies,—maddonnas and cloistered nuns,—the teeming offspring of an imagination heated with romance and devotion. Her attire is sometimes plain, and even negligent, to a studied degree;—but this does not last long; for Prudence, in spite of her discipline, does not under-rate her personal advantages, and it is not unusual for her to break out almost into a riotous vivacity, especially when she is brought into communion with a flaunting, mad-cap belle, that is carrying all before her:—She then, like ‘a pelting river,’ overbears ‘her continents,’ and, in the matter of dress and manners, becomes almost as flaunting a mad-cap as the other.

Her person is very good, although I think it unnecessarily erect; and a hypercritical observer might say her air was rather formal; but that would depend very much upon the time when he saw her;—for if it should happen to be just before dinner, in the drawing-room, he would be ready to acknowledge that she only wanted a pastoral crook, to make an Arcadian of her.

If Prudence has a fault, it is in setting down the domestic virtues at too high a value;—by which virtues I mean those undisturbed humours that quiet

life inspires, and which are mistaken for personal properties,—the sleep of the passions, and not the subjugation of them, which the good people of the country are fond of praising, as much as if it were a matter they could help. This point of character is manifested by our lady in a habitual exaggeration of the benefits of solitude and self constraint, and has rendered her, to an undue degree, merciless towards the pretensions of those whose misfortune it is to live in a busier sphere than herself. To my mind, she is too rigid in her requisitions upon society. This, however, is a very slight blemish, and amply compensated by the many pleasant variations in her composition. She talks with great ease upon every subject; and is even, now and then, a little too high-flown in her diction. Her manner, at times, might be called oratorical, more particularly when she bewails the departure of the golden age, or declaims upon the prospect of its revival amongst the rejuvenescent glories of the Old Dominion. She has awful ideas of personal decorum and the splendour of her lineage, but these are almost the only points upon which I know her to be touchy. Apart from such defects, which appear upon her character like fleecy clouds upon a summer sky, or mites upon a snow-drift, she is a captivating specimen of a ripened lady just standing on that sunshiny verge from which the prospect below presents a sedate, autumnal landscape, gently subsiding into a distant, undistinguishable and misty confusion of tree and field, arrayed in sober brown. It is no wonder, therefore, that with

her varied perfections and the advantages of her position, the world—by which I mean that scattered population which inhabits the banks of the James River, extending inland some ten miles on either side—should, by degrees, and almost insensibly, have propagated the opinion that Prudence Meriwether is a prodigy.

CHAPTER V.**NED HAZARD.**

NED HAZARD has of late become my inseparable companion. He has a fine, flowing stream of good spirits, which is sometimes interrupted by a slight under-current of sadness; it is even a ludicrous pensiveness, that derives its comic quality from Ned's constitutional merriment.

He is now about thirty-three, with a tolerably good person, a little under six feet, and may be seen generally after breakfast, whilst old Carey is getting our horses for a morning ride, in an olive frock, black stock and yellow waistcoat, with a German forage-cap of light cloth, having a frontlet of polished leather, rather conceitedly drawn over his dark, laughing eye. This head-gear gives a picturesque effect to his person, and suits well with his weather-beaten cheek, as it communicates a certain reckless expression that agrees with his character. The same trait is heightened by the half swagger with which he strikes his boot with his riding-whip, or keeps at bay a beautiful spaniel, called Wilful, that haunts his person like a familiar. Indeed, I have grown to possess something of this canine attachment to him myself, and already constitute a very important mem-

ber of his suite. It is a picture worth contemplating, to see us during one of these listless intervals. For, first, there is Ned lounging along the court-yard with both hands in his side pockets, and either telling me some story, or vexing a great turkey-cock, by imitating both his gobble and his strut;—before him walks Wilful, strictly regulating his pace by his master's, and turning his eye, every now and then, most affectionately towards him; then Meriwether's two pointers may be seen bounding in circles round him;—a little terrier, that assumes the consequence of a watch dog, is sure to solicit Ned's notice by jumping at his hand; and, last in the train, is myself, who have learned to saunter in Ned's track with the fidelity of a shadow. It may be conjectured from this picture that Ned possesses fascinations for man and beast.

He is known universally by the name of Ned Hazard, which, of itself, I take to be a good sign. This nicknaming has a flavour of favouritism, and betokens an amiable notoriety. There is something jocular in Ned's face, that I believe is the source of his popularity with all classes; but this general good acceptance is preserved by the variety of his acquirements. He can accommodate himself to all kinds of society. He has slang for the stable boys, musty proverbs for the old folks, and a most oratorical overflow of patriotism for the politicians. To the children of Swallow Barn he is especially captivating. He tells them stories with the embellishment of a deep tone of voice that makes them quake

in their shoes; and with the assistance of a cane and cloak, surmounted by a hat, he will stalk amongst them, like a grizzly giant, so hideously erect, that the door is a mere pigeon-hole to him;—at which the young cowards laugh so fearfully, that I have often thought they were crying. On such occasions I have seen them nestle up together in one corner, looking like a group of white and black cherubim, and evidently regarding Ned as the most astonishing personage in the whole country side.

A few years ago he was seized with a romantic fever that principally manifested itself in a conceit to visit South America, and play knight errant in the quarrel of the Patriots. It was the most sudden and unaccountable thing in the world; for no one could trace the infection to any probable cause;—still, it grew upon Ned's fancy, and appeared in so many brilliant phases, that there was no getting it out of his brain. As may be imagined, this matter produced a serious disquiet in the family, so that Frank Meriwether was obliged to take the subject in hand; and, finding all his premonitions and exhortations unavailing, was forced to give way to the current of Ned's humour, hoping that experience would purge the sight that had been dimmed by the light of a too vivid imagination. It was therefore arranged that Ned should visit this theatre of glory, and stand by the award of his own judgment upon the view. He accordingly sailed from New York in the Paragon, bound for Lima, with liberty to touch and trade along the coast, and, in due time, doubled Cape Horn.

So, after looking at the Patriots in all their positions, attitudes and relations,—with an eye military and civil,—and being well bitten with fleas, and apprehended as a spy, and nearly assassinated as a heretic, he carefully looked back upon the whole train of this fancy, even from its first engendering, with all the motives, false conclusions, misrepresentations, and so forth, which had a hand in the adopting and pursuing of it, and then came to a sober conclusion that he was the most egregious fool that ever set out in quest of a wild goose. “What the devil could have put such a thing into my head, and kept me at it for a whole year, it puzzles me to tell!” was his own comment upon this freak, when I questioned him about it. However, he came home the most disquixotted cavalier that ever hung up his shield at the end of a scurvy crusade; and to make amends for the inconvenience and alarm he had occasioned,—for my cousin Lucretia expected to hear of his being strangled, like Laocoon, in the folds of a serpent,—he brought with him an amusing journal, which is now bound in calf, and holds a conspicuous place in the library at Swallow Barn. This trip into the other hemisphere has furnished him with an assortment of wonders, both of the sea and the land, that are the theme of divers long stories, which Ned tells like a traveller. He is accused of repeating them to the same auditors, and Frank Meriwether has a provoking way of raising his hands, and turning his eyes towards the ceiling, and saying in an under-tone, just as Ned is setting out :

"A traveller there was who told a good tale;
By my troth! it was true, but then it was stale."——

This invariably flushes Ned's face; and with a modest expostulation, in a voice of great kindness, he will say, "My dear sir, I assure you I never told you this before—you are thinking of a different thing." "Then, Uncle Ned"—as Rip said, on one of these occasions, while he was lying on the floor and kicking up his heels—"you are going to make as you go."—These things are apt to disconcert him, and occasion a little out-break of a momentary peevish, but irresistibly comic thoughtfulness, that I have said before formed a constituent of his temper. It is, however, but for a moment, and he takes the joke like a hero. It is now customary in the family, when any thing of a marvellous nature is mentioned, to say that it happened round the Horn. Ned is evidently shy of these assaults, and is rather cautious how he names the Horn if Meriwether be in company.

I have gleaned some particulars of Hazard's education, which, as they serve to illustrate his character, I think worth relating.

When he was ten or eleven years old, he was put under the government of a respectable teacher, who kept an academy on the border of the mountain country, where he spent several years of his life. In this rustic gymnasium, under the supervision of Mr. Crab, who was the principal of the establishment, Ned soon became conspicuous for his hardiness and address in the wayward adventures and miniature wars that diversified the history of this little commu-

nity. He was always an apt scholar, though not the most assiduous; but his frank and upright qualities rendered him equally a favourite with the master and the pupils. He speaks of the attachments of this period of his life with the unction of unabated fondness. In one of our late rambles, Ned gave me the following sketch of the circumstances under which he quitted these scenes of his youth. His father was about removing him to college, and the separation was to be final. I have endeavoured to preserve his own narrative, because I think it more graphic than mine would be; and at the same time it will show the gentle strain of affection that belongs to his nature.

“The condition of a schoolboy,” said Ned, “forces upon the mind the import of a state of probation, more soberly than any other position in life. All that the scripture tells us about the transitoriness of human affairs,—of man being a traveller, and life a shadow,—is constitutionally part and parcel of the meditations of the schoolboy. He lives amidst discomforts; his room is small and ill-furnished; his clothes are hung upon a peg, or stowed away in a chest, where every thing that should be at the top, is sure to lodge at the bottom; his coat carries its rent from term to term, and his stockings are returned to him undarned from the washer-woman; his food is rough and unsavoury; he shivers in a winter morning over a scant and smoky fire; he sleeps in summer in the hottest room of the house:—All this he submits to with patience, because he feels that he

is but for a season, and that a reversion of better things awaits him.

“ My preceptor Mr. Crab was, outwardly, an austere man ; but his was the austerity which the best natures are apt to contract from long association with pupils. His intercourse with the boys was one of command, and he had but few opportunities of mingling in the society of his equals. This gave a rather severe reserve to his manners ; but, at bottom, he had kindly feelings, which awkwardly manifested themselves in frequent favours, conferred without any visible signs of courtesy. His wife was a fat, short-winded old lady, with a large round face, embellished above with a huge ruffled cap, and below, with a huge double chin. This good lady was rather too fat to move about, so she maintained a sovereign station in an ample arm-chair, placed near the door that led to the kitchen, where she was usually occupied in paring apples to be baked up into tough jacks for our provender, and issuing commands for the regulation of her domestic police, in shrill, stirring and authoritative tones. They had a reasonable number of young scions growing around them, who, however, were so mingled in the mass of the school as nearly to have lost all the discriminating instincts that might indicate their origin.

“ We were too troublesome a company to enlist much of the domestic charities from our tutor ; still, however, in the few gleams of family endearment which fell to our lot, I had contracted a kind of household attachment to the objects that surround-

ed me. Our old master had the grave and solemn bearing of a philosopher ; but sometimes, of winter nights, when our tasks were done, he joined in our sports,—even got down on the carpet to play marbles with us, and took quite an eager interest in hearing our humming tops when we stealthily set them to bellowing in the room. These condescensions had a wonderful effect upon us all, for, being rare, they took us somewhat by surprise, and gave us something of the same kind of pleasure which a child experiences in patting a gentle and manageable lion.

“ I had always looked forward, with a boyish love of change, to the period when I was to be called to other scenes. And this expectation, whilst it rendered me indifferent to personal comforts, seemed also to warm my feelings towards my associates. I could pardon many trespasses in those from whom I was soon to be separated. My time, therefore, passed along in a careless merriment, in which all trivial ills were overborne and indemnified in the anticipations of the future.

“ The summons to quit this little sylvan theatre was contained in a letter that was brought from my father by Daniel the coachman. It directed me to return without delay, and intimated, amidst a world of parental advice, that I was to be removed almost immediately to college. Notwithstanding the many secret yearnings I had felt for the approach of this period, I confess it overmastered me when it came. Daniel had brought me my pony,—a little, short-necked, piggish animal, that in the holidays I used to

ride almost to bed—and he himself was ready to attend me on one of the coach horses. I had no time to revolve the matter,—so with a spirit part gay and part melancholy, and with an alacrity of step that I assumed to conceal my emotions and to avoid the interchange with my school-fellows of words that I was too much choked to utter, I went about my preparations. I collected my straggling wardrobe from the detached service of my comrades, to whom, scant as it was, I had lent it piece-meal; carefully paid off sundry small debts of honour, contracted at the forbidden game of all fours; and distributed largesses, with a prodigal hand, amongst the negroes, with whom I had, for a long time, carried on an active commerce in partridge-traps, fishing tackle, and other commodities. I can remember now with what feelings I performed this last office, as I stood at the barn door, where the farm servants were threshing grain, and protracted, as long as I was able, that mournful shaking of hands with which the rogues gave me their parting benedictions;—for I always had a vagabond fondness for the blacks about the establishment. After this I went into the parlour, where our tender and plethoric mistress was employed in one of her customary morning duties of cleaning up the breakfast apparatus, and received a kiss from her, as she held a napkin in one hand, and a tea-cup in the other. I bestowed the same token of grace upon all the little Crabs that were crawling about the room, and, in the same place, took my leave of the old monarch himself, who, relaxing into a grim manifestation of

unfeigned sorrow, took me with both hands, and conducting me to the window, placed himself in a seat, where he gave me a grave and friendly admonition,—saying many kind things to me, in a kinder tone than I had ever heard from him before. Amongst the rest, he bade me reflect, that the world was wide, and had many fountains of bitter waters, whereof—as I was an easy, good-natured fellow—it was likely to be my lot to drink more largely than others;—he begged me to remember the many wholesome lessons he had given me, and to forget whatever might seem to me harsh in his own conduct. Then, in the old-fashioned way, he put his hands upon my head, and bestowed upon me an earnest and devout blessing, whilst the tears started in both of our eyes. This last act he concluded by taking from his pocket a small copy of the Bible, which he put into my hands with a solemn exhortation that I should consult it in all my troubles, for every one of which, he told me, I should find appropriate consolation. I promised, as well as my smothered articulation permitted, to obey his instructions to the letter; and, from the feelings of that moment, deemed it impossible I ever could have forgotten or neglected them. I fear that I have not thought of them as much since, as they deserve. The little Bible I still keep as an affectionate remembrance of a very good, though somewhat unpolished, old man.

“My cronies, all this time, had been following me from place to place,—watching me as I packed up every article of my baggage, and asking me hundreds

of unmeaning questions, out of the very fulness of their hearts. Their time came next. We had a general embrace; and after shaking hands with every urchin of the school-room and every imp of the kitchen, I mounted my plump nag, and on one of those rich mornings of the Indian summer, when the sun struggles through a soft mist, and sparkles on the hoar frost, I broke ground on my homeward voyage. Daniel, with my black leather trunk resting on his pommel—to be carried to the tavern where the mail stage was to receive it—led the way through the lane that conducted us beyond the precincts of this abode of learning and frolick, and I followed, looking back faint-heartedly upon the affectionate and envious rank and file of the school-room, who were collected in one silent and wistful group at the door, with their hard-visaged commander towering above their heads, and shading his brow from the sun with his hand, as he watched our slow progress. Every other face, white or black, upon the premises, was peering above the paling that enclosed the yard, or gleaming through the windows of the kitchen. Not a dry eye was there amongst us; and I could hear my old master say to the boys, “there goes an honest chap, full of gallantry and good will.” In truth, this parting touched me to the heart, and I could not help giving way to my feelings, and sobbing aloud; until at last, reaching a turn in the road that concealed us from the house, the sound of a distant cheering from the crowd we had left, arose upon the air, and

wasted to me the good wishes of some of the best friends I have ever parted from."

After the period referred to in this narrative, Ned was sent to Princeton. That college was then in the height of its popularity, and was the great resort of the southern students. Here he ran the usual wild and unprofitable career of college life. His father was lavish, and Ned was companionable,—two relative virtues that, in such circumstances, are apt to produce a luxuriant fruit. He was famous in the classical coteries at Mother Priestly's, where they ate buckwheat cakes, and discussed the state of parties, and where, having more blood than argument, they made furious bets on controverted questions, and drank juleps to keep up the opposition.

Amidst the distractions of that period there was one concern in which Ned became distinguished. They were never without a supply of goddesses in the village, to whom the students devoted themselves in the spirit of chivalry. They fell into despair by classes; and as it was impracticable to allot the divinities singly, these were allowed each some six or seven worshippers from the college ranks, who revolved around them, like a system of roystering planets, bullying each other out of their orbits, and cutting all manner of capers in their pale light. But love, in those days, was not that tame, docile, obedient minion that it is now. It was a matter of bluster and bravado, to swear round oaths for, and to be pledged in cups at Gifford's. They danced with the beauties at all

the merry-makings, and, in fact, metamorphosed Cupid into a bluff Hector, and dragged him by the heels around every tavern of the village.

As the mistresses were appurtenant to the class, they were changed at the terms, and given over to the successors; whereby it generally fell out, that what advantage the damsels gained in the number of their admirers, was more than balanced by the disadvantage of age. But a collegian's arithmetic makes no difference between seventeen and thirty. Nay, indeed, some of the most desperate love affairs happened between the sophomores and one or two perdurable belles, who had been besonneted through the college for ten years before.

It was Ned's fortune to drop into one of these pitfalls, and he was only saved from an actual elopement by a rare accident which seemed to have been sent on purpose by his good genius; for, on the very evening when this catastrophe was to have been brought about, he fell into a revel, and then into a row, and then into a deep sleep, from which he awoke the next morning, shockingly mortified to find that he had not only forgotten his appointment, but also his character as a man of sober deportment. The lady's pride took alarm at the occurrence, and Ned very solemnly took to mathematics.

Now and then, the affairs of this bustling little community were embellished with a single combat, which was always regarded as a highly interesting incident; and the abstruse questions of the duello were canvassed in councils held at midnight, in

which, I learn, the chivalrous lore displayed by Ned Hazard was a matter of college renown.

Engrossed thus, like the states of the dark ages, in the cares of love, war and politics, it is not to be wondered at, that the arts and sciences should have fallen into some disesteem. This period of Ned's life, indeed, resembled those feudal times, when barons fought for lady love,—swaggered, and swore by their saints,—and frightened learning into the nests of the monks. Still, however, there was a generous love of fame lurking in his constitution, which, notwithstanding all the enticements that waylaid his success, showed itself in occasional fits of close and useful study.

It pains me to say, that Hazard's days of academic glory were untimely cropped; but my veracity as a chronicler compels me to avow, even to the disparagement of my friend, that before his course had run to its destined end, he made shipwreck of his fortunes, and received from the faculty a passport that warranted an unquestioned egress from Nassau Hall;—the same being conferred in consideration of counsel afforded, as a friend true and trusty, to a worthy cavalier, who had answered the defiance of a gentleman of honour, to “a joust at utterance.”

Thus shorn of his college laurels, Ned crept quietly back to Swallow Barn, where his inglorious return astounded the soothsayers of the neighbourhood. For awhile he took to study like a Pundit,—though I have heard that it did not last long,—and in the lonely pursuits of this period he engendered that se-

cret love of adventure and picturesque incident, that took him upon his celebrated expedition round the Horn. But it in no degree conquered his mirthful temper. His mind is still a fairy land, inhabited by pleasant and conceited images, winged charmers, laughing phantoms, and mellow spectres of frolick.

He is regarded in the family as the next heir to Swallow Barn; but the marriage of his sister, and, soon afterwards, the demise of his father, disclosed the encumbered condition of the freehold, to which he had before been a stranger. He has still, however, a comfortable patrimony; and Frank Meriwether having by arrangement taken possession of the inheritance, together with the family, Ned has ample liberty to pursue his own whims in regard to his future occupation in life. Frank holds the estate, for the present, under an honourable pledge to relieve it of its burdens by a gradual course of thrifty husbandry, which he seems to be in a fair way of accomplishing; so that Ned may be said still to have a profitable reversion in the domain. But he has grown, in some degree, necessary to Meriwether, and has therefore, of late, fixed his residence almost entirely at Swallow Barn.

CHAPTER VI.

PURSUITS OF A PHILOSOPHER.

FROM the house at Swallow Barn, there is to be seen, at no great distance, a clump of trees, and in the midst of these an humble building is discernible, that seems to court the shade in which it is modestly embowered. It is an old structure built of logs. Its figure is a cube, with a roof rising from all sides to a point, and surmounted by a wooden weathercock which somewhat resembles a fish, and somewhat a fowl.

This little edifice is a rustic shrine devoted to Cadmus, and here the sacred rites of the alphabet are daily solemnized by some dozen knotty-pated and freckled votaries not above three feet high, both in trowsers and petticoats. This is one of the many temples that stud the surface of our republican empire, where liberty receives her purest worship, and where, though in humble and lowly guise, she secretly breathes her strength into the heart and sinews of the nation. Here the germ is planted that fructifies through generations, and produces its hundredfold. At this altar the spark is kindled that propagates its fire from breast to breast, like the vast conflagrations that light up and purify the prairie of the west.

The school-house has been an appendage to Swallow Barn ever since the infancy of the last generation. Frank Meriwether has, in his time, extended its usefulness by opening it to the accommodation of his neighbours ; so that it is now a theatre whereon a bevy of pigmy players are wont to enact the serio-comic interludes that belong to the first process of indoctrination. A troop of these little sprites are seen, every morning, wending their way across the fields, armed with tin kettles, in which are deposited their leather-coated apple-pies or other store for the day, and which same kettles are generally used, at the decline of the day, as drums or cymbals, to signalize their homeward march, or as receptacles of the spoil pilfered from black-berry bushes, against which these bare-footed Scythians are prone to carry on a predatory war.

Throughout the day a continual buzz is heard from this quarter, even to the porch of the mansion-house. Hazard and myself occasionally make them a visit, and it is amusing to observe how, as we approach, the murmur becomes more distinct, until, reaching the door, we find the whole swarm running over their long, tough syllables, in a high concert pitch, with their elbows upon the desks, their hands covering their ears, and their naked heels beating time against the benches—as if every urchin believed that a polysyllable was a piece of music invented to torment all ears but his own. And, high above this din, the master's note is sounded in a lordly key, like the occasional touch of the horn in an orchestra.

This little empire is under the dominion of parson Chub. He is a plump, rosy old gentleman, rather short and thick set, with the blood-vessels meandering over his face like rivulets,—a pair of prominent blue eyes, and a head of silky hair, not unlike the covering of a white spaniel. He may be said to be a man of jolly dimensions, with an evident taste for good living; somewhat sloven in his attire, for his coat,—which is not of the newest,—is decorated with sundry spots that are scattered over it in constellations. Besides this, he wears an immense cravat, which, as it is wreathed around his short neck, forms a bowl beneath his chin, and,—as Ned says,—gives the parson's head the appearance of that of John the Baptist upon a charger, as it is sometimes represented in the children's picture books. His beard is grizzled with silver stubble, which the parson reaps about twice a week,—if the weather be fair.

Mr. Chub is a philosopher after the order of Socrates. He was an emigrant from the Emerald Isle, where he suffered much tribulation in the disturbances, as they are mildly called, of his much-enduring country. But the old gentleman has weathered the storm without losing a jot of that broad, healthy benevolence with which nature has enveloped his heart, and whose ensign she has hoisted in his face. The early part of his life had been easy and prosperous, until the rebellion of 1798 stimulated his republicanism into a fever, and drove the full-blooded hero headlong into the quarrel, and put him, in spite

of his peaceful profession, to standing by his pike in behalf of his principles. By this unhappy boiling over of the caldron of his valour he fell under the ban of the ministers, and tasted his share of government inercy. His house was burnt over his head, his horses and hounds (for, by all accounts, he was a perfect Acteon) were "confiscate to the state," and he was forced to fly. This brought him to America in no very compromising mood with royalty.

Here his fortunes appear to have been various, and he was tossed to and fro by the battledoor of fate, until he found a snug harbour at Swallow Barn; where, some years ago, he sat down in that quiet repose which a worried and badgered patriot is best fitted to enjoy.

He is a good scholar, and having confined his reading entirely to the learning of the ancients, his republicanism is somewhat after the Grecian mould. He has never read any politics of later date than the time of the Emperor Constantine,—not even a newspaper;—so that he may be said to have been contemporary with *Æschines* rather than Lord Castlereagh, until that eventful epoch of his life when his blazing roof-tree awakened him from his anachronistical dream. This notable interruption, however, gave him but a feeble insight into the moderns, and he soon relapsed to *Thucydides* and *Livy*, with some such glimmerings of the American Revolution upon his remembrance as most readers have of the exploits of the first Brutus.

The old gentleman has a learned passion for

folios. He had been a long time urging Meriwether to make some additions to his collections of literature, and descanted upon the value of some of the ancient authors as foundations, both moral and physical, to the library. Frank gave way to the argument, partly to gratify the parson, and partly from the proposition itself having a smack that touched his fancy. The matter was therefore committed entirely to Mr. Chub, who forthwith set out on a voyage of exploration to the north. I believe he got as far as Boston. He certainly contrived to execute his commission with a curious felicity. Some famous Elzivirs were picked up, and many other antiques that nobody but Mr. Chub would ever think of opening.

The cargo arrived at Swallow Barn in the dead of winter. During the interval between the parson's return from his expedition and the coming of the books, the reverend little schoolmaster was in a remarkably unquiet state of body, which almost prevented him from sleeping: and it is said that the sight of the long expected treasures had the happiest effect upon him. There was ample accommodation for this new acquisition of ancient wisdom provided before its arrival, and Mr. Chub now spent a whole week in arranging the volumes on their proper shelves, having, as report affirms, altered the arrangement at least seven times during that period. Every body wondered what the old gentleman was at all this time; but it was discovered afterwards, that he was endeavouring to effect a distribution of the works ac-

ording to a minute division of human science, which entirely failed, owing to the unlucky accident of several of his departments being without any volumes.

After this matter was settled, he regularly spent his evenings in the library. Frank Meriwether was hardly behind the parson in this fancy, and took, for a short time, to abstruse reading. They both, consequently, deserted the little family circle every evening after tea, and might have continued to do so all the winter but for a discovery made by Hazard.

Ned had seldom joined the two votaries of science in their philosophical retirement, and it was whispered in the family that the parson was giving Frank a quiet course of lectures in the ancient philosophy, for Meriwether was known to talk a good deal, about that time, of the old and new Academicians. But it happened upon one dreary winter night, during a tremendous snowstorm, which was banging the shutters and doors of the house so as to keep up a continual uproar, that Ned, having waited in the parlour for the philosophers until midnight, set out to invade their retreat,—not doubting that he should find them deep in study. When he entered the library, both candles were burning in their sockets, with long, untrimmed wicks; the fire was reduced to its last embers, and, in an arm-chair on one side of the table, the parson was discovered in a sound sleep over Jeremy Taylor's *Ductor Dubitantium*; whilst Frank, in another chair on the opposite side, was snoring over a folio edition of Montaigne. And upon the table stood a small stone pitcher containing a resi-

dium of whiskey punch, now grown cold. Frank started up in great consternation upon hearing Ned's footstep beside him, and, from that time, almost entirely deserted the library. Mr. Chub, however, was not so easily drawn away from the career of his humour, and still shows his hankering after his leather-coated friends.

It is an amusing point in the old gentleman's character to observe his freedom in contracting engagements that depend upon his purse. He seems to think himself a rich man, and is continually becoming security for some of the neighbours. To hear him talk, it would be supposed that he meant to renovate the affairs of the whole county. As his intentions are so generous, Meriwether does not fail to back him when it comes to a pinch;—by reason of which the good squire has more than once been obliged to pay the penalty.

Mr. Chub's character, as it will be seen from this description of him, possesses great simplicity. This has given rise to some practical jokes against him, which have caused him much annoyance. The tradition in the family goes, that, one evening, the worthy divine, by some strange accident, fell into an excess in his cups; and that a saucy chamber-maid found him dozing in his chair, with his pipe in his mouth, having the bowl turned downward, and the ashes sprinkled over his breast. He was always distinguished by a broad and superfluous ruffle to his shirt, and, on this occasion, the mischievous maid had the effrontery to set it on fire. It produced, as

may be supposed, a great alarm to the parson, and, besides, brought him into some scandal ; for he was roused up in a state of consternation, and began to strip himself of his clothes, not knowing what he was about. I don't know how far he exposed himself, but the negro women, who ran to his relief, made a fine story of it.

Hazard once reminded him of this adventure, in my presence, and it was diverting to see with what a comic and quiet sheepishness he bore the joke. He half closed his eyes and puckered up his mouth as Ned proceeded ; and when the story came to the conclusion, he gave Ned a gentle blow on the breast with the back of his hand, crying out, as he did so, " Hoot toot,—Mister Ned !"—Then he walked to the front door, where he stood whistling.

CHAPTER VII.**TRACES OF THE FEUDAL SYSTEM.**

VIRGINIA has the sentiments and opinions of an independent nation. She enjoyed in the colonial state a high degree of the favour of the mother country; and the blandishments of her climate, together with the report of her fertile soil and her hidden territorial resources, from the first attracted the regard of the British emigrants. Her early population, therefore, consisted of gentlemen of good name and condition, who brought within her confines a solid fund of respectability and wealth. This race of men grew vigorous in her genial atmosphere; her cloudless skies quickened and enlivened their tempers, and, in two centuries, gradually matured the sober and thinking Englishman into that spirited, imaginative being that now inhabits the lowlands of this state. When the Revolution broke out, she was among the first of its champions, ardent in the assertion of the principles upon which it turned, and brave in the support of them. Since that period, her annals have been singularly brilliant with the fame of orators and statesmen. Four Presidents have been given to the Union from her nursery. The first, the

brightest figure of history ; the others also master spirits, worthy to be ranked amongst the greatest of their day. In the light of these men, and of their gallant contemporaries, she has found a glory to stimulate her ambition, and to minister to her pride. It is not wonderful that in these circumstances she should deem herself an ascendant star in the Union. It is a feature in her education and policy to hold all other interests subordinate to her own.

Her wealth is territorial ; her institutions all savour of the soil ; her population consists of landholders, of many descents, unmixed with foreign alloy. She has no large towns where men may meet and devise improvements or changes in the arts of life. She may be called a nation without a capital. From this cause she has been less disturbed by popular commotions, less influenced by popular fervours, than other communities. Her laws and habits, in consequence, have a certain fixedness, which even reject many of the valuable improvements of the day. In policy and government she is, according to the simplest and purest form, a republic : in temper and opinion, in the usages of life, and in the qualities of her moral nature, she is aristocratic.

The gentlemen of Virginia live apart from each other. They are surrounded by their bondsmen and by their dependants ; and the customary intercourse of society familiarizes their minds to the relation of high and low degree. They are scattered about like the chiefs of separate clans, and propagate opinions in seclusion, that have the tincture of baronial in-

dependence. They frequently meet in the interchange of a large and thriftless hospitality, in which the forms of society are foregone for its comforts, and the business of life thrown aside for the enjoyment of its pleasures. Their halls are large, and their boards ample; and surrounding the great family hearth, with its immense burthen of blazing wood casting a broad and merry glare over the congregated household and the numerous retainers, a social winter party in Virginia affords a tolerable picture of feudal munificence.

Frank Meriwether is a good specimen of the class I have described. He professes to value the sober and hearty virtues of the country. He has a natural liking for that plain, unadorned character that grows up at home. He seeks companionship with men of ability, and is a zealous disseminator of the personal fame of individuals who have won any portion of renown in the state. Sometimes, I even think he exaggerates a little, when descanting upon the prodigies of genius that have been reared in the Old Dominion; and he manifestly seems to consider that a young man who has astonished a whole village in Virginia by the splendour of his talents, must, of course, be known throughout the United States;—for he frequently opens his eyes at me with an air of astonishment, when I happen to ask him who is the marvel he is speaking of.

I observe, moreover, that he has a constitutional fondness for paradoxes, and does not scruple to adopt and republish any apothegm that is calculated to

startle one by its novelty. He has a correspondence with several old friends, who were with him at college, and who have now risen into an extensive political notoriety in the state:—these gentlemen furnish him with many new currents of thought, along which Frank glides with a happy velocity. He is essentially meditative in his character, and somewhat given to declamation; and these traits have communicated a certain measured and deliberate gesticulation to his discourse. I have frequently seen him after dinner stride backward and forward across the room, for some moments, wrapped in thought, and then fling himself upon the sofa, and come out with some weighty doubt, expressed with a solemn emphasis. In this form he lately began a conversation, or rather a speech, that for a moment quite disconcerted me. “After all,” said he, as if he had been talking to me before, although these were the first words he uttered—then making a parenthesis, so as to qualify what he was going to say—“I don’t deny that the steamboat is destined to produce valuable results—but after all, I much question—(and here he bit his upper lip, and paused an instant)—if we are not better without it. I declare, I think it strikes deeper at the supremacy of the states than most persons are willing to allow. This annihilation of space, sir, is not to be desired. Our protection against the evils of consolidation consists in the very obstacles to our intercourse. Splatterthwaite Dubbs of Dinwiddie—(or some such name,—Frank is famous for quoting the opinions of his contemporaries.

This Splatterthwaite, I take it, was some old college chum that had got into the legislature, and I dare say made pungent speeches,) Dubbs of Dinwiddie made a good remark—That the home material of Virginia was never so good as when her roads were at their worst." And so Frank went on with quite a harangue, to which none of the company replied one word, for fear we might get into a dispute. Every body seems to understand the advantage of silence when Meriwether is inclined to be expatiatory.

This strain of philosophizing has a pretty marked influence in the neighbourhood, for I perceive that Frank's opinions are very much quoted. There is a set of under-talkers about these large country establishments, who are very glad to pick up the crumbs of wisdom that fall from a rich man's table; second-hand philosophers, who trade upon other people's stock. Some of these have a natural bias to this venting of upper opinions, by reason of certain dependencies in the way of trade and favour: others have it from affinity of blood, which works like a charm over a whole county. Frank stands related, by some tie of marriage or mixture of kin, to an infinite train of connexions, spread over the state; and it is curious to learn what a decided hue this gives to the opinions of the district. We had a notable example of this one morning, not long after my arrival at Swallow Barn. Meriwether had given several indications, immediately after breakfast, of a design to pour out upon us the gathered ruminations of the last twenty-four hours, but we had

evaded the storm with some caution, when the arrival of two or three neighbours,—plain, homespun farmers,—who had ridden to Swallow Barn to execute some papers before Frank as a magistrate, furnished him with an occasion that was not to be lost. After despatching their business, he detained them, ostensibly to inquire about their crops, and other matters of their vocation,—but, in reality, to give them that very flood of politics which we had escaped. We, of course, listened without concern, since we were assured of an auditory that would not flinch. In the course of this disquisition, he made use of a figure of speech that savoured of some previous study, or, at least, was highly in the oratorical vein. “Mark me, gentlemen,” said he, contracting his brow over his fine thoughtful eye, and pointing the forefinger of his left hand directly at the face of the person he addressed, “Mark me, gentlemen,—you and I may not live to see it, but our children will see it, and wail over it—the sovereignty of this Union will be as the rod of Aaron;—it will turn into a serpent, and swallow up all that struggle with it.” Mr. Chub was present at this solemn denunciation, and was very much affected by it. He rubbed his hands with some briskness, and uttered his applause in a short but vehement panegyric, in which were heard only the detached words—“Demosthenes and Philip.”

The next day Ned and myself were walking by the schoolhouse, and were hailed by Rip, from one of the windows, who, in a sly under tone, as he beck-

oned us to come close to him, told us, "if we wanted to hear a regular preach, to stand fast." We could look into the schoolroom unobserved, and there was our patriotic pedagogue haranguing the boys with a violence of action that drove an additional supply of blood into his face. It was apparent that the old gentleman had got much beyond the depth of his hearers, and was pouring out his rhetoric more from oratorical vanity than from any hope of enlightening his audience. At the most animated part of his strain, he brought himself, by a kind of climax, to the identical sentiment uttered by Meriwether the day before. He warned his young hearers—the oldest of them was not above fourteen—"to keep a lynx-eyed gaze upon that serpent-like ambition which would convert the government at Washington into Aaron's rod, to swallow up the independence of their native state."

This conceit immediately ran through all the lower circles at Swallow Barn. Mr. Thong, the overseer, repeated it at the blacksmith's shop, in the presence of the blacksmith and Mr. Absalom Bulrush, a spare, ague-and-feverish husbandman who occupies a muddy slip of marsh land, on one of the river bottoms, which is now under mortgage to Meriwether; and from these it has spread far and wide, though a good deal diluted, until in its circuit it has reached our veteran groom Carey, who considers the sentiment as importing something of an awful nature. With the smallest encouragement, Carey will put on a tragi-comic face, shake his head very slow-

ly, turn up his eye-balls, and open out his broad, scaly hands, while he repeats with laboured voice, "Look out, Master Ned! Aaron's rod a black snake in Old Viriginny!" Upon which, as we fall into a roar of laughter, Carey stares with astonishment at our irreverence. But having been set to acting this scene for us once or twice, he now suspects us of some joke, and asks "if there is'nt a copper for an old negro," which if he succeeds in getting, he runs off, telling us "he is too 'cute to make a fool of himself."

Meriwether does not dislike this trait in the society around him. I happened to hear two carpenters, one day, who were making some repairs at the stable, in high conversation. One of them was expounding to the other some oracular opinion of Frank's touching the political aspect of the country, and just at the moment when the speaker was most animated, Meriwether himself came up. He no sooner became aware of the topic in discussion than he walked off in another direction,—affecting not to hear it, although I knew he heard every word. He told me afterwards that there was "a wholesome tone of feeling amongst the people in that part of the country."

CHAPTER VIII.

THE BRAKES.

ABOUT four miles below Swallow Barn, on the same bank of the river, is a tract of land known by the name of The Brakes. The principal feature in this region is an extensive range of lowlands, reaching back from the river, and bounded by distant forest, from the heart of which tower, above the mass of foliage, a number of naked branches of decayed trees, that are distinctly visible in this remote perspective. These lowlands are checkered by numberless gullies or minute water-courses, whose direction is marked out to the eye by thickets of briars and brambles. From this characteristic the estate has derived its name.

A high hill swells upwards from this level ground in a regular cone, on the top of which stands a large plain building, with wings built in exact uniformity, and connected with the centre by low but lengthened covered ways. The whole structure is of dark brick, with little architectural embellishment. It was obviously erected when the ornamental arts were not much attended to, although there is an evident aim at something of this kind in the fancy of the chimneys which spring up from the sharp gable

ends of the building, and also in the conceited pyramids into which the roofs of the low square wings have been reared. The artist, however, has certainly failed in producing effect, if his ambition soared above the idea of a sober, capacious and gentleman-like mansion.

Seen from the river, the buildings stand partly in the shade of a range of immense lombardy poplars, which retreat down the hill in the opposite direction until the line diminishes from the view. Negro huts are scattered about over the landscape in that profusion which belongs to a Virginia plantation.

This establishment constitutes the family residence of the proprietor of the estate, Mr. Isaac Tracy, known generally with his territorial addition,—of *The Brakes*.

Mr. Tracy is now upwards of seventy years of age. He has been for many years past a widower, and seems to stand like an old landmark in the stream of time, which is destined to have every thing gliding past it, itself unchanged. The old gentleman was a stark royalist in the days of the Revolution, and only contrived to escape the confiscation of his estate by preserving a strict and cautious neutrality during the war. He still adheres to the ancient costume, and is now observed taking his rides in the morning, in a long-waisted coat, of a snuff colour, and having three large figured gilt buttons set upon the cuffs, which are slashed after an antiquated fashion. He wears, besides, ruffles over his hands, and has a certain trig and quaint appearance given by

his tight, dark-coloured small-clothes, and long boots with tops of brown leather, so disposed as to show a little of his white stockings near the knee. His person is tall and emaciated, with a withered and rather severe exterior. A formality, correspondent with his appearance, is conspicuous in his manners, which are remarkable for their scrupulous and sprightly politeness; and his household is conducted with a degree of precision that throws a certain air of stateliness over the whole family.

He has two daughters, of whom the youngest has already counted perhaps her twenty-third year, and an only son somewhat younger. Catharine, the eldest of this family, has the reputation of being particularly well educated; but her acquirement is probably enhanced, in the common estimation, by a thoughtful and rather formal cast of character,—a certain soberness in the discharge of the ordinary duties of life,—and a grave turn of conversation, such as belongs to women who, from temperament, are not wont to enjoy with any great relish, nor perceive with observant eyes, the pleasant things of existence.

Bel, the younger sister, is of a warmer complexion. Nature has given her an exuberant flow of spirits, which, in spite of a stiff and rigid education imposed upon her by her father, frequently breaks through the trammels of discipline, and shows itself in the various forms which a volatile temper assumes in the actions of an airy and healthful girl. Still, however, her sentiments are what nurture has made them, notwithstanding her physical elements.

She has been accustomed to the cautious and authoritative admonitions of her father, which have inculcated a severe and exaggerated sense of personal respect, and a rather too rigorous estimate of the proprieties and privileges of her sex. These girls early lost their mother; and their father, at that period advanced in years, had already parted with his fondness and his fitness for society. The consequence was that The Brakes, during the minority of the children, was a secluded spot, cut off from much of that sort of commerce with the world which is almost essential to enliven and mature the sympathies of young persons.

Both Catharine and Bel are pretty, but after different models. The eldest is a placid, circumspect, inaccessible kind of beauty. Bel, on the other hand, is headlong and thoughtless, with quick impulses, that give her the charm of agreeable expression, although her features are irregular, and would not stand a critical examination. Her skin is not altogether clear; her mouth is large, and her eyes of a dark grey hue.

Ralph, the brother, is a tall, ill made, awkward man, with black eyes, and black hair curled in extravagant profusion over his head. He contracted slovenly habits of dress at college, and has not since abandoned them; has a dislike to the company of women, fills up his conversation with oaths, and chews immense quantities of tobacco. He has an unmusical voice, and a swaggering walk, and generally wears his hat set upon one side of his head. He professes

to be a sportsman, and lives a good deal out of doors, not being fond, as he says, of being stuck up in the parlour to hear the women talk. Ralph, however, is said to be a good fellow at bottom, which means that he does not show his best qualities in front. He is famous for his horsemanship, and avows a strong partiality for Bel on account of her skill in the same art, which, Ralph says, comes altogether from his teaching.

This family has always been on terms of intimacy at Swallow Barn, and of late years their intercourse has been much increased by the companionship which has been cultivated between the ladies of the two houses. Frank Meriwether holds the character of Mr. Tracy in great respect, and always speaks of him in a tone of affection, although the old gentleman, Ned says, is a bad listener and a painful talker, two qualities which sort but ill with the prevailing characteristics of Meriwether.

There are some points of family history, affecting the relations of these two gentlemen, which I shall find occasion hereafter to disclose.

CHAPTER IX.

AN ECLOGUE.

HAVING now disposed of all those preliminary sketches with which I have thought it necessary to entertain my reader, it is my design to favour him with some insight into certain particulars of a domestic nature which came under my observation during my visit. These have no other merit than being faithful narratives of events that are apt to escape the eye of the world, and which, nevertheless, contribute in a conspicuous degree to illustrate some pleasing points in the characters of individuals.

Hazard and myself were in the habit of taking frequent rambles together; and it was now on the morning of the first of July, that we had walked some distance on the road leading down the river. In these idle roamings we sometimes fell into strange caprices. The tide of animal spirits, in this unobserved and unfettered intercourse, is apt to rise into exhibitions that would be called childish, by a spectator who was ignorant of the gradual scale by which the feelings may be elevated into the empyrean of foolery. We accordingly, when we got into the woods, practised ludicrous caricatures of the

drama, which Ned called imitations of the most distinguished actors. Sometimes we delivered pompous harangues, as if we were in the midst of a senate, and sustained a mock debate in a very impressive way, with abundance of action.

This day Ned was more buoyant than usual, and strained the strings of propriety until they were ready to crack. In the midst of these grave and sensible pastimes, we frequently stopped to laugh at each other, and Ned would exclaim, "Are we not a pair of most immeasurable fools!" to which there being a free assent, we immediately resumed our antics. After one of these pauses, Ned commenced the following lecture, which was delivered with a countenance of severe gravity.

"Mark, I am astonished that you can find amusement in this silly merriment. As for myself, you are my guest, and I am obliged out of politeness to accommodate myself to your follies. Are you not aware that you make a shocking compromise of your dignity by bawling in this fashion in the woods, until you scare the crows from their perches? What a frivolous witling would you be thought, if, perchance, any sober and solemn sort of person should be on the highway to overhear your nonsense! Your voice is cracked, especially in its upper tones,—your manner is bad, and your melody execrable. Now, if you want instruction, listen to this."—

Here Ned set up a vociferous stave, which he drew out into a multitude of quavers.

"What do you think of that?" said he.

“Tut,” I replied; “that’s a mere squall: it is an affected and servile imitation of the Signorina: it wants both force and majesty. Lend me your ears, and hearken to this.”—

And here I gave him another flourish, greatly improving on his style. “Now,” said Ned, “I know, Mark, you are vain of that; so sit down here, upon this large root, and give me an attentive hearing.”

I sat down upon the root, as directed.

“Let me have no clapping,” he continued, “restrain your transports, and bestow all your thoughts upon the expression and pathos of this strain. I challenge criticism. So be attentive.”

With this prelude, Ned threw himself into the attitude of a singer, pressing his hands passionately upon his bosom, and making a great many gesticulations of his body, while he poured forth a loud and long bravura strain, that made the woods re-echo from many distant points.

It is necessary here to mention, that our previous conversation this morning had dwelt much upon the character of the family at The Brakes, in which Ned had communicated a good deal of what I have detailed in the last chapter. Bel Tracy had been alternately the subject of his satire and his praise. Amongst other things, he had mentioned her skill in music, and her fine voice, which, however, he qualified by some strictures upon her over-refined style of singing, and her attachment to Italian songs in preference to those in her own tongue. All our volunteer effusions had been sung to words of our own,

which were ridiculous enough. In this last flourish of Ned's he expended all the variations of his voice upon the doggrel couplet,—

Bel Tracy against the field!
Against the field Bel Tracy!

And the concluding words, "Bel Tracy," were reverberated through the woods to a thousand reduplications, and with every conceivable intonation and inflexion of his strong and somewhat musical voice,—increasing in vigour and animation as he repeated the words,—and bringing his solo to a close with a multitude of fantastical trills, and violently magnified gestures.

"A merry morning you make of it, Mr. Hazard!" said Bel Tracy, reining up her horse immediately at Ned's back. "You call up spirits from the woods—and they are here. But I think you need not have been so violent in your invocations."

"My sister Bel has reason to be thankful," said Catharine, who was close beside her sister, "for your teaching her name so familiarly to the river-gods. The lute of Orpheus was certainly not more potent in its enchantment."

"The devil!" said Ned to me, in amazement, "what a surprise!"

"That was decidedly the most languishing assault upon poor Bel's heart that was ever made upon it," said Harvey Riggs, a gentleman who was in the train of the two ladies.

"It was as good as a dozen dogs treeing an opossum," said Ralph Tracy, who made up a fourth in the party.

This cavalcade had been galloping along the sandy and noiseless road, until they came within hearing of Hazard's voice, when they had halted unobserved, and listened to the whole of Ned's unlucky strain; and, as he drew to a close, had advanced stealthily upon us, and effected the surprise I have related.

Ned was utterly confounded. His arms dropped to his sides, and he wheeled suddenly round on his heel to front the group, who were bearing him down with peals of laughter. He looked sheepishly about him, and when the laugh had in some degree subsided, he introduced me to the company, saying, after he had done so,—

"Mr. Littleton and myself, Bel, were only practising a serenade with which we intended to regale you at The Brakes. But as you have heard the rehearsal, you will spare us the midnight visit we had designed."

Bel was somewhat piqued with this profane use of her name, and scarcely concealed the feeling which it had provoked, notwithstanding the merriment that it excited at the moment. She replied,

"Perhaps we have mutual reason to rejoice in this meeting then, for my father, I think, is not fond of such refined and delicate strains."

"It was in your own best style," said Ned, with

provoking want of address, "it was a genuine Italian flight—."

"Is'nt it a pity, Mr. Littleton," said Bel, "that Edward Hazard should be so merciless upon his friends?"

"Hazard has already created so strong an interest in me to make your acquaintance, Miss Tracy, that I scarcely regret the ludicrous accident that has brought it about so soon," I replied.

"Come, Bel, forgive me," said Hazard, collecting himself,—for he had been strangely fluttered through the former part of this dialogue. "I own I am the most egregious buffoon, and certainly the most unlucky one, in this country. Littleton and myself have been running riot all the morning, and, whether in jest or earnest,"—he continued in a lower voice—"your name is constantly upon my lips."

As Ned said this, he had approached familiarly to Bel's stirrup, and offered her his hand, which she took with great kindness,—and then remarked, that they were on their road to Swallow Barn, and would not longer interrupt our studies. Upon this Harvey Riggs and Bel rode forward at a gallop, the former looking back over his shoulder, and calling out to Ned,—

"We shall give a good account to Meriwether of your morning occupation. I will take care to have justice done you, Ned."

"The devil take your justice," said Hazard, as they rode away.

Catharine and Ralph followed them, at a more leisurely pace. Ned stood looking along the road at the retreating party, for some moments. Bel was mounted on a beautiful sleek bay mare, which sprang forward with an uncommonly spirited motion. Her figure showed to great advantage on horseback, being graceful and easy. Her dress was a riding habit of nankeen, fancifully trimmed with green, and fitting her shape with accurate adaptation. She wore a light hat of the same colour as her dress, sufficiently prominent in front to guard her face from the sun, without concealing it; and over her right shoulder floated a green veil, that descended from the hat, and fluttered in the breeze as she moved forward.

“ Was there ever,” said Ned, turning round to me, after this troop had disappeared, “ was there ever a more unlucky discovery than that! of all persons in the world, to be caught in the height of our tomfoolery by that little elf Bel Tracy! Just to be taken in the high flood of our nonsense! And with her name, too, most sacrilegiously burlesqued to these silly woods! I should scarcely have regarded it if it had happened with any body else; but she has such a superserviceable stock of conceit about elegance and refinement in her mind, that I don’t doubt she will find in this cursed adventure a pretext to abuse me in her prayers for the next twelvemonth. And then, she will go home and tell that stiff old curmudgeon, her father, that I am the very antipodes of a polished man. Faith, she has said that before! And Harvey

Riggs," added Ned, musing, "will not improve the matter, because he will have his joke upon it. And then sister Kate,—Heaven save the mark!—who is like a simpering, stately mother abbess, will pronounce my conduct undignified; that's *her* word: and so will Bel, for that matter. Why, Mark, in the name of all the trumpery devils! had'nt you your eyes about you?"

"Egad," said I, "they surprised our camp without alarming the sentinels. But after all, what is it? They can only say they met a pair of 'fools in the forest,' and, certainly, they need not travel far to do that, any day!"

"By the by, Mark," said Ned, changing his mood, and brightening up into a pleasanter state of feeling, "did you note Bel's horsemanship,—how light, and fearless, and debonair she rides? And, like a fairy, comes at your bidding, too! She studies postures, sir, from the pictures; reads descriptions of the ladies of chivalry, and takes the field in imitation of them. Her head is full of these fancies, and she almost persuades herself that this is the fourteenth century. Did you observe her dainty fist, 'miniardly begloved,'—as the old minstrels have it?—she longs to have a merlin perched upon it, and, is therefore endeavouring to train a hawk, that, when she takes the air, she may go in the guise of an ancient gentlewoman. She should be followed by her falconer."

"And have a pair of greyhounds in her train," said I.

"Aye, and a page in a silk doublet," added Ned.

"And a gallant cavalier," I rejoined, "to break a lance for her, instead of breaking jokes upon her. I am almost tempted to champion her cause, against such a lurdan as you, myself. But let us hasten back to Swallow Barn, for our presence will be needed."

After this adventure we returned to the mansion-house, with some misgiving on the part of Hazard. He talked about it all the way, and dwelt somewhat fearfully upon the raillery of Harvey Riggs and Meriwether, who, he observed, were not likely to drop a joke before it was pretty well worn.

The servants were leading off the horses as we arrived at the gate, and the family, with their visiters, were collected in the porch, with all eyes turned to us as we approached. There was a general uproar of laughter at Ned, who took it in good part, though with not many words.

When the mirth of the company had run through its destined course, Bel called Hazard up to her, and said:

"You are a shabby fellow, Edward. I have two causes of quarrel with you. You have not been at The Brakes for a week or more,—and you know we don't bear neglect:—and secondly, I don't think you have a right to be frightening Mr. Littleton with my name, however lawful it may be to amuse the gentle geese of the James River with it."

"Bel," replied Hazard, "upon my honour, I

never was more solemn in my life than at the very moment you rode upon us. And as to my remissness, I have had no sentiment on hand since Mark Littleton has been with me, and I did not know what I should say to you. Besides, I have a regard for Mark's health, and I was not disposed to interrupt it with one of your flirtations. He is a little taken already, for he has been praising you and your mare ever since you passed us. If he knew what a jockey you were, in all things, he would give you very little encouragement."

"Pray heaven," said Bel, "if he be a virtuous man, he be not spoiled by such a madcap jester as yourself! Mr. Littleton, I hope you will not believe Edward, if he has been telling you any thing to my disadvantage;—I am never safe in his hands."

"I will tell you what I told him, Bel," said Hazard, getting round close to her ear, where he whispered what was too low to be heard.

"You are incorrigible!" cried Bel, laughing and at the same time shaking her riding whip at him. And with these words she ran into the hall, and thence up stairs at full speed, followed by the rest of the ladies.

"Is 'nt she a merry creature?" said Ned to me, in an affectionate tone, as we entered the door in the rear of the party.

CHAPTER X.

COLLOQUIES.

THE party from the Brakes caused a great uproar within the whilom tranquil precincts of Swallow Barn. The ladies had congregated in one of the chambers, from whence might be heard the racket of exclamation and laughter, which, as far as I am acquainted with the sex, belongs to every feminine conventicle; whilst below, the hall re-echoed with the loud and bluff greetings of the gentlemen, the heavy tramp of boots upon the uncarpeted floor, and the usual noisy gaiety of an assemblage of joyous and idle spirits.

There was something worthy of note in the appearance and manners of Harvey Riggs. A short, square built person, with the dress of a gentleman, but so negligently assorted and worn, as to give even a comic effect to his exterior; a weather-beaten visage, pockmarked, and of a dry complexion; the ripeness of forty beaming in eyes of undefined colour, but bright and shortsighted; a small upturned nose; a large and well shaped mouth; an uncommonly large head, bedecked with a tremendous shock of disorderly hair, that curled upon the cape of his coat:

these formed the most prominent points in his outline. He had that mellowness in his looks that belongs to a man who has conversed much with the world; who has seen it in its pleasant aspects; is familiar with revels, and "sits up late o' nights;" and has often been caught by the dawn at a card table; a countenance of confessed and unmitigated homeliness, but far from displeasing, from its entire absence of pretension, and from an expression of waggery that played upon its features.

His company is much sought after, and, what may seem a little paradoxical, is particularly valued by the females of his acquaintance. It is not unusual for that sex to elevate into favour those individuals of ours who are capable of contributing to their amusement, however free from outward attractions. Harvey Riggs had a vein of strong good sense, which, united to a learned skill in the ways of society, gave him great advantages. He is related to the Tracys, and had recently arrived from Richmond upon a customary visit at the Brakes, where he was now in the high career of that service which was most agreeable to him, that of a squire of dames, with nothing to do but pick up amusement wherever it was to be found.

We were collected in the hall at the foot of the stair-case, where some refreshments had been placed upon a table. It is a common custom in Virginia, about an hour before dinner, to prepare a bowl of toddy, which is kept in ice until the company meet at the table. Harvey Riggs had some

reputation in the concoction of this compound, and, as the proper hour had arrived, he was already engaged in this occupation. "Ned," said he, as he was busily employed with a pitcher in each hand, pouring the contents from one to the other, by way of ripening the mixture, "how far do you call it from here to where we caught you practising your cantata?"

"Something upwards of a mile," replied Ned.

"Well, sir," continued Harvey, "Bel and I rode that in three minutes:—There's a girl for you! Poor cousin Kate followed us at a demure gallop, with Ralph swearing at her, like a trooper, all the way. I will match Bel for speed against any thing in this low country. You know how she talks about discretion, and decorum, and what's elegant—and all that.—Yet, she thinks no more of a ditch, or a moderate worm fence,—if they come in her way,—than she does of a demi-semi-quaver on the piano; she flies over it singing."

"Bel was always a brave girl," said Ned; "you know how the Spanish ladies ride;—booted and spurred. If Bel had one of their saddles, I don't doubt ———"

"That every time Edward Hazard looked at it, we should be favoured with some long story, told us twenty times over, about the good people round the Horn," cried out Bel, from the head of the stairs, where she was quietly leaning over the balustrade, and looking down into the hall.

This was followed by a laugh against Ned, both

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up stairs and below. "As for the matter of that," rejoined Hazard, "if I were inclined to tell stories, I have seen feats enough performed on Ralph's saddle, to give me all the occasions I desire. Indeed, I could give a very true account of a lady crossing a certain stream on a blind plough-horse, Bel, without saddle or bridle either."

"Edward!" returned Bel, as she retreated from the balustrade, "you have no respect for treaties."

"Not after they have been broken by one of the belligerents," said Ned.

"So much for listening where you had no business," exclaimed Ralph, in a rather ungracious tone of voice.

"I come as an ambassador from the Brakes, charged with a commission to you," said Harvey Riggs, addressing himself to Meriwether, "and desire to acquit myself of it at once. Here is an epistle, as Mr. Tracy terms it, which was to be put into your own hands with care and speed. Singleton Swansdown is expected, and arrangements are to be made for the immediate settlement of that interminable boundary-line dispute which has been vexed for forty years. My good kinsman, Mr. Tracy, is anxious that you should expedite Swansdown's departure, and I venture to add my own request, in the name of charity and all the cardinal virtues, that you will detain this gentle carpet knight the shortest practicable time."

"I devoutly believe," replied Meriwether, "that if this old law-suit between our families should be brought to a close by this device,—even if it should

go in Mr. Tracy's favour,—it will cost him some unpleasant struggles to part with it.”

“It is impossible to settle it yet,” said Harvey, “all the oracles are against it. Mammy Diana, who is a true sybil, has uttered a prophecy, which runs thus—‘That the landmarks shall never be stable until Swallow Barn shall wed the Brakes.’ Ned, the hopes of the family rest upon you.”

Meriwether opened the letter, and read as follows :

“Dear and Respected Friend,—Touching the question of the law-suit which, notwithstanding the erroneous judgments of our unlearned courts, still hangs in unhappy suspense, I am moved by the consideration urged in your sensible epistle to me of the fifteenth ultimo, to submit the same, with all the matters of fact and law pertinent to a right decision thereof, to mutual friends, to arbitrate the same between us ; not doubting that the conclusion will be agreeable to both, and corroborative of the impressions which I have entertained, unaltered from the first, arising of this controversy with my venerated neighbour, the late Walter Hazard.

“What stake I have is insignificant in comparison of the value of vindicating the ground on which I have stood for forty years and upwards, and also of relieving our lineal and collateral kindred from vexatious disputes in time to come.

“I have written to my young friend, Singleton O. Swansdown, Esq. of Meherrin,—”

“Very young!” interrupted Harvey, “almost as juvenile as the law-suit.”

—“Son of my late worthy kinsman, Gilbert Swansdown, as a proper gentleman to act in my behalf, and late letters from him signify his ready pleasure to do me this service. His advices inform me that he will be at the Brakes in this present week. Although I could have wished that this arbitrament should in nowise fall into the hands of lawyers—seeing that we have both had reason, to our cost, to pray for a deliverance from the tribe—yet, nevertheless, it is not becoming in me to object to your nomination of Philpot Wart, Esq. who is a shrewd and wary man, and will doubtless strive to do the right between us.

“I would desire, moreover, that it be understood as a preliminary, that no respect shall be had to the quibbles and law quirks wherewith the courts have entertained themselves, to my detriment, hitherto in these premises.

“Praying that unnecessary delay shall not hinder the speedy return of Mr. Swansdown, when his occasions shall call him hence, I beg leave to subscribe myself,

Respected and dear Sir,

Your very obedient and obliged servant,

ISAAC TRACY.”

“Habit converts our troubles into pleasures,” said Meriwether, as he stood with this letter in his hand, after he had finished reading it, and now began to descant, in one of his usual strains; “and my

old friend Tracy has so long interested himself with this inconsiderable claim—for it is not of the value of a sharpshin—one hundred acres of marsh land, that no man would buy—that, to tell the truth, I would long since have given it up to him, if I did not think it would make the old gentleman unhappy to take the weight of it off his mind. Felicity, sir, is an accident; it is motion, either of body or mind; a mode of being, as the logicians call it. Let the best machine of man be constructed, with all the appertinences of strength, faculty, thought, feeling, and with all the appliances of competence and ease, and it will rust from disease; the springs and wheels will grow mouldy; the pipes become oppilated with crudities, and death will ensue from mere obstruction. But give it motion——”

“But what do you think,” interrupted Harvey, “of the old gentleman’s selecting Singleton Swansdown to reverse the decision of all the courts in Virginia, with Philly Wart, too, to back them?”

“The shrewdest person,” replied Meriwether, smiling, and bringing down his left hand over his face, as he threw his head backward, “doubtless may be beguiled by his prepossessions. Singleton’s a right clever fellow after all; and Mr. Tracy has a great respect for him, growing out of family connexions, and his regulated tone of manners, which are very kind and conciliatory to the old gentleman.”

“But he is a devil of an ass,” said Harvey, “and I had like to have blundered out as much, yesterday at dinner, when Mr. Tracy told us he was coming

to the Brakes; but, happily, I was afraid to swear before my cousin Kate."

"Why I dare say," rejoined Meriwether, "Swansdown will be entirely competent to this case, particularly with my friend Philly at his elbow, to show him his road. I have been turning over in my mind," he continued, aside to Riggs, "to contrive to give the old gentleman the advantage in the law-suit, if I can so arrange it as to let him win it upon a show of justice; for if he suspected me of a voluntary concession to him, he would not be pleased; and, upon my soul! I find a difficulty in managing it."

"Can't our friend Wart," said Harvey, "patch up a case against you, that shall deceive even Mr. Tracy?"

"I shall so instruct him," replied Meriwether, "and it will afford us some speculation to observe how reluctantly my good neighbour will part with this bantling of his, when it is decided."

"It has been his inducement," said Harvey, "to study the laws of Virginia from beginning to end; and it has furnished him more conversation than any other incident of his life."

CHAPTER XI.**PRANKS.**

THE dinner hour arrived, and found our company in the tone of spirits indicated by the recitals in the last chapter.

Bel's thoughts bounded along in a current of uncontrolled gaiety, and it seemed as if Hazard had set himself particularly to the task of provoking her into this animated humour, by a series of assaults which put upon her the necessity of reply. Without wearing the semblance of flattery, this device had all its effects, since it served to display the vivacity and good nature of the lady, and to present her to the company in the most playful and agreeable positions. It was, however, utterly destitute of that show of reverence which all women are pleased to exact, even for their foibles, and, therefore, bore the aspect of favours impolitically conferred. Bel might even have found a pretext to be offended with Hazard, but for the manifest good feeling towards her which shone out above all his raillery.

Catharine, at times, showed even a prudish reserve, and, in consequence, neither Ned nor Harvey Riggs ever ventured upon a jest with her. Indeed,

it is observable of Harvey, that, under the externals of a volatile flow of spirits, he conceals a careful policy to give a complimentary complexion to whatever falls from him. Prudence sustained her part in the sportiveness of the day, and was alternately sentimental and mettlesome, thoughtless or grave, as the occasion served.

As the evening advanced, the tide of frolic feeling ran higher, and it was at last resolved to despatch a messenger to the Brakes, to say that the party would remain at Swallow Barn all night. After tea the ladies made a concert around the old harpsichord. Then some lively airs were played, and at length, by a universal vote, my cousin Lucretia was seated at the instrument, and all the rest of the company, except Frank Meriwether, were on the floor, dancing reels and cotillions. The children grouped about the corners of the room in an ecstasy of delight. Mistress Barbara, who had stolen quietly into the apartment, relaxed her features into a wormwood smile, and shook her head at Harvey Riggs's drolleries; and the domestics of the family gathered about the doorway, or peeped in at the open windows.

From a breeze, the pervading mirth rose into a gale. The gentlemen romped, and the ladies, in defiance of the established discipline, encouraged the merriment by unconstrained laughter. Now and then, indeed, Catharine bridled up, and resisted the torrent of rebellious spirits by a statelier pace; but

Bel gave way to it, like a true child of nature, and permitted her swift flowing blood to have its full sway.

In the midst of this confused and mingled scene, Lucy and Victorine appeared like children, in the graceful playfulness of their age; springing about with the easy motions and delighted looks of young novices, to whom the world is a sunny picture of pleasure and harmony.

Exhausted, at length, we took our seats, and gradually subsided into that lower and more equable temper which is apt to follow violent excitements. Harvey Riggs and Ned Hazard were observed to withdraw from the parlour, and it was sometime before they reappeared. In their absence they had been making preparation for a melodrama, which was now announced by Rip. The subject of this new prank was "The Babes in the wood." Rip and one of the little girls were to enact the babes; and accordingly, in due time, two candles were set upon the floor to represent the stage lights; the company were arranged in front;—the children were laid out, and ordered to keep their eyes shut; a piece of baize covered them, instead of leaves, and Rip raised his head, for an instant, to inform the audience that there was to be a great storm. Suddenly a servant came in and blew out the candles,—all except the two on the floor. This was followed by a tremendous racket in the hall, that was principally occasioned by the violent slamming of doors, which was designed to imitate thunder;—then came a flash of

lightning that made our audience start;—it was produced by firing gunpowder outside of the room; and to give a perfect verisimilitude to the storm, a most dismal hissing and pattering of rain assailed every ear. This was, undoubtedly, the liveliest part of the drama. It continued with unabated violence for some moments, producing equal amazement and diversion in the region of, what may be called, the boxes,—but finally became rather oppressive by a volume of pungent vapour that diffused itself through the apartment, with a strange savour, that set us all to coughing. Surrounded by this pothet of the elements, Ned and Harvey entered, each with a huge sabre,—their faces smutted with cork, and their figures disguised in old uniform coats, oddly disproportioned to their persons. Here they strutted about, making tragic gestures, and spouting fierce blank verse. The rain, at intervals, sank upon the ear, as if dwindling into a gentle mist, and anon rose with redoubled fury and increasing pungency, up to its former violence. The play, however, was interrupted by an incident which I must not omit. The rain had, for the last time, fallen into a mere drizzle, and, at the very moment when the tempest ought to have howled its loudest, it dropped into perfect silence. “More rain!” cried Ned: “Give us more rain.”

Instead of rain, a giggle came from the hall, from the midst of which Carey’s voice was heard, saying,

“Master Ned, it’s no use; the frying pan’s got cold; it wont make no more noise.”

Shouts of uproar followed this disclosure, which was made with a laughable sobriety on the part of the old negro. Ned had given private instructions to Carey to heat that implement of the kitchen, and to bring it near the parlour door, where it was his cue to fry a slice of fat bacon, until the storm was over, the effects of which we had already felt. The confusion of this announcement from Carey put an end to the tragedy, and the company, as it was now late, separated for the night, in the best humour with each other.

The withdrawal of the larger portion of the family to their chambers, left us in a different mood. The night was calm and clear, and our late boisterous occupations inclined us to contemplate the present repose of nature. We sauntered a short distance from the house. The moon had risen, and was flinging a wizard glare over the tree-tops. A heavy dew had fallen upon the grass, and imparted an eager chilliness to the atmosphere. The grove resounded with those solemn invocations which are poured forth by the countless insects of the night, that keep their vigils through the livelong hours of darkness,—shrill, piercing and melancholy. The house dogs howled at the moon, and rushed at intervals tumultuously forward upon some fancied disturber; for the dog is imaginative, and is often alarmed with the phantoms of his own thoughts. A distant cock, the lord of some cabin hen-roost, was heard, with a clear and trumpet-like cadence, breaking the deep stillness of this midnight time, like a

faithful warder on the battlements telling the hour to the sleepers. Every thing around us was in striking contrast with the scenes in which we had just been engaged. We grew tranquil and communicative; and thoughtless of the late hour—or rather alive to its voluptuous charm—we completed our short circuit, and had gathered again into the porch, where we lay scattered about upon the benches, or seated on the door-sill. Here, whilst we smoked segars, and rambled over the idle topics that played in our thoughts, Harvey Riggs engaged himself in preparing a sleeping draught of that seductive cordial which common fame has celebrated as the native glory of Virginia. It is a vulgar error, Harvey contends, to appropriate the mint sling to the morning. "It is," he remarked with solemn emphasis, "the homologous peculiar of the night,—the rectifier of the fancy,—the parent of pleasant dreams,—the handmaid of digestion,—and the lullaby of the brain: in its nature essentially anti-roral; friendly to peristaltics and vermiculars; and, in its influence upon the body, jocund and sedative." I have recorded Harvey's express words, because in this matter I conceive him to be high authority.

Upon this subject Harvey is eloquent, and whilst we sat listening to his learned discriminations in the various processes of this manufacture, our attention was suddenly drawn to another quarter by the notes of a banjoe, played by Carey in the court-yard. He was called up to the door, and, to gratify my curiosity to hear his music, he consented to serenade the

ladies under their windows. Carey is a minstrel of some repute, and, like the ancient jongleurs, he sings the inspirations of his own muse, weaving into song the past or present annals of the family. He is considered as a seer amongst the negroes on the estate, and is always heard with reverence. The importance this gives him, renders the old man not a little proud of his minstrelsy. It required, therefore, but little encouragement to set him off; so, after taking a convenient stand, and running his fingers over his rude instrument by way of prelude, he signified his obedience to our orders.

The scene was really picturesque. Carey was old, and the infirmities of age were conspicuous upon his person; his head was hoary, and now borrowed an additional silver tint from the moonbeam that lighted up his figure. Our eager group, that stood watching him from the midst of the rose bushes in which we were partly embowered; the silent hour, interrupted only by the murmur of the occasional breeze; the bevy of idle dogs that lay scattered over the ground; the mistiness of the distant landscape; and the venerable mass of building, with its alternate faces of light and shade, formed a combination of images and circumstances that gave a rich impression to our feelings.

Carey, for a moment, tuned his instrument with the airs of a professor, smiled, and looking round to Hazard, asked, in a half whisper, "what shall I play, Master Ned?"

"What you like best, Carey. Give us something that you can recommend."

"Well," said Carey, striking off a few notes, "I'll try this:"

The rich man comes from down below,
Yo ho, yo ho.
 What he comes for, I guess I know,
Long time ago.
 He comes to talk to the young lady,
Yo ho, yo ho.
 But she look'd proud, and mighty high,
Long time ago.

And in this strain, clothed in his own dialect, he proceeded to rehearse, in a doggerel ballad, sung with a chant by no means inharmonious, the expected arrival of Swansdown at the Brakes, and the probable events of his visit, which, he insinuated, would be troublesome to Ned Hazard, and would, as the song went,

"Make him think so hard he could'nt sleep."

"Can't you give us something better than that?" interrupted Ned.

"Ah! that makes you very sore there, master Ned Hazard," said the old negro, putting his hand on Ned's breast.

"Tut!" replied Ned, "you croak like a frog to-night; sing something worth hearing."

"Give us 'Sugar in a Gourd,' or 'Jim Crow,'" cried out Ralph Tracy, "none of your'd——d cantabiles."

"I'll sing you my dream, master Ned," said Ca-

rey, "but the young mistresses would rather hear about their sparks than any thing else. It's so all the world over."

Here Carey struck up another air, in the same off-hand manner, the purport of which was, that, as he lay sleeping in his cabin, a beautiful lady appeared to him, and told him that he must instruct his young master, when he went a-wooing, that there were three things for him to learn: he must never believe his mistress to be light of heart because she laughed; nor that she was offended because she looked angry; nor that she would not marry him because she had given one refusal.

"Carey sings like a discreet augur," said Harvey Riggs, "and has almost as delicate a note as the carpenter's tool of that name, when it dives into the mystery of a white-oak log. Now, old gentleman, you have done your duty, so creep to your kennel; and here's something to cross your palm with."

"God bless you, master Harvey, and young masters all!" cried the old groom, as he retired with a repetition of many formal bows.

We withdrew to our rooms, where, some time after we were in bed, we could hear the negroes dancing jigs to Carey's banjoe in the court-yard. In the midst of these noises I sank to sleep,—thus terminating a day that had been marked by a succession of simple pastimes richly characteristic of country life.

CHAPTER XII.**AN EMBARRASSED LOVER.**

THE ladies had announced their intention of returning to the Brakes before breakfast; and, accordingly, the next morning soon after the dawn, the court-yard was alive with the stir of preparation. Horses, dogs and servants filled the enclosure with a lively bustle, and the inmates of the house thronged the door and porch. Bel, with the wholesome bloom of the morning on her cheek, displayed those spirits that belong to young and ardent girls when they are conscious of being objects of admiration. She danced about the hall, and sang short passages from songs with a sweet and merry warbling.

“ We owe you our thanks, gentlemen, this morning,” said she, “ for Mr. Carey’s saucy ditty last night. And do you seriously call that croaking a serenade, Edward?—Cousin Harvey, I set down all the impertinence of it to you. Well, help me to my saddle, and when I am on horseback I will tell you my mind. I am not afraid to speak when I have a swift foot under me.”

At this, Ned advanced somewhat officiously to lead the animal which Bel was about to mount, up to the steps.

“ No, no, Edward !” said Bel, checking his eager-

ness to perform this service, "I never want assistance to get into my seat when cousin Harvey is by; I have trained him for my own use. See how well he understands his duty!"

Harvey came round to the stirrup side of the mare, and stooping down, whilst he locked his two hands so as to form a step:

"Now, Bel, your left foot,—so; bear on my shoulder, and there you are," said he, as she obeyed his instructions, and sprang lightly from the ground, by the assistance of his hand, into the saddle.

"I flatter myself," said Bel, "that was gracefully done. Have I not an excellent cavalier, Mr. Littleton, to put me here with so little trouble?"

"It is seldom," I replied, "that a gentleman finds so ready a pupil."

"Edward," continued Bel, "how long would you be learning such a feat?"

"Indeed," said Ned, "I should readily take to such a service, if my hand were deemed as worthy of your slipper as your cousin Harvey's."

"Then," replied Bel, "come to the Brakes, and perhaps I shall teach you to be useful in future. Bring Mr. Littleton with you, and resolve to make yourselves as agreeable as you can; for, in truth, we have an especial need of gay friends. I am afraid that even cousin Harvey will fall into our moping humours, unless we can procure him merry companions, and that very soon."

"I have practised already," said Ned, with a serious air, "too many antics to keep your favour. If

I grow worse on that score, it will be because it gives you pleasure to see what a fool I can make of myself. We shall not fail to visit the Brakes in a very short time."

"The sun is up," said Bel; "so, fair betide you all!" Then speaking in an affectionate tone to the petted animal on which she rode,—“Now, Grace,—forward.”

The mare rose on her hind legs with an active motion, and sprang off at a brisk speed.

Catharine had all this time been quietly mounting by the aid of a chair, and talking in a subdued tone to Prudence and the ladies around her. She now said some amiable things at parting, urged Hazard and myself to come to the Brakes, and rode forward with a becoming propriety of gait, attended by Ralph;—Harvey had followed close at the heels of Bel—and before the rays of the sun had fallen below the highest tree-tops, the equestrians were out of sight.

After breakfast, I found Hazard sitting at the door, examining a small box of fishing tackle. A few cane rods leaned against one of the pillars of the porch, and Rip, together with a little ape-faced negro, was officiously aiding in the inspection of the lines, and teasing Ned with a catechism of questions appertaining to the purpose of his present employment; their drift was to ascertain how far it comported with his design to take them along wherever he might be bent.

"The day looks so well," said he to me, "that I am about to propose a ramble along the brook, and

we will take these rods with us, to help us to a little pastime. 'The angler, at the least, hath his wholesome walk and merry at his ease—as the quaint prioress of Sopwell, I think, says—a sweet air of the sweet savour of the mead flowers that maketh him hungry:—and if he take fish, surely no man is merrier than he is in his spirit.' We shall not want conversation even if the fish should fail us."

Rip, and the flat-nosed pigmy that hung about him in quality of henchman, were, of course, to accompany us. These two efficient auxiliaries were forthwith despatched to procure bait. Away they went,—Rip at a bound across the railing of the porch, and Belzebub, (such was Ned's appellative for the black,) down the steps into the yard, with a mouth distended from ear to ear, making somersets over the green sward of the enclosure. In a few moments the latter was on his way to the stable with a long-handled hoe across his shoulder, and a small tin vessel in his hand, to collect worms; whilst Rip was following up some devoted grasshoppers across the lawn, and flapping down his much-abused beaver upon them, with a skill that showed this to be a practised feat.

A brief delay brought in our active marauders with an abundant spoil; and we then set forth on our expedition, each provided with a long rod and its appertenances; our young attendants shouldering their weapons, and strutting before us with amazing strides and important faces.

As we loitered along, we fell into a half-serious

conversation, which principally concerned the persons who had lately left us. Ned told me anecdotes of Harvey Riggs, and gave me many particulars relating to Catharine and Ralph ; but it was observable that his notice of Bel was rather cursory and insufficient. I perceived from the manner in which he came up to this subject, and his immediate retreat from it, and the repetitions of the same stratagem, that Ned was rather anxious that I should express some curiosity to know more of Bel than he had communicated. Finding this, it rather amused me to disappoint him ; because I was sure he would, after a while, volunteer a more special revelation.

I need hardly say, after the details I have already communicated in my previous sketches, that Ned was pretty fairly in love with Bel. The truth was notorious to the whole family, and, I believe, to all the subordinates and dependants of Swallow Barn,—as much as any piece of country gossip could be—and that is saying a great deal. This was very evident to me in the little incident in which Bel surprised him the day before. Besides, Rip, who is inconveniently shrewd in such matters, took occasion this morning, just after the ladies left us on their return to the Brakes, to whisper to me, as we entered the breakfast room, “ Uncle Ned wanted mightily to lift Bel to her horse, because he likes the very ground she walks on.” And Harvey Riggs did not mince matters when he spoke of it. Then, old Carey had twisted it into his rhyme on the night before. Yet, strange as it may appear, Ned, with all these proofs

against him, was such an owl as to think it a profound secret to all the world except himself. Such is the hallucination of a gentleman afflicted with this malady !

So great is the natural frankness of Hazard's character, that all attempted concealments of his feelings have a comic extravagance ; and in this matter, his zeal to disguise the truth now and then led him to counterfeit an ill acted but most perilous indifference. This was the cause of his inexpert efforts at railery upon his mistress ; his continually falling pell-mell upon her foibles, alarming her pride, laughing at her conceits, and making unconscionable jests upon points that women are not apt to endure. Instead of haunting her society, like more skilful lovers, he rather affected to regulate his approaches by the rules of ordinary intercourse ; was awkward in his attentions ; seemed to lose his intrepidity in her presence ; and, by some froward destiny, to be for ever presenting himself to her view in those aspects which were most likely to offend her conceptions of a lover. Thus, his burlesque display of the night before, though producing diversion, assailed some of her most determinate prepossessions. I have said that she had a vein of romance. This engendered some fantastic notions touching propriety of manners, and even gave her a predilection for that solemn foppery which women sometimes call dignity and high wrought refinement ; and which, it has been already perceived, did not enter in the slightest proportion into any one motion of Ned Hazard. Her own

temper was exactly at war with this formal pretension ; but by a certain ply of her mind, picked up perhaps in some by-path of education, or nurtured by a fanciful conceit of the world, or left upon her memory amongst the impressions of some character she had been taught to admire, or peradventure—which is equally probable—the physical disclosure in her organization of some peculiarly aristocratic drop of blood inherited from some over-stately grandam, and re-appearing at the surface after the lapse of a century;—from whatever cause, it was produced, she considered an orderly, measured, graceful movement, a choice adaptation of language, reverence of deportment, and, above all, entire devotedness, essential to the composition of, what she termed, a refined gentleman—a character which runs a fair risk of being set down in the general opinion as sufficiently dull and insipid. Bel overlooks the total absence of these gifts in Harvey Riggs, and says his playfulness (she uses a soft expression) is quite delightful. I explain this anomaly by the fact that Harvey is entirely out of the question as a lover ; and that Bel has unwarily permitted her nature to counsel her opinion in Harvey's case ; by reason of which, her good-humoured cousin has taken the citadel of her favour by surprise. Ned Hazard she regards in quite a different light. Her sentinels are all at their posts when he makes a demonstration.

I sometimes think there is a little spleen at the bottom of Ned's treatment of Bel, a momentary sub-acid fretfulness, occasioned by her professing to

hold in estimation the grave and empty pedantry of Singleton Swansdown, the very model of a delicate and dainty gentleman. Bel says, "he is so like the hero of a novel;" which Ned has once or twice repeated to me, with the remark, that it was "cursed fudge."

I have related enough to enable my reader to comprehend the spirit of the dialogue between Ned and myself, that I am about to record. We had reached an old sycamore on the bank of the brook, and had thrown our lines into a deep pool formed by the narrow stream under the roots of the tree, and taken our seats upon the grass in its shade. As I expected, Ned had begun, at last, to talk more freely of Bel; and I found that I was gaining rapidly upon his confidence by the gravity with which I listened to him. I affected total ignorance of his concern in this question, and praised or dispraised with a judicial impartiality. Ned particularly desired to open his bosom to me on the love affair, but he found great difficulty in contriving such a train of conversation as might introduce it in a natural manner. I remained provokingly dull of apprehension. It is universally true, that no man of sober sense can, with any decent face, disclose the fact of his being in love—even to his most intimate friend. He looks like a fool, attempt it when he will.

"Mark," said Ned; and here followed a pause, in which he wore a strange look of discomfiture.

"Well!" said I, looking full in his face.

The beginning was too abrupt, so Ned evaded it with—

“Bel’s a lively girl.”

“Very.”

“Curse that little slippery minnow!” said he, as he pulled up his naked hook; it has nibbled away three excellent baits; but I can’t manage to get it at the point of the hook.”

“Throw in again, Ned,” said I, laughing, “perhaps you will have better luck next time.”

“Littleton!” here was another pause; “did you hear what a reproach Bel gave me for not having been at the Brakes lately?”

“I cannot imagine how you should deserve it,” I remarked, “living so near, too.”

“These women are always jealous of attentions;” said Ned. “It is not above ten days since I was there.”

“They exact a great deal of their lovers,” I replied; “now I suppose she would have you trudging there at least twice or three times a week, if she had her way. But she is unreasonable, Ned. I would not submit to it,” I continued, in a bantering tone, with a view to help him to a disclosure which I began to perceive was likely to be protracted.

“Lovers!” said Ned, not, however, in any tone of surprise.

He had it on his lips to follow up the word with a full confession; but hesitating one moment, that unit of time was fatal: his heart failed him, and like a

ship that misses her stays, he fell back again into the wind.

“If Bel Tracy had her way,” he continued, without denying my imputation, “she would have her father’s house filled with admirers through the whole year. She would import them by the gross, and change them with every voyage of the steamboat. She is a perfect cormorant of admiration.”

“They do say, that your friend Swansdown looks that way with an eager eye, and, if reports be true, something is likely to come of it.”

“I thought if I could rouse Ned’s jealousy a little, he would come with a bolder front to the question, and therefore I made the insinuation implied in this remark. Ned answered with great promptness, and an unusual degree of fire,—

“Never. Bel’s a woman of good sense, and discriminates with remarkable acuteness. She has some odd fancies, but it is all talk with her; she does not act upon them. You may depend upon it she has her working-day notions for use, and her conceits for holidays. She might tolerate Swansdown on Sunday evening, but she would not give a toy-puppet for him on Monday morning.”

“I know how she discriminates,” I replied; “and besides, I understand that her father likes the idea very well. Bel is a dutiful girl, and does as her father bids her. Moreover, when a woman of a lively imagination once permits her fancy to light upon a lover, it is quite immaterial what manner of man he be; the fancy is apt to settle the business for itself.”

“Swansdown,” said Ned, alarmed by the suggestion which I had forced so confidently upon him, and therefore rising into a tone of anger, “is the most preposterous ass—the most lackered, tinselled pretender—the most unflavoured coxcomb in Virginia. Weak, sir, weak as water-gruel; not fit to stand by Bel Tracy’s chair with a shawl when her waiting-woman signifies she is going to walk. Sir, he has nothing in him but a few tawdry shreds, which are all shown in fifteen minutes. Bel Tracy will none of him! I speak disinterestedly, I would not associate with her, if I thought she could seriously endure Singleton Swansdown.”

“No matter for all that,” said I; “Bel, as you say, likes even the counterfeit of dignity, and that, by all accounts, Swansdown possesses, at least.”

“Folly!” cried Ned; “I know she is touched with that distemper, and that it does make a woman impracticable. But her natural sense will get the better of it. However, you may reason as you will about it, I know that she does not care that for him, (snapping his fingers,) I have reason to know it personally,” he continued, with some warmth.

“What reason?”

“Damn it, if you will have it, I am in love with her myself;” exclaimed Hazard, with a petulant emphasis, and then bursting out into a laugh. “Mark, you must not mention it: it is a foolish thing, that will happen to a man when he has nothing to do. I never told any one before; so keep it secret, as you are my friend.”

"Is it possible!" I returned: "Why did'nt you tell me before? Here have I been taking your part against Bel Tracy all this time; and now it appears I ought to have been on the other side."

"I thought you would laugh at me," said he.

"Indeed, I assure you upon my honour, I think to be in love one of the most serious, nay solemn, things in the world. And does she encourage you?"

"I should say so. You know there are a thousand little passages in a woman's life, that show how her humour lies. You observed yesterday how she spoke to me? and this morning when she insisted upon our coming to the Brakes? Trifles!—but the manner of the thing! Besides, I frequently send her books, and write notes with them, which she always receives without the least scruple."

"Did you ever show her any very particular attentions?"

"Frequently. Almost whenever I had a chance."

"As how?"

"Why I can hardly describe them. You saw that ivory-handled riding-whip this morning? I presented that to her."

"The deuce you did!"

"She once said in my hearing, that she would like to have some Cologne of a particular kind; so, about three months afterwards, I brought her a large supply from Richmond myself.

"No!"

"And I have sent her, I suppose, at different times,

at least a dozen young partridges : she is fond of raising them."

" Indeed !"

" I made Hafen Blok one night, about a year ago, go over to the Brakes, and play his fiddle for an hour under her window."

" There was something pointed in that ! And you went there, of course, yourself very often ?"

" No, not very. It might have alarmed her ; she is very sensitive."

" You spoke to her when you met, I suppose ?"

" Mark, you are laughing at me," said Ned, all at once aroused by my replies. " But you know these things depend entirely upon the circumstances of time and place and looks, and many particulars that I cannot give you an idea of."

" Entirely," said L. " But I think, after all, from your account of your particular attentions, the lady might be blind enough to mistake their import."

" She could not mistake them," he replied, " because all this was after I had addressed her."

" So, ho ! You addressed her then ?"

" Like a most miserable varlet I did," replied Ned. " It was strange. But she acted with admirable spirit. I'll tell you how it happened. About a year ago I dined at the Brakes with a large company ; and we drank a great deal of champagne. I think I must have been possessed with a devil, for I was walking with Bel alone on the porch, after night-fall : the moon was bright above us, and I was rattling

away more boldly than I ever did in my life before. Some how or other she said something to me,—God knows what,—but, by the faith of a gentleman, I addressed her in downright English.”

“What then?”

“What then! She gave me the flattest refusal you can conceive; and ran away laughing.”

“That was encouraging!”

“How could she have done otherwise?” said Ned. “Bel Tracy is a girl of a nice sense of propriety, and thought it impudent in me to propose in that way. She laughs about it now, and says that she knew I intended it as a joke. I don’t think she ever will believe that I am in earnest! However, that made her acquainted with my design, and if, after that, she received my advances well,—don’t you think it looks as if something might come out of it?—Well, sir, since that I have rode out with her twenty times.”

“Alone?”

“No. She always makes Ralph or Harvey Riggs or somebody else of the party. But that shows she is sensitive on the subject, and does not consider it so much of a joke as she pretends.”

“Have you ever said any thing to her since?”

“Faith! I was so completely driven from my wits that evening, that I never could touch the subject since.”

“Why, you always had the reputation of being a brave man!”

“There is a great difference,” said Ned, “be-

tween bravery, man-ward and woman-ward. I would as lief march up to an alligator, to box him about the eyes in a pair of kid gloves, as come up deliberately of a cool morning, in the drawing-room, or any where else, to Bel Tracy, with a straightforward declaration of love. It is so hard to groove such a thing into conversation. A man gets his nerves flurried, and he can hardly talk on common subjects, with such an intention in his head. I don't know a single topic that one can take hold of with a surety that it will bring him straight to the point. You may depend upon it, that a man who addresses a woman must go at it like a French rope-dancer, hop on the rope without a word of introduction, and trust to the balance-pole to preserve him through his flourishes."

"We must order this thing differently in future," said I. "I dare say, together we can find out her exact opinion upon the subject."

"If it should be after dinner," said Ned, "I could court her almost any day; for I should lay in as much courage as the case required. It is mere moonshine when a man is merry. But then, Bel is so fastidious on that point, that she would be sure to floor me at the first word."

"And then, your fall would be so much the greater," I added, "in proportion to your previous elevation. It is my opinion that we should try her with cool heads."

Before we ended this discussion we had several

times changed our ground, and had, at this moment, wandered to the inmost recess of a grove of tall trees. Hazard, having eased his mind of its weight, changed our topic, and directed my attention to the scenery around us. The trees were principally beech, poplar and sycamore, springing from a moist carpet of matted grass. The forest was free from underwood, except an occasional thicket of blackberries, or a straggling grapevine swung across from tree to tree, embracing the branches of both in its serpent-like folds; or here and there where some prim old maidish poplar, long and lean, was furbelowed with wild ivy, and in this sylvan millinery, coquetted with the swaggering Zephyr that seemed native to the grove. Through this sequestered shade the stream crept, with a devious course, brattling, now and then, at the resistance of decayed trunks that accident had thrown across the channel, but quickly after subsiding into silence. As we advanced, the swarms of tadpoles darted from the shallows into deeper water; the apple-bugs (as schoolboys call that glossy black insect which frequents the summer pools, and is distinguished for the perfume of the apple) danced in busy myriads over the surface of the still water; the large spider, resembling a wheel without its rim, seemed to move in every direction on his little seas, as if driven by the wind; and hosts of small fish sprang upwards at every mote that fell upon the stream. Occasionally the grey-squirrel vaulted furtively across our path to some neighbour-

ing tree; and our attention was frequently called to the harmless water-snake, with his head thrust under a stone, and the folds of his body glistening in the sun, as the stream washed over him.

Rip and his goblin page, both of whom had been long out of sight, were now in view. They had grown weary of their patient employment, and were wading through the brook with their trowsers drawn above the knee, Rip leading the way and directing the motions of Belzebub, who preserved an affected subordination to his master, and imitated all his gestures with a grin of saucy good nature. They were carrying on a pernicious warfare against the frogs, and, by the capture of several distinguished individuals of the enemy, had spread consternation and dismay along the whole riparian settlement; inso-much, as Rip declared, "That not a Frenchman amongst them dared to show his goggle eyes through the mud."

Hazard had taken some dozen of small fish, and pursued his sport with the skill of an angler, whilst I sat on the bank and watched the successive depredations of the game upon my bait, until, in an attempt to land a voracious mullet, I lost my hook; "An evil fish," as the authority quoted by Ned affirms, "for he is so stronge enarmyd in the mouthe, that there may no weke harnays hold him." The sun had now travelled up to his meridian, and we proposed a return. So, gathering up our spoils, and calling in our skirmishers from the battle of the frogs,

we took up our line of march; the two dripping and muddy mignons of our suite bringing up the rear, each bearing a string of fish, hung by the gills upon a willow rod. In this array we soon regained the court-yard of Swallow Barn.

CHAPTER XIII.**A MAN OF PRETENSIONS.**

IT is to be remarked in regard to all love affairs, that whatever may be the embarrassment of the disclosure, there is by no means the same difficulty in conversing about them afterwards. When the ice is once broken, your genuine lover is never tired of talking about his mistress.

For twenty-four hours after our late ramble, Ned talked, almost incessantly, upon the same subject. He would let it drop for a moment, but he was sure to come speedily back upon it with a new face, as if it were a matter that required a serious deliberation; and he would insinuate, that, in the present stage of the business, my advice was important to determine whether he should go on with it; although it was easy enough to perceive that his mind was not only quite made up, but keenly set upon the prosecution of the affair. Then, he would affect to be greatly undecided as to some minute particular of conduct. Again, he had his doubts whether, upon the whole, she really did encourage him. In this sentiment he was sincere, although he endeavoured to persuade himself that the matter was reasonably certain. These doubts made him restless, droll and solemn;

but again changing his mood, he presented the entire action to me, from beginning to end, as a laughable affair; and that would make him swear at it, and say it was very queer—unaccountable—extraordinary;—that it put a man in such an awkward situation! But his conclusion to it all was, that there was no use in talking about it,—matters had gone so far that there was no alternative; he was committed on the point of honour, and bound as a gentleman to make his pretensions good. I vexed him a little by saying I did not think so; and that if it was distasteful to him, I thought he was at liberty to retire when he chose. This balked his humour. So I consented to admit his premises for the future, and allow that he was bound in honour. With this admission he proceeded in his argument. It all amounted to the same thing, and the only varieties I discovered after this, were in his positions. He argued it perpendicularly, walking, jumping, dancing; then horizontally, lolling over three chairs, stretched out on a bed, and perched in the windows; then manually, washing, dressing, whistling, singing and laughing. In short, he behaved himself throughout the whole debate, like a man in love.

We were at the height of this disquisition, on the morning following Ned's first confessions, about an hour before dinner, in my chamber, extended at full length upon the bed, with our feet set up against the bed-posts, when Rip came running in, almost out of breath, saying, "that if we wanted to see something worth looking at, we should come down stairs

quickly, for there was Mr. Swansdown spinning up to the house, and making the gravel fly like hail; and there was aunt Prue, in the drawing room, fixing a book before her in such a hurry! and Mrs. Winkle scolding about the custards:—And wasn't there going to be fun!"

I went to the window, and could see the phenomenon that excited Rip's admiration approaching the mansion like a meteor. A new light blue curricle, with a pair of long-tailed bay horses in fine keeping, driven by a gentleman of a delicate, emaciated figure, and followed by a servant in livery, had just entered the court-yard. The plate of the harness and mouldings glittered with an astounding brilliancy in the sun, and the spokes of the wheels emitted that spirited glare that belongs to an equipage of the highest polish. The horses were reined up at the door, and the gentleman descended. It was very evident that Mr. Singleton Oglethorpe Swansdown was a man to produce a sensation in the country.

Hazard and myself repaired to the hall. Meriwether received his guest with the plain and cordial manner that was natural to him. Mr. Swansdown has a tall figure, and an effeminate and sallow complexion, somewhat impaired perhaps by ill health, a head of dark hair, partially bald, a soft black eye, a gentle movement, a musical, low-toned voice, and a highly finished style of dress. He was very particular in his inquiries after the family; and having gone through many preliminary civilities, he was

shown to a chamber to make his toilet for dinner. Soon afterwards, he appeared in the drawing room, where he was remarkable for his sober, winning affability. He flattered Mrs. Meriwether upon her good health, and the fine appearance of the children. Lucy and Victorine he thought were going to be very beautiful (Lucy and Victorine both blushed :) they made him feel old, when he recollected their infant gambols: Master Philip (otherwise Rip) was growing up to be a fine manly fellow, (at this, Rip crept slyly behind him, and strutted in the opposite direction with many grimaces,) it was time to give up his nickname; he didn't like nicknames. He was very complimentary to Prudence Meriwether, which had a visible effect upon her, and made her animated; and thought his friend Meriwether looked younger and more robust than when they last met. He told Hazard that he was very much wanting in Richmond, by a party of ladies who were going off to the North, and that he, Ned, had made a great impression upon them. In short, Mr. Swansdown seemed determined to please every body, by the concern which he manifested in their happiness; and this was done with such a refined address, and such practised composure, as to render it quite taking. There is nothing equal to the self-possession of a gentleman who has travelled about the world, and frequented the circles of fashion, when he comes into a quiet, orderly, respectable family in the country. It is pleasant to behold what delight he takes to hear himself talk.

Swansdown had inherited from his father an estate on the Meherrin, in the most southern quarter of Virginia. He was now about the prime of life, and still a bachelor. Being, therefore, a gentleman without much to keep him at home, he had recently travelled over Europe, and was conversant in the principal cities of this continent. He has twice been very nearly elected to Congress, and ascribes his failure to his not being sufficiently active in the canvass. Upon this foundation he considers himself a public man, and of some importance to the government. It is remarked of him, that he is a very decided Virginian when he is out of the state, and a great admirer of foreign parts when he is at home. His memory is stored with a multitude of pretty sayings, and many singular adventures that have befallen him in his sundry-travel, which he embellishes with a due proportion of sentiment. He has the renown of a poet and of a philosopher, having some years ago published a volume of fugitive rhymes, and being supposed now to be engaged in a work of a grave, speculative character, which it is predicted will reflect credit upon the literature of the South.

That he is a bachelor is the fault only of his stars, for he has courted a whole army of belles between Maine and Georgia, in which divers wooings he has been observed to do remarkably well for the first two weeks; after which, somehow or other, he falls off unaccountably. And it is said that he can reckon more refusals on his head than a thorough-paced, political office-hunter. He is what the sailors

call an unlucky ship. One misfortune in love matters makes many, and three are quite ill-omened in the calculation of a high-toned, fashionable dame. This calamity has been so often reduplicated upon Swansdown, that it is thought he begins to lower his pretensions, and talk in a more subdued tone upon the subject. He is believed now to encourage the opinion that your raging belles are not apt to make the best wives; that a discreet lady, of good family and unpretending manners, is most likely to make a sensible man happy; great beauty is not essential; the mad world of fashion is a bad school; and some such other doctrines that indicate reflection, if not disappointment.

In pursuance of this temperate philosophy, he is supposed to be casting his eye about the country, and investigating more minutely the products of those regions over which he has hitherto travelled with too much speed for accurate observation; like a military engineer whose first survey is directed to the most prominent points of the ground, and who retraces his steps to make his examination of the subordinate positions.

From an intimacy of long standing between Mr. Tracy and the father of Swansdown, the former has a strong prepossession in favour of the son, which is cherished by Singleton in a course of assiduous attentions, and, no doubt, enhanced in some degree by the studied and formal cast of his manners. Mr. Tracy does not fail to speak of him as a man of excellent capacity and solid judgment; and

has therefore admitted him into a somewhat confidential relation. He says, moreover, that Singleton is remarkably vivacious, and a man of attic wit. This appears odd enough to those who have the honour of this worthy's society.

What I have said will explain how it came to pass that this gentleman had been selected as Mr. Tracy's arbitrator in the question of the boundary line. It was with a view to the final arrangement of this subject that Swansdown had lately arrived at the Brakes; and he had now visited Swallow Barn in respect to that identical negotiation.

The ladies had just retired from the dinner-table, and we were sitting over our wine, when Harvey Riggs and Ralph Tracy rode up to the door. This addition to our company gave a spur to the conversation of the table. Swansdown had become animated and eloquent. He descanted upon the occasion of his visit: that to gratify his old friend, Mr. Tracy, he had prevailed upon himself to proffer his services to terminate a difficult controversy, which, he had been given to understand, was of some duration. This was one of those imperfect obligations which appertain to the relation of friendship. He ventured to suggest an opinion, that the issue would be auspicious to their mutual interests, and took leave to indulge the hope, that neither of his amiable and excellent friends would find occasion to regret the arrangement.

Meriwether answered these diplomatic insinuations with a bend of the head that implied entire ac-

quiescence, and with an occasional remark that showed the little importance he attached to the matter. Ned and Harvey Riggs exchanged looks, drank their wine, and listened to the oracle. Swansdown, in the course of the evening, was continually reminded of something he had seen at Florence, or Vienna, or other places. The river, which was visible from our windows, put him in mind of the Lake of Geneva; it only wanted the mountains. Then, he had choice anecdotes to tell of distinguished personages in Boston or New York; and a most pithy piece of scandal that had transpired last winter at Washington. Meriwether bowed his head again, but very much like a man who was at a loss how to reply, and continued to listen with the utmost suavity. Harvey Riggs, however, often drew the discourse into a parenthesis, as if to get at such subsidiary particulars as were necessary to elucidate the narrative, and generally, by this mischievous contrivance, took off the finish which the speaker studied to give to his recital.

A neat little pamphlet of verses some time ago made its appearance at Richmond, in hot press, and on the finest paper. It was a delicate effusion of superfine sentiment, woven into a plaintive tale; and had dropped, apparently, from some amaranthine bower formed by the sun-gilt clouds, as they floated, on one vernal evening, over the fashionable quarter of Richmond,—it was so dainty in its array, and so mysterious in its origin. “From whence could it come, but from the Empyrean, or from Hybla,” said

the ladies of Richmond ; “ or from the divine pen of the fastidious and super-sentimental Swansdown ? ” Ned Hazard had brought this beautiful foundling to Swallow Barn, and had given it to Prudence Meriwether to nurse. It was now upon the window-seat.

It is necessary to state, that amidst all the criticism of Richmond, and the concurring determination of every body to impute the verses to Swansdown, and the consequent reiteration of that imputation by all companies, he never gave a plain denial of his paternity ; but, on the contrary, took pleasure in hearing the charge, and was so coquettish about the matter, and insinuated such gentle doubts, that it was considered a case of avowed detection.

This dapper and delicious little poetical sally was christened “ The Romaunt of Dryasdale,” in the title page, but was more generally known by the name of “ The Lapdog Romance,” which Harvey Riggs had bestowed upon it.

“ I suppose you have seen this before ? ” said Hazard to Swansdown, as he threw the book upon the table before him.

Swansdown picked it up, hastily turned over the leaves, smiled, and replied, “ It has made some stir in its day. But things like this are not long-lived, however well executed. This seems to have kept its ground much longer than most of its species.”

“ The common opinion,” said Ned, “ is not backward to designate its author.”

“ Of course,” replied Swansdown, “ if a man has

ever been guilty in his life of stringing couplets, he becomes a scapegoat ever after. Is it not somewhat strange that I should be perpetually charged with this sort of thing? But it is long since I have abandoned the banks of the Helicon. I protest to you I have not time for this kind of idling. No, no, gentlemen, charge me with what indiscretion you please, but spare me from the verses, as you are Christian men!"

"If we could believe the rumours," said Harvey, "we should not doubt the origin of this effusion; but I rely more on my own judgment. I can pretty surely detect the productions of persons I am acquainted with: there is a spice, a flavour, in a man's conversation, which is certain to peep out in the efforts of his pen. Now this work is diametrically opposite to every thing we know of Mr. Swansdown. In the first place, it is studied and solemn, and wants Swansdown's light and familiar vivacity. Secondly, there is an affectation of elegance utterly at war with his ordinary manners. Thirdly,"—

"Oh, my dear sir," cried Swansdown, "save me from this serious vindication of my innocence. You can't be in earnest in thinking any one believes the report?"

"They do say so," replied Harvey, "but I have always defended you. I have said that if you chose to devote your time in this way, something of a more permanent and solid character would be given to the world."

"I have been bantered with it by my friends in

the North," added Swansdown, "but that is a gantlet which every man, who dabbles in literature, must expect to run."

"I have forgotten the name of the poem," said Meriwether, with innocent gravity.

"It is called *The Romaunt of Drysdale*," said Swansdown.

"Or *The Lapdog Romance*," added Ned.

Swansdown coloured slightly, and then laughed, but without much heart.

"Fill up your glass, Mr. Swansdown," said Meriwether, "the truth of wine is better than all the fiction of poetry. Is this thing much admired?"

"A good deal," replied Swansdown.

"Amongst the young ladies of the boarding-school, especially," said Harvey.

"If I were disposed to criticise it," said Ned, "I should say that the author has been more successful in his rhyme than in his story."

"Yes," added Harvey, "the jingle of the verse is its great merit, and seems to have so completely satisfied the writer, that he has forgotten to bring the story forward at all. I have never been able to make out exactly what is the subject of it."

"Then the sentiment," continued Hazard, "in which it abounds, is somewhat over-mystical;—one flight runs so into the other, that it is not very easy to comprehend them."

"That," said Harvey, "is an admirable invention in writing. The author only gives you half of what he means, leaving you to fill up the rest for yourself.

It saves time, and enables him to crowd a great deal into a small space."

At this, Swansdown gave another laugh, but somewhat dry and feeble.

"There is another thing about this poem," said Ned, "it has some strange comparisons. There is one here that Prudence has marked; I suppose she has found out its meaning, and as that is a fortunate enterprise, she has taken care to note it. The poet has endeavoured to trace a resemblance between the wing of Cupid and his mistress's breath; and he sets about it by showing, that when Cupid takes a flight on a spring morning, with his wings bound with roses, he must necessarily, at every flutter, shake off some of these odoriferous flowers: and then, as the lady's breath is redolent of aromatic flavours, the resemblance is complete. I'll read the passage aloud, if you please."

"Meriwether," said Swansdown in evident embarrassment, but still endeavouring to preserve a face of gaiety, "suppose we take a turn across your lawn before dark?—We want a little motion."

"Wont you stay to hear this flight of Cupid?" asked Ned, taking up the book.

"I have no doubt it is very fine," said Swansdown. "But your account of it is so much better, that I should not like to weaken the impression of it."

Saying this, he retreated from the dining room, and waited at the front door for Meriwether, who almost immediately followed.

In the evening our party played at whist; Prudence and the poet making partners against Meriwether and Harvey; whilst the rest of us sat round as spectators of the game. Mr. Chub, as usual, smoked his pipe in the porch, and the children slept about the corners of the room. Swansdown had grown dull, and his particularly accomplished bearing appeared somewhat torpid, except now and then, when he had occasion to make an inquiry respecting the game, which he did in a manner that no vulgar whist-player may ever hope to emulate: as thus,—putting on an interrogative look, gently bending his body forward, extending his left arm a little outward from his breast, and showing a fine diamond ring on his little finger, and asking with a smile,—so soft that it could hardly be called a smile,—“spades are trumps?”

CHAPTER XIV.**MY GRAND UNCLE.**

My grand uncle Edward Hazard, the father of Walter, was, from all accounts, a man of an active, speculating turn. He was always busy in schemes to improve his estate, and, it is said, threw away a great deal of money by way of bettering his fortune. He was a gentleman who had spent a considerable portion of his life in England, and when he settled himself, at last, in possession of his patrimony at Swallow Barn, he was filled with magnificent projects, which, tradition says, to hear him explain, would have satisfied any man, to a mathematical demonstration, that with the expenditure of a few thousand pounds, Swallow Barn would have risen one hundred per cent. in value. He was a very authoritative man, also, in the province; belonged frequently to the House of Burgesses; and was, more than once, in the privy council. The family now look up to my grand uncle Edward, as one of the most distinguished individuals of the stock, and take a great deal of pride in his importance: they say he was a most astonishing rake in London, and a wonderful speaker in the provincial legislature.

Connected with these two developements of his character, there are two portraits of him at Swallow Barn. One represents him in an embroidered coat without a cape, a highly worked cravat, tied tight enough round his neck to choke him, which makes his eyes seem to start from their sockets; an inordinately bedizened waistcoat, satin small-clothes, silk stockings, and large buckles in his shoes. His complexion is of the most effeminate delicacy, and his wig seems to form a white downy cushion for a small fringed cocked-hat. By the portrait, he could not have been much above twenty years of age; and his air is prodigiously conceited. The second picture exhibits only his bust. It presents a gentleman with a fine, bluff, and somewhat waggish face, past the meridian of life, arrayed in brown, with the oratorical expression of one about to make a speech.

Now it must be made known, that the tract of land, called the Brakes, belonging to the Tracy family, lies adjacent to Swallow Barn. In old times the two estates were divided by a small stream that emptied into the James River, and that is still known by the name of the Apple-pie Branch. This rivulet traverses a range of low grounds for some miles, occasionally spreading itself out into morasses, which were formerly, and in some places are now, overgrown with thickets of arrow-wood, nine-bark, and various other shrubs, the growth of this region. The main channel of the stream through these tangled masses, was generally distinct enough to be traced as a boundary line, although the marsh extended

some distance from each bank. In the course of this stream there is one point where the higher ground of the country stretches in upon the bed of the marsh, from either side, so as to leave a gorge of about a hundred yards in width, from both of which eminences the spectator may look back upon the low lands of the swamp for nearly a mile.

Just at that period of the life of my grand uncle when his fever of improvement had risen to its crisis, and when he was daily creating immense fortunes,—in his dreams,—it struck him, upon looking at the gorge I have described, that with very little trouble and expense, he might throw a stout breastwork from one side to the other, and have as fine a mill-dam as any man could possibly desire. It was so simple an operation that he was surprised it had never occurred to him before. And then a flour mill might be erected a short distance below,—which would cost but a trifle,—and the inevitable result would be, that this unprofitable tract of waste land would thereupon become the most valuable part of the estate.

I am told that it belonged to the character of my grand uncle to fall absolutely in love with every new project. He turned this one over in his mind for two or three nights; and it became as clear to him as daylight, that he was to work wonders with his mill.

So, reflecting that he had but sixteen irons in the fire at this time, he went to work without a moment's delay. The first thing he did was to send an

order to Bristol, (for he never had any opinion of the mechanics at home,) for a complete set of mill machinery; and the second, to put up a house of pine weather-boards, for the mill. Contemporaneously with this last operation, he set about the dam; and, in the course of one summer, he had a huge breastwork of logs thrown across the path of the modest, diminutive Apple-pie, which would have terrified the stream even if it had been a giant.

As soon as this structure was completed, the waters began to gather. My grand uncle came down every day to look at them, and as he saw them gradually encroaching upon the different little mounds of the swamp, it is said he smiled, and remarked to his son Walter, whom he frequently took with him, "that it was strange to see what results were produced by human art." And it is also told of him, that he made his way, during this rising of the waters, to a tree in the bed of the dam, to notch with his penknife a point to which the flood would ultimately tend; that, while stooping to take a level with the breast of the dam, he lost his balance, and was upset into a pool, formed by the encroaching element; and that, when Walter expected to see him in a passion at this mishap, he rose laughing, and observed, "that the bed of the dam was a damned bad bed;" which is said to be the only pun that ever was made in the Hazard family, and therefore I have put it on record.

In a few days, with the help of one or two rains,

the dam was completely full ; and, to the infinite pleasure of my grand uncle, a thin thread of water streamed over one corner of the dam,—the most beautiful little cascade in the world ; it looked like a glossy streamer of delicate white ribbon. My grand uncle was delighted. “There, my boy,” said he to Walter, “there is Tivoli for you ! We shall have our mill a-going in a week.”

Sure enough, that day week, off went the mill. All the corn of the farm was brought down to this place ; and, for an hour or two that morning, the mill clattered away as if it had been filled with a thousand iron-shod devils, all dancing a Scotch reel. My grand uncle thumped his cane upon the floor with a look of triumph, whilst his eyes started from his head, (so as to produce a wonderful resemblance to his youthful picture,) as he frequently exclaimed to the people about him, “I told you so ; this comes of energy and foresight ; this shows the use of a man’s faculties, my boy !”

It was about an hour and a half, or perhaps two hours,—as my authority affirms,—after the commencement of this racket and clatter in the mill, that my grand uncle, and all the others who were intent upon the operation, were a little surprised to discover that the millstone began to slacken in its speed ; the bolting cloth was manifestly moving lazily, and the wheels were getting tired. Presently, a dismal screech was heard, that sounded like all the trumpets of Pandemonium blown at once ; it was a pro-

longed, agonizing, diabolical note that went to the very soul.

“In the name of all the imps of Tartarus, and blackguard fiends of Acheron!—(a famous interjection of my grand uncle,) what is that?” “It’s only the big wheel stopped as chock as a tombstone,” said the miller, “and it naturally screeches, because, you see, the gudgeon is new, and wants grease.” Hereupon a court of inquiry was instituted; and, leading the van, followed by the whole troop, out went my grand uncle to look at the head-gate. Well, not a thing was to be seen there but a large solitary bull-frog, squatted on his hams at the bottom of the race, and looking up at his visitors with the most piteous and imploring countenance, as much as to say, “I assure you, gentlemen, I am exceedingly astonished at this extraordinary convulsion, which has left me, as you perceive, naked and dry.” Then the court proceeded upon their investigation towards the dam, to observe how that came on.

I can readily imagine how my grand uncle looked, when the scene here first presented itself to his view. It must have been just such a look as Sir Peter Teazle is made to put on, when the screen falls: a look of droll, waggish, solemn, silent wonder, which, for the time, leaves it a matter of perfect doubt whether it is to terminate in a laugh or a cry. In the first place, the beautiful ribbon cascade was clean gone. In the second, there were all the little tussocks of the swamp, showing their small green heads above the

surface of the water, which would hardly have covered one's shoe-top; and there were all the native shrubs of the marsh, bending forwards, in scattered groups, like a set of rose bushes that had been visited by a shower; dripping wet, and having their slender stalks tangled with weeds; and there was, towards the middle, a little line of rivulet meandering down to the edge of the dam, and then holding its unambitious course parallel with the breastwork, deploying to the left, where it entered the race, and tripping along gently, down to the very seat of the bull-frog. "Hoity, toity," cried my grand uncle, after he had paused long enough to find speech, "here is some mistake in this matter!"

Now, it is a principle of physics, that an exhausted receiver is the worst thing in the world to make a draught upon. The mill-dam was like a bank that had paid out all its specie; and, consequently, could not bear the run made upon it by the big wheel, which, in turn, having lost its credit, stopped payment with that hideous yell that wrought such a shock upon the nerves of my grand uncle.

In vain did the old gentleman ransack the stores of his philosophy, to come at this principle. He studied the case for half an hour, examined the dam in every part, and was exceedingly perplexed. "Those rascals of muskrats have been at work," said he. So, the examination was conducted to this point; but not a hole could be found. "The soil is a porous, open, filtrating kind of soil," said the old gentleman.

"It seems to me, master," said an arch looking negro, who was gaping over the flood-gate upon the muddy waste, "that the mill's run out of water."

"Who asked you for your opinion, you scoundrel?" said my grand uncle in a great fury,—for he was now beginning to fret,—“get out of my sight, and hold your tongue!”

"The fellow is right," said the miller, "we have worked out the water, that's clear!"

"It's a two-hour-mill," added the negro, in a voice scarcely audible, taking the risk of my grand uncle's displeasure, and grinning saucily but good-humouredly, as he spoke.

It is said that my grand uncle looked up at the black with the most awful face he ever put on in his life. It was blood-red with anger. But, bethinking himself for a moment, he remained silent, as if to subdue his temper.

There was something, however, in the simple observation of the negro, that responded exactly to my grand uncle's secret thoughts; and some such conviction rising upon his mind, gradually lent its aid to smother his wrath. How could he beat the poor fellow for speaking the truth! It was,—and he now saw it written in characters that could no be mistaken,—it was, after all his trouble, and expense, and fond anticipations, "a two-hour-mill."

"Stop the mill," said my grand uncle, turning round, and speaking in the mildest voice to the miller, "stop the mill; we shall discontinue our work to-day."

"Squire," replied the miller, "the mill has been as silent as a church for the last hour."

"True," said my grand uncle, recollecting himself; "come Walter, we will mount our horses, and think over this matter when we get home. It is very extraordinary! Why didn't I foresee this? Never mind, we will have water enough there to-morrow, my boy!"

He slowly went to the fence corner, and untied his horse, and got up into his saddle as leisurely as if he had been at a funeral. Walter mounted his, and they both rode homeward at a walk; my grand uncle whistling Malbrouk all the way, in an under key, and swinging his cane round and round by the tassel.

CHAPTER XV.**THE OLD MILL.**

IT fortunately happened that a tolerably wet season followed this first experiment of the mill. But with all the advantages of frequent rains, the mortifying truth became every day more apparent, that my grand uncle's scheme of accommodating the neighbourhood with a convenient recourse for grinding their corn, was destined to be baulked, in the larger share of its usefulness, by that physical phenomenon which was disclosed to him on the first day of his operations; to wit, that his capacious reservoir was emptied in a much more rapid ratio than it was filled. It was like a profligate spendthrift whose prodigality exceeded his income. The consequence was that the mill was obliged to submit to the destiny of working from one to two hours in the morning, and then to stop for the rest of the day, except in the very wet weather of the spring, (and then there was no great supply of corn,) in order, by the most careful husbandry, to wring from the reluctant little water-course a sufficient fund for the next day's employment.

This was a serious loss to the country around;

for my grand uncle had talked so much about his project, and extolled his benefaction so largely, that the people had laid out their accounts to take all their grist to his mill. They came there, all through the summer, in crowds; and nothing was more common than to see a dozen ruminative old horses, with as many little bare-legged negroes astride upon them, with the large canvass mill-bags spread out for saddles, all collected of a morning round the mill door, each waiting for his turn to get his sack filled. Sometimes these monkeys were fast asleep for hours on their steeds; and sometimes they made great confusion about the premises with their wild shouts, and screams, and rough-and-tumble fights in which they were often engaged. But it invariably fell out that at least half were disappointed of their errands, and were obliged to attend the next day. In the dry spells the mill stopped altogether. These things gave great dissatisfaction to the neighbourhood, and many good customers abandoned the mill entirely. I am told, also, that the old gentleman was singularly unfortunate in his choice of a miller. He had a great giant of a fellow in that station, who was remarkable for a hard-favoured, knotty, red head, and a particularly quarrelsome temper. So that it often happened, when the neighbours expostulated in rather too severe terms against the difficulty of getting their corn ground, this functionary, who was a little of the mould of the ancient miller in the mother country, made but few words of it, and gave the remonstrants a sound threshing, by way of bringing

them to reason. Then again, the dam formed a large pestilent lake, and, by its frequent exposure of the bottom to the sun, engendered foul vapours that made the country, in the autumn, very unhealthy.

These circumstances, in process of time, worked sadly to the disparagement of my grand uncle's profits, and set the people to talking in harsh terms against his whole undertaking. They said the worst thing they could of it, "That it was a blasted thundergust mill, and not worth a man's while to be fooling about it with his corn, as long as he could get it ground any where else, if it was ten miles off!"

In process of time the miller was turned away: and then the machinery got out of order, and my grand uncle would not repair; and so the mill came to a dead halt. Following the course of nature, too, the dam began to manifest symptoms of a premature old age. First, the upper beams decayed by the action of the sun upon them; after these, the lower parts of the structure broke loose. But what with drift wood, and leaves, and rubbish, the mound, which constituted the breastwork, remained sufficiently firm to support the pond for some years. It was a famous place for black snakes and sun fish in summer, and wild ducks in winter. All this time the stream found a vent through an opening that had been worn in the breastwork; and, consequently, the race had become entirely dry, and grown over with grass.

Year after year the surface of the pond grew gra-

dually less. It retreated slowly from its former edge, and became narrower. At length, at the breaking up of one unusually boisterous, wet and surly winter, there came on, in the month of March, a week of heavy and incessant rain. This celebrated week closed with one of the most furious tempests ever remembered in that part of the country. The heavens poured down their wrath upon the incontinent mill-dam; the winds rushed, with a confounding energy, over this desolate tract, driving the waters before them in torrents; and away went the rickety old breastwork, with all the imprisoned pool behind it.

The next morning the tempest subsided. The sun smiled again over the chilly scene; and there was the fuming and affrighted little Apple-pie, in all its former insignificance. Not a trace of the breastwork was left; and there was to be seen the foul and slimy bed of the mill pond, exposed in shocking nakedness to the eye. Long green tresses of weed, covered with the velvet of many years' accumulation beneath the surface of the water, lay strewn about, wherever any stubborn shrub occurred to arrest their passage; huge trunks of trees, moss-grown and rotten, were imbedded upon the muddy surface; briars, leaves, and other vegetable wrecks were banked up on each other in various forms, mingled, here and there, with the battered and shapeless carcasses of the smaller vermin that frequented the pond. The wind swept with a brisk and whistling speed over this damp bottom, and visited, with a wintry rigour, the shivering spectators whom curiosity had

attracted to witness the ravages of the night ; but, in the midst of all, the feeble and narrow Apple-pie shot hastily along, with a turbid stream, pursuing his course through, under, and around the collected impediments in his path, as near as possible in the very same channel which, ten or fifteen years before, he had been wont to inhabit; as if unconscious that this disturbance in the face of nature could be attributed, in the slightest degree, to such an inefficient and trifling imp as himself: by no means an unimpressive type of the confusion and riot which the most sordid and paltry passions may produce in the moral world, when suffered to gather up and gangrene in the system.

As I have introduced this narrative to make my reader acquainted with the merits of the controversy relative to the boundary line, it is necessary that I should inform him, that when my grand uncle first entered upon this project of the mill, he immediately opened a negotiation with Mr. Gilbert Tracy, his neighbour,—who was at that time the proprietor of the Brakes,—for the purchase of so much of the land, or rather of the marsh, which lay eastward of the Apple-pie Branch, as was sufficient for the projected mill-dam. I have already told my readers that the Branch itself was the dividing line between the two estates ; and, consequently, my grand uncle was already in possession of all westward of that line. In his communications with Mr. Gilbert Tracy on this subject, he unfolded his whole scheme, and, without the least difficulty, obtained the purchase he desired.

There were several letters passed between them, which stated the purpose contemplated; and the deed that was executed on the occasion also recites, that "Edward Hazard, Esquire, of Swallow Barn, conceiving it to be a matter of great importance to the good people residing on, frequenting and using the lands in the vicinage of the stream of water, commonly known and called by the name of the Apple-pie Branch, that a convenient and serviceable mill, adapted to the grinding of wheat, rye, and Indian corn, should be constructed on the said Apple-pie, &c.:" And also, "that the said Edward Hazard, Esquire, having carefully considered the capacity, fall, force of water, head and permanency of the said Apple-pie Branch for the maintenance and supply of a mill as aforesaid; and being convinced and certified of the full and perfect fitness of the same, for the purposes aforesaid;" the said Gilbert Tracy transferred, &c., a full title "to so much of the said land as it may be found useful and necessary to occupy in the accomplishment of the said design, &c.; the said Edward Hazard paying therefor at the rate of one pound, current money of Virginia, for each and every acre thereof."

By this conveyance, the western limit of the Brakes was removed from the channel of the Branch to the water edge of the mill-pond, as soon as the same should be created.

My grand uncle, after the failure of his scheme, could never bear to talk about it. It fretted him ex-

ceedingly; and he was sure to get into a passion whenever it was mentioned. He swore at it, and said a great many harsh things; for, I am told, he was naturally a passionate man, and was not very patient under contradiction. He would not even go near the place, but generally took some pains, in his rides, to avoid it. When they told him that the storm had carried away the dam, he broke out with one of his usual odd kind of oaths, and said, "he was glad of it; it was a hyperbolic, preposterous abortion;—he must have been under the influence of the moon when he conceived it, and of Satan when he brought it forth; and he rejoiced that the winds of heaven had obliterated every monument of his folly." Besides this, he said many other things of it equally severe.

The date of this freak of the old gentleman was somewhere about the middle of the last century. The ruin of the mill is still to be seen. Its roof has entirely disappeared; a part of the walls are yet standing, and the shaft of the great wheel, with one or two of the pinions attached, still lies across its appropriate bed. The spot is embowered with ancient beech trees, and forms a pleasant and serene picture of woodland quiet. The track of the race is to be traced by some obscure vestiges, and two mounds remain, showing the abutments of the dam. A range of light willows grows upon what I presume was once the edge of the mill-pond; but the intervening marsh presents now, as of old, its complicated

thickets of water plants, amongst which the magnolia, at its accustomed season, exhibits its beautiful flower, and throws abroad its rich perfume.

Before the period of the Revolutionary war, Gilbert Tracy paid the debt of nature. The present proprietor, his eldest son, inherited his estate. Old Edward Hazard figured in that momentous struggle, and lived long enough after its close to share, with many gallant spirits of the time, the glories of its triumph. Isaac, the son of his old friend, preserved a neutral position in the contest; and, being at heart a thorough-going loyalist, the intercourse between him and the family at Swallow Barn grew rare and unsocial. The political principles of the two families were widely at variance; and, in those times, such differences had their influence upon the private associations of life. Still it is believed, and I suppose with some foundation for the opinion, that the good offices of my grand uncle, secretly exerted, and without even the knowledge of Mr. Tracy, had the effect to preserve the Brakes from confiscation,—the common misfortune of the disaffected in the war: An affectionate remembrance of his old friend Gilbert, and the youth of the successor to the estate at that time, being imagined to have actuated Edward Hazard in this manifestation of kindness.

My grand uncle, very soon after the peace, was gathered to his fathers; and has left behind him a name, of which, as I have before remarked, the family are proud. Amongst the monuments which still exist to recal him to memory, I confess the old

mill, to me, is not the least endearing. Its history has a whimsical bearing upon his character, illustrating his ardent, uncalculating zeal; his sanguine temperament; his public spirit; his odd perceptions; and that dash of comic, headstrong humorousness that, I think, has reappeared, after the shifting of one generation, in Ned.

I, accordingly, frequently go with Ned to this spot; and, as we stretch ourselves out upon the grass, in the silent shade of the beech trees, or wander around the old ruin, the spot becomes peopled to our imaginations with the ancient retainers of Swallow Barn; the fiery-headed miller; the elvish little negroes who have probably all sunk, hoary-headed, to the grave, leaving their effigies behind, as perfect as in the days when they themselves rode to mill; and last of all, our venerable ancestor.

Out of these materials, we fabricate some amusing and touching stories.

CHAPTER XVI.

PROCEEDINGS AT LAW.

It was about the year 1790, that my uncle Walter began to turn his attention to the condition of the Apple-pie frontier.

Until this time, ever since the miscarriage of the unfortunate enterprise of the mill, this part of the domain had been grievously neglected. It was a perfect wilderness. No fences had ever been erected, on either side, to guard the contiguous territories from encroachment ; and there were numerous cow-paths leading into the thickets, which afforded a passage, though somewhat complicated, from the one estate to the other. The soil was cold and barren, and no cultivation, therefore, was expended upon this quarter. In fact, it may be said to have belonged to the colts, pigs, heifers, racoons, opossums and rabbits of both proprietors. The negroes still consider it the finest place in the whole country to catch vermin, as they call the three latter species of animals ; and I myself, frequently in my ranges through this region, encounter their various gins and snares set in the many by-paths that cross it.

The tract of marsh land, occupied by the dam in old times, did not exceed, on the Tracy side of the

Branch, above thirty acres. It was a slip of about half a mile in length, and perhaps, at its widest part, not more than two hundred yards broad, that bordered on that side of the Branch. This slip, of course, constituted the subject matter of my grand uncle's purchase from Mr. Gilbert Tracy.

It occurred to Walter Hazard, about the period I have referred to above, that this bottom might be turned to some account, if it were well drained, cleaned of its rank growth of brushwood, and exposed to the sun and then set in grass. It would doubtless, he thought, make an excellent pasture for his cattle; and, at all events, would contribute to render the surrounding country more healthy.

If my uncle Walter had been a man in the least degree given to superstitious influences, he would have seen, in the ill-fated schemes of his father in this direction, the most inauspicious omens against his success in his contemplated achievement. But he was a man who never thought of omens, and was now altogether intent upon adding a rich and convenient meadow to his estate.

It seemed that the Apple-pie was to be the fountain of an Iliad of troubles to the Hazard family.

When Walter Hazard was ready to go to work, somewhere about midsummer, he turned in twenty hands upon the marsh, and forthwith constructed some rectangular ditches, traversing it upon both sides of the branch, sufficiently near to carry off the water. Whilst he was employed at this work, and not dreaming of any other obstacles than those that

were before his eyes, he was exceedingly surprised to receive a letter from Mr. Isaac Tracy, which, in the most friendly and polite terms, intimated that the writer had just been made acquainted with Captain Hazard's (my uncle always bore this title after the war,) design of draining the marsh; and regretted to learn that he had assumed a proprietary right over a portion of the domain that appertained to the Brakes. The letter proceeded to acquaint my uncle that this infringement involved a question affecting the family dignity; and, therefore, it was suggested, that it became necessary to remonstrate against it, more from considerations of a personal nature, than from any regard to the value of the soil thus brought into dispute.

Now it so happened that Mr. Tracy had, for some time past, been revolving in his mind this subject, to wit,—the right of ownership over the bed of the mill-dam, after the accident that brought it again into the condition in which it existed before the erection of the mill. He had examined the deed from his father, part of which I have recited in a former chapter, and that document favoured the conclusion, that as the grant had been made for a specific purpose, the failure of that purpose restored the original owner to all his former prerogatives.

This brought him to studying the law of the matter, and he soon became perfectly assured that he understood all about it. In short, he took up a bold, peremptory and dogged opinion, that he was in,—as he remarked,—of his former estate: that it was a

grant *durante* the existence of the mill-pond ; a feoffment defeasible upon condition subsequent, and a dozen such other dogmas which tickled the worthy gentleman excessively, when they once made a lodgment in his brain. There is nothing in the world, I believe, that produces a more sudden glory in the mind, than the first conceits of a man who has made some few acquisitions in an abstruse science : he is never at rest until he makes some show of his stock to the world ; and I have observed that this remark is particularly applicable to those who have got a smattering of law. Mr. Tracy ran off with the thing at full speed. He affected to consult his lawyer upon the matter, but always silenced all attempts of that adviser to explain, by talking the whole time himself, and leaving him without an answer.

It was in the height of this fervour that he received the information of my uncle's proceedings ; and it was with a kind of exultation and inward chuckling over the certainty of his rights, that he sat down and addressed Captain Hazard the letter of which I have spoken. There was another sentiment equally active in Mr. Tracy's mind to spur him on to this action. The lord of a freehold coming by descent through two or three generations, and especially if he be the tenant in tail, is as tenacious as a German Prince of every inch of his dominions. There is a seigniorial pride attached to his position, and the invasion of the most insignificant outpost conveys an insult to the lawful supremacy ; it manifests a contemptuous defiance of the feudal dignity. Mr. Tracy

felt all this on the present occasion, and, perhaps, rather more acutely in consequence of the partial alienation between his own and his neighbour's family, produced by the late political events, and which was, at this period, but very little removed.

The letter came upon my uncle like a gauntlet thrown at his feet. He was somewhat choleric in temper, and his first impulse was to make a quarrel of it. It seemed to him to imply a dishonest intrusion.

However, when he came to consider it more maturely, he could find no fault either with its tone or its temper. It was a frank, polite and seemly letter enough: "If it was Mr. Tracy's land," said my uncle, "he certainly had a right to say so:" and in truth, as he thought more about it, he came to the conclusion that it looked well to see a gentleman inclined to stand by his rights: it was what every man of property ought to do!

In this feeling, my uncle wrote his reply to Mr. Tracy's letter, and filled it with every observance of courtesy, but, at the same time, steadily gainsaying his neighbour's opinions of the right, and desiring that the matter should be investigated for their mutual satisfaction. This communication was followed by the instant withdrawal of his people from the debatable ground, and, for the time, with an abandonment of the meadow scheme.

Never were there, in ancient days of bull-headed chivalry, when contentious monk, bishop or knight appealed to fiery ordeal, cursed morsel, or wager of

battle, two antagonists better fitted for contest than the worthies of my present story. My uncle had been a seasoned campaigner of the Revolution, with a sturdy soul set in an iron frame, and had grown, by force of habit, a resolute and impregnable defender of his point. Mr. Tracy, I have already described as the most enamoured man in the world of an argument. And here they were, with as pretty a field before them as ever was spoiled by your peace-makers. The value of the controversy not one groat; its issue, connected with the deepest sentiment that lay at the bottom of the hearts of both,—the pride of conquest!

Mr. Tracy's first measure was to write a long dissertation upon the subject, in the shape of an epistle, to my uncle. It was filled with discussions upon reversionary interests, resulting uses, and all the jargon of the books, plentifully embellished with a prodigious array of learning, contained in pithy Latin maxims, in which the lawyers are wont to invest meagre and common thoughts with the veil of science. It was filled, moreover, with illustrations and amplifications and exaggerations, the fruit of a severe and learned study of his case by the writer.

Then followed my uncle's reply, in which it was clear that he did not understand a word of the argument that was intended to prostrate him. After this came rejoinder and surrejoinder, and reduplications of both, poured in by broadsides. Never was there so brisk a tourney of dialectics known on the banks of the James River! The disputants, now and then,

became sharp, and my uncle, whenever this was the case, obtained a decided advantage by a certain caustic humour, that he handled with great dexterity.

Eventually, as it might have been foreseen, they resolved to go to law, and institute an amicable ejectment. Here a difficulty arose. It was hard to determine which should be plaintiff, and which defendant; since it was not quite clear who was in possession. Mr. Tracy insisted, with all imaginable politeness, upon making my uncle the compliment of appearing as the plaintiff in the action, which the latter obstinately refused; inasmuch as he was unwilling it should be understood by the world that the suit had been one of his seeking. This was adjusted, at last, by Mr. Tracy's commencing the proceeding himself. It began in the county court; and then went to the superior court; and then to the court of appeals. This occupied some years. All the decisions, so far as they had gone, had been in favour of my uncle; but there were mistakes made in important points, and proofs omitted, and papers neglected to be filed. Mr. Tracy was deeply vexed at the issue, and waxed warm. So, the whole proceedings were commenced anew, and carried a second time through the same stages. The principal points were still in my uncle's favour. His antagonist bit his lips, affirmed the utter impregnability of his first positions, and resolved not to give up the point. Never was there a case so fruitful of subdivisions! Jury after jury was brought to bear upon it; and twenty times every trace of the original controversy was entirely out of sight. At

length they got into chancery, and then there was the deuce to pay !

Year after year rolled away, and sometimes the pretty little quarrel slept, like the enchanted princess, as if it was not to wake again for a century. And then again, all of a sudden, it was waked up, and shoved and tossed and thumped and rolled and racketed about, like Diogenes' tub.

It was observable, throughout all this din and bustle, that Mr. Tracy was completely driven out of every intrenchment of law and fact ; which, so far from having the effect of moderating his opinion or his zeal, set him into a more thorough and vigorous asseveration of his first principles.

He affirmed that the juries were the most singularly obtuse and obstinate bodies he had ever encountered ; and that the courts were, beyond all question, the most incurably opinionated tribunals that ever were formed.

In the height of this warfare, the death of the defendant, my uncle, occurred ; which for some years again lulled all hostilities into a profound slumber. After a long interval, however, the contest was resumed ; and it now fell to the lot of Frank Meriwether to enter the lists. No man could be more indisposed by nature to such an enterprise ; and it was plainly discernible that our old friend of the Brakes was also beginning, in his old age, to relax into a pacific temper.

It must be remarked, that during the latter years of this struggle the two families had grown to be upon a

very intimate footing, and that at no period had the legal disquiets the least influence whatever upon the private regards of the parties.

In order, therefore, to get rid of the troubles of carrying on the debate, Frank Meriwether had thrown out some hints of a disposition to settle the whole affair by a reference to mutual friends; and would gladly at any time have relinquished all claim to the disputed territory, if he could have contrived to do so without wounding the feelings of his neighbour, who was now singularly tenacious to have it appear that his only object in the pursuit was to vindicate his first decided impressions. The old gentleman, therefore, readily agreed to the arbitration, and still fed his vanity with the hope that he should find in the private judgment of impartial men, a sound, practical, common sense justification of his original grounds in the controversy.

This result is to be risked upon the opinions of Singleton Oglethorpe Swansdown and Philpot Wart, Esquires, who are immediately to convene for the consideration of this momentous subject.

CHAPTER XVII.

STRANGE SYMPTOMS.

My reader will recollect, that before my digression to show the merits of the question touching the boundary line, I left Mr. Swansdown seated, after tea, at a game of whist. This game is a special favourite in the low country of Virginia, and possesses an absorbing interest for Meriwether. Prudence is not behind her brother either in the skill or the devotion of a thorough-bred player ; and Harvey Riggs may very justly be set down as pre-eminent in this accomplishment. The poet and philosopher was the only one of the party at the table who may be said to have ever been at fault during the evening.

I do not pretend myself to be well versed in the mysteries of this silent and cogitative recreation ; but I have often had occasion to observe that a genuine whist-player is apt, for the time, to be one of the most querulous of mortals. He makes fewer allowances for the frailty of his brethren than any other member of society. The sin of not following suit, or losing a trick, or not throwing out a good card in the right place, is, in his eyes, almost inexpiable, and does not fail to bring down upon the delinquent that sharp, unmitigated and direct rebuke that implies, "you

must be a blockhead, or you never would have thought of doing so stupid a thing!" This is sometimes insinuated in a look, sometimes conveyed in a question, and often inferred by a simple ejaculation.

Swansdown was not unfrequently taken to task by his antagonists. Harvey Riggs would stop, put down his cards upon the table, and, with a biting affectation of mildness, observe, "Really, Mr. Swansdown, if I could only count upon your observing the rules of the game, I should know what to play; but as it is, I am exceedingly perplexed!" Even Frank Meriwether, with all his benignant impulses, would sometimes throw himself back into his chair, and putting his hand across his forehead, would draw it slowly down to his chin, as if studying a contingency which, from the play of the other party, had baffled his calculations: and sometimes he would break out into an interjectional whistle, and come down suddenly with a card upon the table, as he said, "Now, Mr. Swansdown, I believe you have given me that trick!" To all these implied imputations against his dexterity, the gentleman would reply in the most polite manner imaginable,—with a lambent smile upon his features,—by a compliment to the superior address of his partner, expressive of his reliance upon her ability to rescue him from the fatal tendency of his own errors.

It was quite perceivable that Prudence by no means joined in this vituperation of her coadjutor; but, on the contrary, frequently checked the license

of the other two, and said many things in extenuation of his aberrations from the laws of the game. Indeed, I thought she carried this vindication further than his case required. But it never failed to produce a grateful recognition from him, and a frequent attempt to excuse himself upon the ground, that Miss Prudence had herself to blame, as her conversation was very much calculated to seduce such a tyro as he was, from the proper study of his part in the play. At all such sallies, Prudence looked modestly; re-adjusted herself in her seat, and smiled upon the poet.

Before the party broke up, the lady was quite animated. Her demeanour was characterized by a certain restless attempt at composure, and a singularly vivacious kind of sobriety,—partly sentimental, partly witty, and exceedingly lady-like. I will not say she had designs upon the peace of our new guest, but it looked prodigiously like it!

When she retired to her chamber, she was manifestly under some serious or strange influences. It is reported of her, that she sang one or two plaintive songs; showed a slight disposition to romp, above stairs, with Lucy and Vic; then she took a seat in her open window, looked out on the moon, and “fette a gentil sigh”—in the phrase of the lady of the ballads. It is, moreover, reported, that she remained in the window until long past midnight. Something ailed her; but it was not told! Perhaps some soft and blandishing vision floated before her pensive eye; some form from the fairy world of her

imagination, at this hour wore its robes of light, and careered upon the moonbeam, or bounded with the silver ray along the tree-tops that fluttered in the dewy breeze! or, perchance, in the deep shades of the grove that slept in dark masses before her chamber lattice, the spectres of her thought beckoned her regards, and filled her mind with new and holy contemplations! I am all unlearned in the mystery of so serene a creature's secret communions; and it does not become me to indulge conjecture upon such a perilous question. I therefore content myself with reporting the simple fact, that in that window she sate, to all appearance doing nothing, until every other sentient being at Swallow Barn was hushed in sleep. What could it mean?

The next morning there was another phenomenon exhibited in the family, equally strange. An hour before breakfast, Prudence, arrayed with unusual neatness, was seated at the piano, apparently beguiling the early day with the rehearsal of a whole volume of sonnets. This was an unwonted effort, for her music had fallen, of late, into disrelish,—and it had been supposed, for a year past, that she had bidden a careless adieu to all its charms. But this morning she resumed it with a spirit and a perseverance that attracted the notice of all the domestics. It boded, in their simple reckonings, some impending disaster. Such a change in the lady's habits could import no good! They intimated, that when people were going to give up the ghost, such marvels were the not unusual precursors of the event. "It was

as bad," one of the servant maids remarked, "as to hear a hen crow at night from the roost, and she should'nt wonder if something was going to happen,—a burying, or a wedding, or some such dreadful thing!"

But Prudence was not melancholy. On the contrary, she smiled, and seemed more cheerful than ever.

After breakfast, Mr. Swansdown passed an hour or two in the parlour, and fascinated the ladies by the pleasantries of his discourse. He fell into a conversation with Prudence upon literary topics, and nothing could be more refreshing than to hear how much she had read, and how passionately she admired! It was hard to tell which was best pleased with this comparison of opinions—it was so congenial! Prudence proclaimed Cowper to be her favourite bard, and that was exactly Swansdown's preference. They both disliked the immorality of Byron, and admired Scott. And both recited delicious lines from "The Pleasures of Hope."—" 'Tis distance lends enchantment to the view," declaimed Swansdown, following the line up with twenty more. "'Tis distance," echoed Prudence,—as if it had been a simultaneous thought,—and responded throughout, in a softer voice, and with an enraptured eye, to the whole recitation. Good souls! Delightful unison! Why has cruel fate—Pooh! Nonsense! I shall grow sentimental myself, if I say another word about them!

Before noon, Swansdown's equipage was at the

door. Meriwether had arranged the examination of the boundary line to take place on Wednesday next. In the mean time, the belligerent parties, on either side, were to make their hostile preparations.

With the most gracious condescension, the philosopher, poet, patron, arbitrator, and aspiring statesman, ascended his radiant car, and whisked away with the brisk and astounding flourish that belongs to this race of gifted mortals.

CHAPTER XVIII.**THE NATIONAL ANNIVERSARY.**

THE event with which I have closed the last chapter, took place on the morning of the Fourth of July, a day that is never without its interest even in the most secluded parts of our country. It was to be celebrated at "The Landing," a place about a mile and a half distant, on the bank of the river, where the small river boats are usually moored to take in their cargoes. To this spot Ned proposed that we should ride after dinner.

It was a holiday; so Rip had permission to accompany us, and Carey was directed to have our horses at the door. We were amused to find that the old groom had not only brought out our own cavalry, but also a horse for himself: and there he stood, holding our bridles, arrayed in his best coat, with a pair of old top-boots drawn over loose pantaloons of striped cotton which were scrupulously clean. He wore his spurs, and carried also a riding-whip. His mien was unusually brisk, and, after an ancient fashion, coxcombical. He ventured to tell us that Master Frank thought he ought to attend us to the Landing, "as there was goings on down there, upon account of the fourth of July." The truth

was, that learning our destination, he had slipped off to Meriwether to ask his permission to go with us.

Our aged squire rode at a mannerly distance behind us; and Rip, on a hard-mouthed and obstinate colt, that belonged to him, trotted by our sides, with both hands pulling in the bridle, and his legs thrust forward to enable him to counteract the constant tendency of his steed to run away. Rip protests that Spitfire—for so he calls his colt—is the easiest-going animal on the place, although each particular step lifted him at least six inches above his saddle, and almost entirely stopped his talking, because the motion shook the words out of his mouth somewhat in the same manner that water comes out of a bottle. However, no man ever thinks ill of his horse.

Our road lay through thickets of pine, in the shade of which we advanced rapidly, and we soon reached the Landing. There are very few villages in the tide-water country of Virginia: it is intersected by so many rivers, that almost every plantation may be approached sufficiently near by trading vessels to gratify the demands of the population, without the assistance of those little towns which, in other parts of the United States, sprout up like mushrooms. There are yet, therefore, to be seen the vestiges of former trading stations on all the principal rivers; and the traveller is not unfrequently surprised, when, having consulted his map, and been informed of some village with a goodly name, he learns that he has unwarily passed over the spot, without being conscious of any thing but a ruinous tenement stand-

ing on the bank of a river, embowered in deep and solitary shade.

The Landing, which we had now reached, had originally been used for a foreign trade, in which vessels of a large class, a long time ago, were accustomed to receive freights of tobacco, and deposit the commodities required by the country, in return. It is now, however, nothing more than the place of resort for a few river craft, used in carrying the country produce to market. There were two or three dilapidated buildings in view, and, among these, one of larger dimensions than the rest, a brick house, with a part of the roof entirely gone. A rank crop of Jamestown weed grew up within, so as to be seen through the windows of the first story. Indian corn was planted on the adjacent ground up to the walls, and extended partly under the shelter of a few straggling old apple trees, that seemed to stand as living mementoes of an early family that had long since been swept from beneath their shade. An air of additional desolation was given to this ruin by an extensive swamp that reached almost up to the rear of the building, and over which the river spread its oozy tide, amongst a thick coat of bulrushes. This tenement, tradition says, was once the mansion of an emigrant merchant from Glasgow, who here ruminated in quiet over his slow gains, and waited with a disciplined patience for the good ship which once a year hove in sight above the headland that bounded his seaward view. I can imagine now, how that harbinger of good tidings greeted his eye in the gloom

of the great forest; and with what stir and magnified importance the fitting arrangements were made for her reception! How like a winged deity she came fluttering into this little road, with all her pomp of apparel—with foam upon her breast, and shouts upon her deck—gliding in upright stateliness to her anchorage, as she gathered up her sails in the presence of the wondering eagle and frightened heron!

What was once the warehouse, but now used for a ferry house, stood with its gable end at the extremity of a mouldering wharf of logs. In this end there was a door studded with nails, and another above it opening into the loft. The ridge of the roof projected over these doors and terminated in a beam, where were yet to be seen the remains of a block and tackle. On the land side the building was enlarged by sheds, to which was appended a rude porch. A sun-dried post supported what was once a sign, whereon a few hieroglyphics denoted that this was a place of entertainment, notwithstanding its paper-patched windows and scanty means of accommodation.

Some thirty or forty persons were collected at the Landing. The porch of the shabby little hostelry was filled by a crowd of rough looking rustics, who were laughing boisterously, drinking, and making ribald jokes. A violin and fife were heard, from within the building, to a quick measure, which was accompanied with the heavy tramp of feet from a party of dancers. A group of negroes, outside of the house, were enjoying themselves in the same way, shuffling

through the odd contortions of a jig, with two sticks lying crosswise upon the ground, over which they danced, alternately slapping their thighs and throwing up their elbows to the time of the music, and making strange grimaces. A few tall, swaggering figures, tricked out in yellow hunting-shirts trimmed with green fringe, and their hats, some white and some black, garnished with a band of red cloth and ragged plumes of the same colour, that seemed to have been faded by frequent rains, stood about in little knots, where they talked loudly and swore hard oaths. Amongst these were mingled a motley collection of lank and sallow watermen, boys, negroes and females bedizened in all the wonders of country millinery. At the fences and about the trees, in the vicinity of the house, was to be seen the counterpart of these groups, in the various assemblage of horses of every colour, shape and degree, stamping, neighing and sleeping until their services should be required by their maudlin masters. Occasionally, during our stay, some of these nags were brought forward for a race, which was conducted with increased uproar and tumult.

Contrasted with this rude and busy scene was the voluptuous landscape around us. It was a picture of that striking repose, which, I think, is peculiar to the tide water views; soft, indolent and clear, as if nature had retreated into this drowsy nook, and fallen asleep over her own image, as it was reflected from this beautiful mirror. The river was upwards of a mile in width, and upon its bosom

were seen, for many a rood below, those alternate streaks of light and shade that are said to point out the channel, where its smooth surface was only ruffled by the frequent but lonely leap of some small fish above the water. A few shallows were hauled up on the beach, where some fishing nets were stretched upon stakes, or spread upon the fences on the bank. At the distance of two or three hundred yards from the shore there was a slim pole planted in the river, probably to mark a fishing ground, and upon the very top of this was perched, with a whimsical air of unsociableness, a solitary swallow, apparently ruminating on the beauteous waste of waters below him : and above this glittering expanse, some night-hawks skimmed, soared and darted in pursuit of the hordes of insects that bickered through the atmosphere.

The sun was within half an hour of his journey's end—and, nearer to theirs, were two negroes, who were rapidly approaching the shore with a boat load of crabs and cucumbers, the regular stroke of their oars falling on the ear as if measuring the stillness of the evening. Far below, and seemingly suspended in air amongst the brilliant reflexions of the heavens, lay a small schooner at anchor, fixed as by a spell, and, nevertheless, communicating a sense of animation to this tranquil world by its association with the beings that trod its noiseless deck.

We had wandered, after dismounting from our horses, all round the purlieus of the crowd. Rip had recognized some familiar features amongst the coun-

try volunteers, and had already found out the drummer, who had hung his martial instrument around his shoulders ; and the delighted boy was beating away at it with all his might. Carey had collected about him a set of his old cronies, to whom he was delivering a kind of solemn harangue, of which we could only observe the energy of his gesticulations. The ferry-boat lay attached to the wharf, and on the stern benches were seated three or four graver looking men in coarse attire, who were deeply discussing questions that occasionally brought them into a high tone of voice, and, now and then, into a burst of loud laughter. Ned had led me up to this group, and, in the careless indolence of the moment, we had thrown ourselves out at full length across the seats ; Ned with his legs dangling over the gunwale, with Wilful lying close by, and reposing his head upon his lap.

The principal personage in this collection was Sandy Walker, a long, sun-burnt waterman, who was the proprietor of the hotel, and evidently a man of mark amongst his associates. One of the others was a greasy gentleman in a blue coat, out at elbows, with a nose lustrous with living fire. These two were the principal speakers, and they were debating an intricate point of constitutional law, with more vehemence than perspicacity. At length, an appeal was made to Ned, by Sandy, who was infinitely the most authoritative in his manner of the whole group.

“ Can’t Congress,” said Sandy, “ supposing they

were to pass a law to that effect, come and take a road of theirs any where they have a mind to, through any man's land? I put it to Mr. Ned Hazard."

"Not by the Constitution," said the gentleman in the greasy coat, with marked emphasis.

"Well," said Ned, "we'll hear you, Sandy."

Sandy rose up, and lifting his hand above his head, as he began,—

"I say it stands to reason —"

"It stands to no such thing!" rejoined the other, interrupting him, "if it's against the Constitution,—which I say it is undoubtedly,—to come and take a man's land without saying, by your leave; if I may be allowed the expression, Mr. Ned Hazard, it's running against a snag."

"Silence," said Ned, "Mr. Walker has the plank; we can only hear one at a time!"

"Why, sir," continued Sandy, argumentatively, and looking steadfastly at his opponent, with one eye closed, and, at the same time, bringing his right hand into the palm of his left; "they can just cut off a corner, if they want it, or go through the middle, leaving one half here, and tother there, and make you fence it clean through into the bargain; or," added Sandy, giving more breadth to his doctrine, "go through your house, sir."

"Devil a house have I, Sandy!" said the other.

"Or your barn, sir."

"Nor barn nother."

"Sweeping your bed right from under you, if Congress says so. Arn't there the canal to go across the

Allegheny mountain? What does Congress care about your state rights, so as they have got the money!"

"Canals, I grant you," said his antagonist; "but there's a difference between land and water," evidently posed by Sandy's dogmatic manner, as well as somewhat awed by the relation of landlord, in which Sandy stood, and whom, therefore, he would not rashly contradict. "But," said he, in a more softened tone, and with an affected spice of courtesy in his accost, "Mr. Walker, I'd be glad to know if we could'nt nullify."

"Nullify!" exclaimed Sandy, "nullify what?" said he, with particular emphasis on the last word. "Do you know what old Hickory said down there in the Creek nation, in the war, when the Indians pretended they were going to have a ball play?"

"No."

"If you don't go and wash all that there paint from your faces, I'll give you the shockingest ball play you ever had in all your lives."

"You don't tell me so!" exclaimed the red-nosed gentleman with animation, and bursting out into a tremendous laugh.

"Did'nt he say so, Ned Hazard? I beg your pardon, Mr. Ned Hazard?" ejaculated Sandy, and turning to Ned.

"I think I have heard so," said Ned, "though I don't believe he used that exact expression."

"It was something like it," said Sandy: "well, that's the sort of nullification you'd get."

"Things are getting worse and worse," replied the other. "I can see how it's going! Here, the first thing General Jackson did when he came in, he wanted to have the President elected for six years; and, by and by, they will want him for ten! and now they want to cut up our orchards and meadows, whether or no; that's just the way Bonaparte went on. What's the use of states if they are all to be cut up with canals and rail-roads and tariffs? No, no, gentlemen! you may depend, Old Virginny's not going to let Congress carry on in her day!"

"How can they help it?" asked Sandy.

"We hav'nt *fout* and bled," rejoined the other, taking out of his pocket a large piece of tobacco, and cutting off a quid, as he spoke in a somewhat subdued tone, "we hav'nt *fout* and bled for our liberties to have our posterity and their land circumcised after this rate, to suit the figaries of Congress. So let them try it when they will!"

"Mr. Ned Hazard, what do you call state rights?" demanded Sandy.

"It's a sort of a law," said the other speaker, taking the answer to himself, "against cotton and wool."

"That's a fact," cried Sandy, "and, in my thinking, it's a very foolish sort of a business."

"There's where you and me differs," responded the other.

"Well," said Ned, "it's a troublesome question. Suppose we wait until we hear what Old Virginia says about it herself! And as for us, Sandy, it is getting late, and we must go."

These words concluded the colloquy; and, soon after, having summoned our cavalcade, we set out on our return to Swallow Barn, where we arrived some time after night-fall.

Ned detailed the dialogue I have just described to Frank Meriwether, in the course of the evening, and, from what Frank let fall,—for he grew grave on the subject,—I have reason to think that he has some fearful misgivings of the ambitious designs of the general government. He is decidedly of the state rights party.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE COUNTY COURT.

ON Monday morning Meriwether announced to us that the County Court was to commence its session, and, consequently, that he was obliged to repair to the seat of justice.

I have before intimated that my kinsman is one of the quorum, and has always been famous for his punctuality in the discharge of his judicial functions. It was, moreover, necessary for him to be there to-day, because his business with Philly Wart, in regard to the arbitration, enjoined it upon him to meet that legal luminary without delay.

He insinuated a wish that Ned and myself should accompany him. I think Frank is a little vain of his appearance on the bench. We readily assented to his proposal.

Meriwether never moves on these state occasions without old Carey, who has a suit of livery that is preserved almost exclusively for this service. Accordingly, the old man this morning was decorated with all his honours, of which the principal consisted in a thick drab coat, edged with green; and, as the day was very hot, Carey suffered as much under his

covering as an ancient knight of the Crusades, in his linked mail, on the sandy plains of Syria.

His master, too, had doffed the light and careless habiliments in which he accommodated himself, usually, to the fervours of the season, and was now pranked out in that reverential furniture of broad cloth which he conceived befitted the solemn import of the duties he was about to discharge.

He rides a beautiful full-blooded sorrel; and his pride in all matters that belong to his equitation is particularly conspicuous in the fresh and comfortable character of his housings and horse furniture. He has a large new saddle, luxuriously stuffed and covered with a richly worked coat of yellow buckskin. The stirrups hang inordinately low, so that it is as much as he can do to get the point of his boot into them. But he sits with a lordly erectness upon his seat, and manages his horse with a bold and dexterous hand. On horseback he is a perfect personation of an opulent, unquestioned squire,—the very guardian genius of the soil and its prerogatives—fearless, graceful and masterly, his fine athletic figure appearing here to its greatest advantage.

Ned and myself formed a part of his retinue, like a pair of aids somewhat behind the commander-in-chief, insensibly accommodating our position to the respect inspired by his bearing and rank. Old Carey, in his proper place, brought up the rear. Our journey to the court house was about twelve miles, and as we occasionally brought our horses to a gallop, we arrived there at an early hour.

The sitting of this court is an occasion of great stir. The roads leading to the little county capital were enlivened by frequent troops of the neighbouring inhabitants, that rode in squadrons, from all directions. Jurors, magistrates, witnesses, attorneys of the circuit, and all the throng of a country side interested in this piepowder justice, were rapidly converging to the centre of business.

Upon our arrival, a considerable part of the population had already assembled, and were scattered about the principal places of resort, in decent and orderly groups, in which all seemed intent upon the quiet and respectful discharge of their several errands.

The court house is a low, square, brick building, entirely unornamented, occupying the middle of a large area. It has an official appearance given to it by a huge door of a dingy exterior and ample windows covered with dust and cobwebs. An humble and modest little building, of the same material, stands on one corner of the area, and by the well-worn path leading hence to the temple of Themis, it may be seen that this is the only depository of the county records. At a distance further off, a somewhat larger edifice claims a public character, which is denoted by one or two of the windows being grated. A few small forest trees have been set in the soil, over this space, which, by their feeble growth and shelterless condition, as well as by the formal and graceless precision with which they have been distributed, show that the public functionaries

have at times had one or two abortive inspirations of a spirit of improvement, and a transient passion for beauty.

In front of the court house there is a decayed and disjointed fixture, whose uses seem now to have gone by. It is a pillory, with the stocks below it, and was occupied at the moment of our visit, as a place of meeting for a few idle negroes, who were seated on the frame at a game of pushpin. Immediately in this neighbourhood the horses of the crowd whose occasions brought them to the scene, were fastened to racks erected for that purpose ; and the adjacent fence-corners became gradually appropriated in the same way.

Half a dozen frame dwellings, partially obscured by trees and generally of a neat exterior, were scattered over the landscape, and made up the village—if so sparse an assemblage be entitled to that name. There are two places of entertainment. The first, a little shrunken, single-storied edifice, concealed behind a rough, whitewashed piazza. The second is an old building of some magnitude, composed entirely of wood, and, from the profusion with which its doors and windows have been supplied with architectural embellishments, must formerly have been a private residence of note.

Our cavalcade stopped at the latter of these rival establishments ; and we dismounted under a broad, flaunting sign, that screeched slowly upon its hinges in the breeze, and seemed to give a responsive note

to a party of geese, that were greeting every fresh troop that arrived with a vociferous, periodical cackle.

There were several respectable-looking gentlemen collected about the door; and Meriwether's arrival was met with many kind and hearty expressions. We were shown into a room that, from its air of neatness, was evidently kept as an apartment of more worship than that in which the larger portion of the visitors of the hotel were assembled. This room was garnished with carvings and mouldings of an ancient date. The floor had suffered from the ravages of time, and had a slope towards an ample hearth, whose unsightly aperture was embowered by a tasteful screen of the tops of asparagus plants. Some pieces of mahogany furniture, black with age and glistening like ebony, stood against the wall; and above them hung divers besmirched pictures representing game cocks in pugnacious attitudes, distressingly clipped of their feathers, the Godolphin Arabian, Flying Childers and some other victors of the turf, all in black frames; and which, from the hue that time had flung over the copperplate, seemed to be gleaming through an atmosphere obscured with smoke.

The hour soon came round for opening the court. This was announced by a proclamation, made in a shrill, attenuated voice, from the court house door; and was followed by an immediate movement, from all directions, to that quarter. The little hall in which justice was administered was crowded almost

to overflowing. A semi-circular gallery, raised five or six feet above the floor, at the further end of the hall, was already occupied with a bevy of Justices—nearly a dozen, perhaps—some of whom had flung their feet upon the rail before them, and were lolling back upon their seats, ready to proceed to their judicial employments. Our friend Meriwether occupied his place with a countenance of becoming importance. Indeed, the whole bench presented a fine picture of solid faces and figures, that might be said to be a healthy and sturdy specimen of this pillar of the sovereignty of the state;—and was well calculated to inspire a wholesome respect for that inferior and useful magistracy which has always been so much a favourite of the people of Virginia.

Immediately under the gallery of the Justices, sat the clerk of the court; and, on either side of his desk, within the area of the semi-circle, were benches designed for the juries. Fronting this array of the court and jury, was a long, narrow platform, guarded all round with railing, and elevated a few feet above the floor, within whose constricted confines were disposed some five or six members of the bar, most incommodiously perched upon seats of a height out of all proportion to the human figure; and, before these, a narrow desk extended the whole distance, so as to give to the place of their accommodation somewhat of the dimensions of a pew.

These courts hold their sessions monthly, and their jurisdiction reaches almost all the ordinary legal requirements of the county; but, as the territorial

limit over which they preside is generally small, it requires but a few days to despatch the business of each term.

The first matter that occupied the attention of the court was the marshalling of the grand jury, to whom the usual charge was delivered. This office was assigned by the court to one of the members of the bar, a young practitioner, who did not fail to embellish the summary of duties, which he unfolded to their view, with a plentiful garniture of rhetoric. Notwithstanding the portentous exaggeration of the solemnity of the occasion, and the multitudinous grave topics which were urged upon the grand inquest, it seems that this quintessence of the freehold dignity was sadly puzzled to find employment in any degree commensurate with the exaltedness of its function. It is said that the jurors revolved in their minds the whole list of national grievances. One party suggested the idea of presenting the established mode of electing the President of the United States as a grievance to the good people of the county; another thought of a formal denunciation of the Tariff; a few advocated an assault upon the Supreme Court; but all were happily brought into a harmonious concurrence in the design of presenting a mad-cap ragamuffin, by the name of Jemmy Smith, for disturbing the peace of a camp-meeting by drinking whiskey and breeding a riot within the confines of the conventicle. Accordingly, after an hour's deliberation upon these various suggestions, they returned to the court room with a solitary bill, made

out in due form, against Jemmy; and, this matter constituting the sum total of their business for the term, they were thereupon discharged, with the thanks of the court for the able and vigilant administration of their inquisitorial duties.

Jemmy Smith had anticipated this act of authority; and was now in court, ready to stand his trial. He had already selected his counsel—a flowery and energetic advocate, whose strength lay, according to the popular opinion, in his skill in managing a jury. The name of this defender of Jemmy's fame was Taliaferro, (pronounced Tolliver,) or, as it was called for shortness, Toll Hedges, Esq. a gentleman whose pantaloons were too short for him, and whose bare legs were, consequently, visible above his stockings. Toll's figure, however, was adorned with a bran-new blue coat, of the most conceited fashion, which, nevertheless, gave some indications of having been recently slept in, as it was plentifully supplied with down from a feather bed. He was conspicuous, also, for an old straw hat, that had been fretted at the rim by a careless habit in handling it. This learned counsel had apparently been keeping his vigils too strictly the night before, for his eyes were red, and his face inflamed. His frame had all the morning languor of a sedulous night watcher; and, altogether, Toll did not appear to be in the best condition to try his case. However, he had now taken his seat at the bar; and close beside him sat his client, Jemmy Smith, an indescribably swaggering, saucy blade, who had the irreverence to come

into court without coat or waistcoat, and to show a wild, grinning, disorderly countenance to his peers.

Whilst the gentleman who conducted the case for the Commonwealth was giving a narrative of Jemmy's delinquencies to the jury, and was vituperating that worthy's character in good set terms, Toll was, to all appearance, asleep upon his folded arms, resting on the desk before him. When the charge was fairly explained, one witness was called to support it. This individual was pretty much such a looking person as Jemmy himself. He was rather down-faced and confused in his demeanor before the court, and particularly shabby in his exterior; but he told a plain, straight forward story enough, in the main, and his evidence went the full length of all the traverser's imputed enormities. The truth was, Jemmy had certainly broke into the camp and played some strange antics, considering the sanctity of the place. But, during all this time, Taliaferro Hedges, Esq. maintained his recumbent position, except, now and then, when Jemmy, feeling himself pinched by the testimony, would recline his head to whisper in his counsel's ear, which act would rouse him enough to bring upon Jemmy a rebuke, that was generally conveyed by pushing him off, and an injunction to be quiet. At length, the whole story was told, and bad enough it looked for Jemmy! The attorney for the commonwealth now informed Mr. Hedges, that the witness was at his disposal. At this, Toll completely roused himself, and sitting bolt upright, directed a sharp and peremptory catechism to the witness, in

which he required him to repeat the particulars he had before detailed. There was something bullying in the manner of the counsel, that quite intimidated the witness, and the poor fellow made some sad equivocations. At last, said Toll, after admonishing the witness, in a very formal manner, that he was upon his oath, and explaining to him the solemnity of his obligation to speak the truth, "I will ask you one question; answer it categorically, and without evasion."

"When you and Smith went down to camp-meeting, had'nt Smith a bottle of whiskey in the bosom of his shirt? Tell the truth."

The attorney for the Commonwealth objected to the question; but the court overruled the objection.

"Why, yes, he had," replied the witness.

"Did'nt Jemmy buy that bottle himself, and pay for it out of his own pocket? On the oath you have taken."

"Why, yes, he did."

"Well, now tell us. Did'nt you drink some of that whiskey yourself, along the road?"

"Why, yes, I did. I tell the truth, gentlemen."

"More than once?"

"Yes, several times."

"After you got down to camp?"

"Oh, yes! certainly. I don't deny it."

"Did you and Jemmy drink out of the mouth of the bottle, or out of a cup?"

“Certainly ; out of the mouth of the bottle. You will not catch me in any lies, lawyer Hedges.”

“Really, Mr. Hedges,” interrupted the attorney for the Commonwealth, “I don’t see what this has to do with the question. I must apply to the court.”

“Oh, very well,” said Toll, “I see how it is ! Gentlemen of the jury, I don’t insist on the question, if the gentleman does not like to have it answered. But you can’t help seeing the true state of the case. Here’s this fellow, who has been all along drinking out of the very same bottle with Jemmy Smith,—and Jemmy’s own whiskey too,—and now he comes out state’s evidence. What credit can you attach to a cock-and-bull story told by a fellow that comes to swear against a man who has been dividing his liquor with him? For the honour of the Old Dominion, gentlemen!” cried Toll, concluding this sidebar appeal to the jury with an indignant gesticulation, and a look of triumph in his face, that might be said to be oratorically comic.

The look was a master-stroke. It took complete effect ; and Jemmy was acquitted in spite of the facts.

As the crowd broke up, Toll, on leaving the court room, walked up to the witness, and slapping him on the back, said, “Come, let us go take something to drink.” And off the two went together to the tavern.

Hazard remarked to Hedges afterwards, that it was a little odd, as he had completely triumphed

over the facts of his case by undermining the credit of the witness, he should be on such good terms with this person as to bring him down to drink with him.

“Ah!” replied Hedges, “if the jury knew that man as well as I do, they would have believed every word he said. For there is not an honest fellow in the county. But I know how to work these juries.”

CHAPTER XX.**OPINIONS AND SENTIMENTS.**

THE court resumed its session after dinner, having a prospect of concluding its business before noon the next day ; and Meriwether was obliged to remain for the night. Neither Ned nor myself regretted the pretext this furnished us for the same delay.

During the afternoon many of the older inhabitants had taken to horse ; and the crowd of the court room was sensibly diminished. Still the out-door bustle assumed a more active and noisy character. The loiterers about the verge of the court had less business, but more to say. Indeed, it seemed to be difficult to keep those in attendance whose presence was necessary to the affairs of justice ; for the crier of the court might be frequently heard summoning the absentees, as they were wanted, in his slender and shrill voice, by distinctly repeating thrice the name of each, from the court house door, where he stood bare headed and with his hand shading his eyes.

The sun began, at last, to throw a merciless blaze upon the broken window-panes in the western fronts of some old buildings, whose raggedness was thus rendered painfully public. The ducks and geese of

the village were already trooping homeward, from a small brook hard by, in their sober evening march, and with a sedate under-gabble, like that of old burghers in conversation. The departing squadrons of horsemen became more frequent; and the alacrity with which these retreating bodies sprang forward from their starting points, showed that their temporary sojourn had been attended with an increase of animal spirits. At this hour the court put an end to its labours; and the throng that had been occupied there, all day, were now gathering about the doors of the two taverns.

Our host was an imperturbable, pleasant-faced, old fellow, with a remarkably accommodating temper, which exhibited itself in lavish promises, though he was allowed to be very incommensurate in performance. He was unwieldy in bulk, and pertinacious in the enjoyment of his ease; and, to save the trouble of forming opinions, he gave an invariable answer to every speculation that was addressed to him. This was conveyed in the words "quite likely," no matter how inconsistent the averments to which they had reference. Ned and myself had put him, in the course of the afternoon, to some severe trials, but without being able either to ruffle his temper or enlarge his vocabulary.

The large room of the inn had a bar partitioned off at one corner; and this was the principal centre of reinforcement to the inhabitants of these precincts. As the shades of evening thickened this resort became more crowded. The remnants, or more pro-

perly speaking, the sediment of the population, whose occasions had brought them to the court house, had repaired hither to enjoy the computations and arguments that are apt to abound in such assemblages. Some were in the middle of the floor, accompanying their diatribes with violent gestures; others were strewed around the room wherever seats were to be obtained. At a small table, lighted by a single candle in a most unsightly candlestick, sat a gentleman in a loose calico robe, with a dirty shirt, engaged at backgammon with a robust, well-knit man who wore his hat drawn low over his eyes: the first was the Galen of the country side, and the other a deputy sheriff. Our friend Toll Hedges was a conspicuous personage in this checkered assembly. He had shaken off the dullness of the morning, and was now playing a part that seemed more native to his disposition, that of a familiar, confident, loud talking interlocutor, who called every man by his christian name, swore roundly after a pedantic fashion, had some knowledge of every man's business, and bore himself with the peremptoriness of one whose character partook in equal degrees of the wag and the brawler. He was sarcastic, shrewd and popular; and to all these, it may be added, that before bedtime he was in no small degree flustered. In this crowd might also be observed one or two other members of the bar, of a graver demeanor, and even some of the justices holding more sedate conversations, apparently on matters connected with their business. In one corner sat a quiet, neighbourly

shoemaker in an arm chair, contentedly taking a stiff beverage of whiskey and water about once in fifteen minutes, and saying nothing to any body.

Our host himself was a sober man, God wot, and a discreet ! He stood at his post the whole evening, with a wooden pestle in his hand—the symbol of his calling ; one while laughing with a civil good nature at the rough jokes that were aimed at himself, and at another mixing toddy to meet the numberless demands of his thirsty customers. Amidst this edifying display of toss-pot eloquence and genial uproar, my attention was particularly attracted to the behaviour of this exemplary publican. Though scant in speech, he laboured like a man who had the good of his family at heart ; and bore himself through the tumultuary scene with the address of a wily statesman who is anxious to win the applause of all parties. The tide was in his favour, and his aim was to float smoothly upon it. In times of great excitement, it may be observed that the party in power gain many advantages by a show of moderation. With regard to them the maxim applies, “where the least is said it is soonest mended.” Now, our good landlord stood pretty much in this predicament ; for the whole assemblage had fallen into an inflammatory discussion of some ticklish points of politics, in which he might have lost friends by an inconsiderate participation. Whilst, therefore, the tempest raged he played the part of moderator, and was perpetually crying out—“Now, gentlemen!—if you please,—remember ;—we are all friends !” and such

like gentle admonitions; and as often as he was taken by the button by one of the speakers, and pinned up against the wall, so that it seemed impossible for him to escape committing himself, I could hear his old equivocation—"quite likely"—given forth with an impregnable composure of nerve. In fact, a sober observer could have been at no loss to perceive that the cautious landlord had all the ambidexterity of a practised public servant.

As the evening waned the disputants began to leave the field; and Hedges being thrown by chance into the bar-room, alone with his good natured host, addressed him very seriously upon the subject of the countenance he had given to certain heresies that had been uttered in his presence, and, seemingly, with his concurrence. "Lord! Mr. Hedges," said he, in a quiet tone, and looking round to see who was within hearing,—“you know my ideas long ago about all that matter!—It isn't my business to break with customers, or to be setting up against them. What signifies opinions this way or that! But,” he continued, erecting his figure to its full height and putting on a look of extraordinary determination, “sentiments is another thing! Let any man ask me my sentiments!—that's all;—Thar's no flinch in me, you may depend upon it!”

Having learned this distinction between sentiments and opinions, I retired to my chamber.

The next morning, after a short delay in court, Meriwether was released from his judicial cares, and we made preparations for our return to Swallow

Barn. Philly Wart, who had been an active and conspicuous personage in the transactions of the term, and who is hereafter to make some figure in these annals was to accompany us. About noon we were all mounted, Philly being perched upon a tall, raw-boned, grey steed, that seemed to have parted with his flesh in the severe duties of the circuit, but who was distinguished for his easy and regular pace. As to Philly himself it is necessary that I should give him a chapter.

By the usual dinner hour, we were all comfortably seated at Swallow Barn.

CHAPTER XXI.**PHILPOT WART.**

I HAVE a great reverence for the profession of the law and its votaries ; but especially for that part of the tribe which comprehends the old and thorough-paced stagers of the bar. The feelings, habits and associations of the bar in general, have a very happy influence upon the character. It abounds with good fellows : And, take it altogether, there may be collected from it a greater mass of shrewd, observant, droll, playful and generous spirits, than from any other equal numbers of society. They live in each other's presence, like a set of players ; congregate in the courts, like the former in the green room ; and break their unpremeditated jests, in the intervals of business, with that sort of undress freedom that contrasts amusingly with the solemn and even tragic seriousness with which they appear, in turn, upon the boards. They have one face for the public, rise with the saws and learned gravity of the profession, and another for themselves, replete with broad mirth, sprightly wit and gay thoughtlessness. The intense mental toil and fatigue of business give them a peculiar relish for the enjoyment of their hours

of relaxation, and, in the same degree, incapacitate them for that frugal attention to their private concerns which their limited means usually require. They have, in consequence, a prevailing air of unthriftiness in personal matters, which, however it may operate to the prejudice of the pocket of the individual, has a mellow and kindly effect upon his disposition.

In an old member of the profession,—one who has grown grey in the service, there is a rich unction of originality, that brings him out from the ranks of his fellow men in strong relief. His habitual conversancy with the world in its strangest varieties, and with the secret history of character, gives him a shrewd estimate of the human heart. He is quiet, and unapt to be struck with wonder at any of the actions of men. There is a deep current of observation running calmly through his thoughts, and seldom gushing out in words: the confidence which has been placed in him, in the thousand relations of his profession, renders him constitutionally cautious. His acquaintance with the vicissitudes of fortune, as they have been exemplified in the lives of individuals, and with the severe afflictions that have “tried the reins” of many, known only to himself, makes him an indulgent and charitable apologist of the aberrations of others. He has an impregnable good humour that never falls below the level of thoughtfulness into melancholy. He is a creature of habits; rising early for exercise; temperate from necessity, and studious against his will. His face is accustom-

ed to take the ply of his pursuits with great facility, grave and even severe in business, and readily rising into smiles at a pleasant conceit. He works hard when at his task ; and goes at it with the reluctance of an old horse in a bark-mill. His common-places are quaint and professional : they are made up of law maxims, and first occur to him in Latin. He measures all the sciences out of his proper line of study, (and with these he is but scantily acquainted,) by the rules of law. He thinks a steam engine should be worked with *due diligence*, and without *laches* : a thing little likely to happen, he considers as *potentia remotissima*; and what is not yet in existence, or *in esse*, as he would say, is *in nubibus*. He apprehends that wit best, that is connected with the affairs of the term ; is particularly curious in his anecdotes of old lawyers, and inclined to be talkative concerning the amusing passages of his own professional life. He is, sometimes, not altogether free of outward foppery ; is apt to be an especial good liver, and he keeps the best company. His literature is not much diversified ; and he prefers books that are bound in plain calf, to those that are much lettered or gilded. He garners up his papers with a wonderful appearance of care ; ties them in bundles with red tape ; and usually has great difficulty to find them when he wants them. Too much particularity has perplexed him ; and just so it is with his cases : they are well assorted, packed and laid away in his mind, but are not easily to be brought forth again without labour. This makes him something of a procrastinator, and rather to delight

in new business than finish his old. He is, however, much beloved, and affectionately considered by the people.

Philpot Wart belongs to the class whose characteristics I have here sketched. He is a practitioner of some thirty or forty years standing, during the greater part of which time he has resided in this district. He is now verging upon sixty years of age, and may be said to have spent the larger portion of his life on horseback. His figure is short and thick-set, with a hard, muscular outline; his legs slightly bowed, his shoulders broad, and his hands and feet uncommonly large. His head is of extraordinary size, cubical in shape, and clothed with a shock of wiry, dark grey hair. A brown and dry complexion; eyes small, keen, and undefined in colour, furnished with thick brows; a large mouth, conspicuous for a range of teeth worn nearly to their sockets; and ample protruding ears, constitute the most remarkable points in his appearance. The predominant expression of his features is a sly, quick good nature, susceptible, however, of great severity.

His dress is that of a man who does not trouble himself with the change of fashions; careless, and, to a certain degree, quaint. It consists of a plain, dark coat, not of the finest cloth, and rather the worse for wear; dingy and faded nankeen small-clothes; and a pair of half boots, such as were worn twenty years ago. His hat is old, and worn until the rim has become too pliable to keep its original form; and his cravat is sometimes, by accident, tied in such a

manner, as not to include one side of his shirt collar ;—this departure from established usage, and others like it, happen from Mr. Wart's never using a looking-glass when he makes his toilet.

His circuit takes in four or five adjoining counties, and, as he is a regular attendant upon the courts, he is an indefatigable traveller. His habit of being so much upon the road, causes his clients to make their appointments with him at the several stages of his journeyings ; and it generally happens that he is intercepted, when he stops, by some one waiting to see him. Being obliged to pass a great deal of his time in small taverns, he has grown to be contented with scant accommodation, and never complains of his fare. But he is extremely particular in exacting the utmost attention to his horse.

He has an insinuating address that takes wonderfully with the people ; and especially with the older and graver sorts. This has brought him into a close acquaintance with a great many persons, and has rendered Philly Wart,—as he is universally called,—a kind of cabinet-counsellor and private adviser with most of those who are likely to be perplexed with their affairs. He has a singularly retentive memory as to facts, dates, and names ; and by his intimate knowledge of land titles, courses and distances, patents, surveys and locations, he has become a formidable champion in all ejectment cases. In addition to this, Philly has such a brotherly and companionable relation to the greater number of the freeholders who serve upon the juries, and has such a confiding,

friendly way of talking to them when he tries a cause, that it is generally supposed he can persuade them to believe any thing he chooses.

His acquirements as a lawyer are held in high respect by the bar, although it is reported that he reads but little law of later date than Coke Littleton, to which book he manifests a remarkable affection, having perused it, as he boasts, some eight or ten times ; but the truth is, he has not much time for other reading, being very much engrossed by written documents, in which he is painfully studious. He takes a great deal of authority upon himself, nevertheless, in regard to the Virginia decisions, inasmuch as he has been contemporary with most of the cases, and heard them, generally, from the courts themselves. Besides this, he practised in the times of old Chancellor Wythe, and President Pendleton, and must necessarily have absorbed a great deal of that spirit of law-learning which has evaporated in the hands of the reporters. As Philly himself says, he understands the currents of the law, and knows where they must run ; and, therefore, has no need of looking into the cases.

Philly has an excellent knack in telling a story, which consists in a caustic, dry manner that is well adapted to give it point ; and sometimes he indulges this talent with signal success before the juries. When he is at home,—which is not often above a week or ten days at a time,—he devotes himself almost entirely to his farm. He is celebrated there for a fine breed of hounds ; and fox hunting is quite

a passion with him. This is the only sport in which he indulges to any excess ; and so far does he carry it, that he invariably takes his dogs with him upon the circuit, when his duty calls him, in the hunting season, to certain parts of the country where one or two gentlemen reside who are fond of this pastime. On these occasions he billets the hounds upon his landlord, and waits patiently until he despatches his business ; and then he turns into the field with all the spirit and zest of Nimrod. He has some lingering recollections of the classics, and is a little given to quoting them, without much regard to the appropriateness of the occasion. It is told of him, that one fine morning, in December, he happened to be with a party of brother sportsmen in full chase of a gray fox, under circumstances of unusual animation. The weather was cool, a white frost sparkled upon the fields, the sun had just risen and flung a beautiful light over the landscape, the fox was a-foot, the dogs in full cry, the hunstmen shouting with exuberant mirth, the woods re-echoing to the clamour, and every one at high speed in hot pursuit. Philly was in an ecstasy, spurring forward his horse with uncommon ardour, and standing in his stirrups, as if impatient of his speed, when he was joined in the chase by two or three others as much delighted as himself. In this situation he cried out to one of the party, " Is'nt this fine ; don't it put you in mind of Virgil ? *Tityre tu patulæ recubans sub tegmine fagi.*" Philly denies the fact ; but some well authenticated flou-

rishes of his at the bar, of a similar nature, give great semblance of truth to the story.

It often happens that a pair of his hounds will steal after him, and follow him through the circuit, without his intending it; and when this occurs, he has not the heart to drive them back. This was the case at the present court: accordingly, he was followed by his dogs to Swallow Barn. They slink close behind his horse, and trot together as if they were coupled.

Philly's universal acquaintance through the country and his pre-eminent popularity have, long since, brought him into public life. He has been elected to the Assembly for twenty years past, without opposition; and, indeed, the voters will not permit him to decline. It is, therefore, a regular part of his business to attend to all political matters affecting the county. His influence in this department is wonderful. He is consulted in reference to all plans, and his advice seems to have the force of law. He is extremely secret in his operations, and appears to carry his point by his calm, quiet and unresisting manner. He has the reputation of being a dexterous debater, and of making some sharp and heavy hits when roused into opposition; though many odd stories are told, at Richmond, of his strenuous efforts, at times, to be oratorical. He is, however, very much in the confidence of the political managers of all parties, and seldom fails to carry a point when he sets about it in earnest.

During the war, Philly commanded a troop of volunteer light-horse, and was frequently employed in active service, in guarding the hen roosts along the river from the attacks of the enemy. These occasions have furnished him with some agreeable episodes in the history of his life. He gives a faithful narrative of his exploits at this period, and does not fail to throw a dash of comic humour into his account of his campaigns.

In our ride to Swallow Barn, he and Meriwether were principally engrossed with the subject of the expected arbitration. Meriwether particularly enjoined it upon him so to manage the matter as to make up a case in favour of Mr. Tracy, and to give such a decision as would leave the old gentleman in possession of the contested territory.

Philly revolved the subject carefully in his mind, and assured Frank that he would have no difficulty in putting Swansdown upon such a train as could not fail to accomplish their ends.

"But it seems strange to me," said the counsellor, "that the old man would not be content to take the land without all this circuitry."

"We must accommodate ourselves to the peculiarities of our neighbours," replied Meriwether, "and, pray be careful that you give no offence to his pride, by the course you pursue."

"I have never before been engaged in a case with such instructions," said Philly. "This looks marvellously like an Irish donkey race, where each man cudgels his neighbour's ass. Well, I suppose

Singleton Swansdown will take the beating without being more restive under it than others of the tribe!"

"I beseech you, use him gently," said Meriwether. "He will be as proud of his victory as ourselves."

Philly laughed the more heartily as he thought of this novel case. Now and then he relapsed into perfect silence, and then would again and again break forth into a chuckle at his own meditations upon the subject.

"You are like a king who surrenders by negotiation, all that he has won by fighting," said he, laughing again, "we shall capitulate, at least, with the honours of war,—drums beating and colours flying!"

"It is the interest of the commonwealth that there should be an end of strife; I believe so the maxim runs," said Meriwether smiling.

"*Concordia, parvæ res crescunt; discordiâ maximæ dilabuntur,*" added the counsellor. "But it seems to me to be something of a wild goose chase notwithstanding."

Philly repeated these last words as he dismounted at the gate at Swallow Barn, and, throwing his saddle-bags across his arm, he walked into the house with the rest of the party.

CHAPTER XXII.**THE PHILOSOPHER UNBENT.**

THE next morning opened upon us in all the beauty of the season. Every necessary preparation had been completed for the definite adjustment of the long abiding law-suit. The household was in motion at an hour much earlier than usual, and a general anxiety seemed to prevail throughout the family to speed the issues of the day. Meriwether was animated by unwonted spirits; and Hazard and myself anticipated, with some eagerness, the entrance upon a business that promised to us nothing but amusement in its progress. The notoriety which all the preliminary movements in this matter had gained from the frequent conversations of Meriwether relating to it, had magnified its importance in a degree much disproportioned to its intrinsic merit. The day was therefore considered a kind of jubilee. Mr. Chub had expressed a strong wish to be present at the settlement; and had, accordingly, proclaimed a holiday in the school. The children were all in a state of riotous excitement. Rip was especially delighted with the prospect of the approaching bustle. Prudence partook of the common feeling with rather

more restlessness than any one else. There was a studied sedateness upon her features, which was not altogether natural; and this was contrasted with her motions, that seemed to be unsettled, variable and perplexed.

Philly Wart had risen soon after the dawn, and had taken a walk of two or three miles before the family began to assemble. About an hour before breakfast, he had seated himself on the bench of the porch, alone with Mr. Chub, and was there chipping a stick with his penknife, as he kept up a desultory discourse with the parson, upon divers matters connected with the history, doctrine and discipline of the Presbyterian Church. What were the particulars of this conversation I could not learn, but it had a stimulating effect upon his companion, who took occasion to call me aside, as soon as it was finished, and said to me, "Faith, that Philly Wart, as you call him, is a sensible old fellow! He's a man of a great deal of wit, Mr. Littleton! He is a philosopher of the school of Democritus of Abdera, and knows as much about the kirk of Scotland as if he had been at the making of the covenant. And not very starched in his creed neither, ha, ha, ha! a queer genius!"

Philly himself, after leaving the parson, was sauntering up and down in the hall, with his coat buttoned close about him, so as to cause a roll of papers that was lodged in one of his pockets to protrude somewhat oddly from above his hip. In this situation I joined him. "Your parson there, is a great

scholar," said he, smiling; "we have had a bout together concerning church-matters; and the old gentleman has been entertaining me with a speech, for an hour past. He is a very vehement orator, and has puzzled me with his Grecian heroes until I had't a word to say. I think he likes a good listener: But I am entirely too rusty for him. I must rub up the next time I talk with him."

Just before breakfast Harvey Riggs and Ralph, having in convoy Catharine and Bel Tracy, rode up to the door; and our attention was called to the party, by the loud salutations of Harvey Riggs. "Hark you, Ned! spring to your post, and catch Bel before she touches ground."

Hazard succeeded in reaching the outer side of the gate just in time—not to catch Bel, who had already dismounted with the nimbleness of a bird—but to take the rein of her horse and fasten it to the fence, and then to lead her to the door.

It was not long before we were all ranged around the ample breakfast board. Mr. Wart was inclined to be jocular, and Meriwether indulged in some good natured speculations upon the certainty of his success in the case. Harvey Riggs was placed next to Bel at the table, and took occasion to whisper in her ear, that he had no faith in these negotiations for a peace, and added, that he rested his hopes entirely upon the prophecy of old Diana; then, looking towards Ned, who sat opposite, he remarked, loud enough to be heard by the latter, "there is but one way of giving permanency to these family treaties."

Ned coloured up to the eyes—affected not to understand, and asked for another cup of coffee. Bel was more self-possessed, and replied with perfect composure, "Cousin Harvey, look to yourself, or I shall dismiss you from my service."

After breakfast, it was determined that it would be necessary for the contending powers to have a personal inspection of the seat of war. The old mill was proposed as the trysting place, and the principal discussion, it was settled, should be held on the banks of the famous Apple-pie. Mr. Tracy's arrival with his privy counsellor, Swansdown, was looked for with impatience; and, in the meantime, our whole company had broken off into detachments.

Prudence and Catharine had gone out upon the grass-plot in front of the house; and were slowly walking to and fro, without any covering upon their heads, and with their arms around each other's waists, in deep and secret communion, under the shade of the willow. Rip had gone off with a whoop and halloo to the stable, to order up the necessary cavalry for the expedition. The little girls were jumping a rope on the gravel-walk. My cousin Lucretia was busy with household matters. Wart and Meriwether were conning over some papers in the breakfast room; and Harvey Riggs, Ralph Tracy, Hazard, and myself were seated in the porch, patiently abiding the progress of events.

Bel, who had been roaming at large from group to group, and making amusement for herself out

of all, like one whose spirits would not allow her to remain stationary, had picked up the dice that belonged to a back-gammon board in the parlour, and now came to the porch where we were seated, rattling them in the box, and making as much noise as she could.

"I mean to tell the fortune of the day," said she; "why are not these dice just as good judges of boundary lines as all the lawyers? Now, Mr. Littleton, observe if this be not a true oracle. Here's for Mr. Meriwether," she continued, throwing the dice upon the bench. "Four, one. That's a shabby throw for Swallow Barn. Well, here's for Pa. Deuce, ace."

"Good-bye to the Brakes!" exclaimed Harvey.

"No, indeed!" interrupted Bel. "There's a great deal of luck in deuce, ace. But we will give Swallow Barn another chance. There's six, four; that's the parson's point, as Pa calls it."

"And now for the Brakes, Bel," said Ned; "this throw must settle the question."

"Trays," cried Bel, flinging the dice, and clapping her hands. "Hav'nt we gained it now?"

"No! certainly not!" said Hazard. "They make but six together, and Swallow Barn had ten."

"But," answered Bel, "you forget, Edward, that three is a luckier number than any other; and we have got three, three times out of the dice."

"The luck," replied Ned, "is in the highest number."

"Well, do you wait here, and I will go and ask Mr. Chub," said Bel, "who will give me all that he

has ever seen in the books about fortunate numbers. Don't interrupt us, because the old gentleman is on such good terms with me, that he says a great deal to me that he would not let any of you hear. You may listen to us through the windows."

The reverend gentleman was seated in the parlour window next to the porch, with a book in his hand, when Bel entered and took a seat beside him; and, thus arranged, both of their backs were towards the window.

It is said in the family, that Mr. Chub is never so happy as when he is able to show his scholarship. It is not often that he has this good fortune, and, therefore, when it arrives, he is not sparing of the liberty he allows to his imprisoned stock of learning. It was evident in the conversation which he now had with Bel, that he fancied himself to be regaling his auditors with that light and dainty food which is most congenial to a lady's taste.

Bel's accost was very grave.

"Mr. Chub," said she, with a gracious and respectful voice, "do you think there is any thing in numbers?"

"Ha, ha!" cried the tutor, in a kind of bewildered laugh, as if he did not exactly comprehend her purpose, "pon my honour, Madam, I don't know how to answer the question. There are multipliers and multiplicands, and ——"

"I don't mean that," said Bel, "do you think there is any luck in numbers?"

"If you mean in a number of lawyers to try the

question of the old mill-dam, I think the more there are, the worse the luck. Upon my veracity, I would rather have Mr. Philpot Wart than the whole bar; judges, juries, and all, Miss Bel! Ha, ha!"

"You don't understand me yet," answered Bel.

"I beg your pardon, my dear!" interrupted the tutor.

"I did'nt speak with reference to the mill-dam question, either," continued Bel, "but I wanted to know, if there are not some numbers deemed more fortunate than others. Were not the ancients a little superstitious about the number of crows that flew across the heavens of a morning, for instance?"

"Assuredly, madam!" replied the old gentleman, now beginning to take Bel's meaning; "all nations have had some leaning to be superstitious about numbers. The number twelve has had a great deal of distinction conferred upon it. The twelve Apostles, and the twelve hours of the day, and the twelve months of the year, in spite of the moon, Miss Bel! That looks as if there was some virtue in the number. And, you know, the Romans had their laws written on twelve tables; and the Greeks celebrated the twelve labours of Hercules. And I believe, up to this day, it always takes twelve men to make a jury. There is something heathenish in that, Miss Isabella, ha, ha!"

This last burst was manifestly destined for a sally of wit, and the good old gentleman continued to laugh at it immoderately. Bel appeared to relish it herself. "And there are imagined to be some occult

influences in the trines and nones," continued the tutor, after he had laughed his fill, "not to say any thing of seven, of which number, nevertheless, I will mention a few examples; for it was an especial favourite both of Jew and Christian. We well know that the week has seven days, Miss Isabella."

"Yes," said Bel, "that is very well known."

"And the Jews thought we should forgive our enemy seven times,—which the scripture says, with reason, should be seventy times seven,—and the Revelation speaks of the seven phials of wrath, with divers other sevens: and we read of the seven ages of man, which I need not enumerate. You have heard, Mistress Isabella, of the seven sages of Greece, and of the seven wonders of the world? Besides these, and many more that I could think of, the monkish legends tell us some strange adventures of the seven sleepers"—

"Mercy, what a list of sevens!" cried Bel.

—"Who slept in a cave for two hundred and thirty-nine years,—Saint Maximian, Saint Malchus, and their comrades. Wherefore I conclude seven to be a lucky number."

"It was undoubtedly a very lucky thing for the seven sleepers all to wake up again, after such a long sleep," said Bel.

"Ha, ha!" ejaculated the old gentleman, in another fit of laughter, "that's very well said, Miss Isabel! But the number three," continued the tutor, "is even more eminent in mystical properties. The most ancient Egyptians worshipped the holy Trian-

gle Equilateral, as being the symbol of divine harmony ; and Pythagoras and Plato have both taught the mysteries of this number. You are, moreover, aware, Miss Bel, that there were three Gorgons."

"I thought there were four!" said Bel, with an air of astonishment.

"Three, madam," replied the parson, "Stheno, Euryale, and Medusa. And there were three Furies too."

"What were their names, Mr. Chub?"

"Tisiphone, Megara and Alecto," said he, enumerating his triads slowly upon his fingers. "And there were the three Graces, my dear! You know their names very well—Thalia, Euphrosyne, and Aglaia. The Fates,—there were three of them, you remember ; and, faith, they have had work enough to do ! Clotho, Lachesis, and Atropos:—if you had studied Greek, Miss Bel, you would understand how well their names became them."

"Listen, if you would live and laugh !" exclaimed Harvey Riggs, who was sitting on the rail of the porch, and taking in every word of this odd discourse. "Here is the parson, pouring a whole dictionary of outlandish nonsense into Bel's ear, and she humouring all this pedantry with the most incomparable gravity!"

"There might be cited many more of these triple sisterhoods," continued Mr. Chub,—Bel still looking in his face with an encouraging earnestness,—"as for another example, there were the Horæ ; namely, Dice, Irene, and Eunomia : the Harpies,—Celœ-

no, Ocypete, Aello, (still counting with the same precision as before;) we must not forget the Sirens,—bless me! no—the ladies are often called Sirens themselves, ha, ha! Parthenope—Parthenope—let me see—” He paused, with the forefinger of his right hand, upon the middle finger of his left: “Tut, it slips my memory! I am very bad at remembering names.”

“Particularly bad!” said Bel, interrupting him and smiling.

“Parthenope, Miss Tracy, child, I had it on my tongue! I am getting old, Miss Isabel! I dare say, you can help me out.”

“Indeed, I dare say I cannot,” replied Bel; “you have turned my brain so topsy-turvy with such a list of hard names, that I have almost forgotten what I came to ask you.”

“You have totally omitted, Mr. Chub, to mention the three wise men of Gotham that went to sea in a bowl,” said Hazard, speaking to the parson from the porch.

“And the three blind mice, that lost their tails on a visit to the farmer’s wife,” said Harvey Riggs.

“And the three fiddlers of old king Cole,” said Hazard.

“Poh! Get along, Mr. Edward and Mr. Harvey! you are both too much given to be waggish. I doubt you will never mend your ways while you keep each other’s company!” cried the good old gentleman, completely overborne by this spirited attack upon him; and, as he said this, he turned

round upon them a face full of queer perplexity at being caught in the high career of this scholarly exertion. He is especially sensitive to the least jest that is aimed at this peculiarity.

"Well," said Bel, "I am really very much obliged to you, Mr. Chub, for your instructive lecture; and I shall always remember hereafter, that the Graces were three young women, and the Furies, three old ones: And that three is the luckiest number in arithmetic."

By this time two horsemen, followed by a servant, had come in sight upon the road leading to the gate. They advanced at a leisurely pace, and were soon descried to be Mr. Tracy in company with Swansdown. The old gentleman's face, even at a distance, exhibited careful thought, and his bearing was grave and mannerly. He was in deep conversation with his friend, up to the moment of their arrival at the gate. Meriwether went forth to meet him, and assisted him from his horse with an affectionate and highly respectful assiduity.

As soon as he was on his feet, he took off his hat and made Meriwether a formal bow; and then walked across the court-yard to the door, making many obeisances to the company. Swansdown followed with scarcely less ceremony; and they were ushered into the parlour.

"We have an agreeable day's work before us, Mr. Meriwether," said Mr. Tracy, with an air of sprightly politeness, but in a voice somewhat tremulous from years. "Permit me to assure you it is not a small

gratification to me, that we come so amicably to the close of a controversy, which, in other hands, might have been embittered with many unkind feelings. This has been conducted with so much courtesy, from beginning to end, that I had almost flattered myself with the hope, I should have had the luxury of it for the rest of my life."

He concluded this complimentary speech with a dash of gaiety in his tone, and a vivacious gesticulation of his body; and then turning round to the ladies, with smiles upon his face, he made many civil inquiries after family matters.

The parties now being all assembled, our next move was to the old mill.

CHAPTER XXIII.

TRIAL BY VIEW.

WHEN mounted our muster consisted of ten persons, besides the servants, and included all the gentlemen assembled, with the addition of Rip, who, astride of Spitfire, caracoled and bounded from place to place, like a young adjutant of a squadron. The old walls of Swallow Barn had never echoed back the tramp, the hum, or the shouts of a more goodly company than that which now filed off from the gate. Our ranks were accommodated to the nature of the road we had to travel. At first, Mr. Wart, with his papers still peeping forth from his pocket, shot ahead of the troop by the common brisk and easy-racking gait to which his tall and ungainly steed was accustomed; and he did not seem to be aware of the inequality of his pace, until he had gained about a hundred yards upon the cavalcade, and was admonished by a call from two or three of the party, that he would soon leave us out of sight, if he went on at that speed. His two hounds were, as usual, jogging close at his horse's heels; and any one might very well have mistaken our whole equipment for a party setting out to beat a cover, with the principal hunstman in advance; for, in addition to Philly's

hounds, we had every dog of Swallow Barn in our train. Never, since the deluge, was there a law-suit to be determined by so grotesque an array of judges, counsellors, parties and witnesses as this ! And never before in the history of jurisprudence, perhaps, was there such a case !

Philly Wart was highly amused. He had brought himself to look upon the whole matter as a mere pastime, and he was now determined to make the best of it. He could not for a moment give his features a serious cast, but laughed in reply to every question, like a man tickled with his own thoughts. He had reined up his horse, in obedience to our call, and was looking back upon the approaching host, when I rode up to him.

“ This is a mode of practice very much to my liking,” said he. “ The law would not be such a wearisome business, Mr. Littleton, if its affairs were to be transacted in the field o’ horseback ; and with a fine pack of dogs instead of a jury. Famous juries they’d make, for courses and distances, in an ejection, ha, ha, ha ! If it were only the right season, I think we should be likely to look over more boundary lines than one to-day.”

The same tone of enjoyment seemed gradually to have visited even old Mr. Tracy, after we had left the gate. Before this, there was a deep-seated care upon his brow ; but he now began to take the hue of the hour. We had entered, after riding some distance, upon a narrow and tangled path, beset with underwood, that indicated our proximity to the ground

around the mill. Through this portion of our road we were constrained to pass in single files, thus elongating our line of march, until it resembled that of a detachment of cavalry exploring a suspected haunt of an enemy. The resemblance occasioned our venerable friend of the Brakes to turn round to Meriwether and remark with a pleasant but precise form of address,—

“ You perceive, Mr. Meriwether, that the most formidable invasion of the Apple-pie frontier continues now, as of old, to come from the direction of Swallow Barn.”

“ I could heartily wish, my dear friend,” replied Frank, “ that every invasion in the world were as certain to promote the ends of justice and peace as this. And I could wish, too, that every supposed encroachment upon right, should be as gallantly and honourably met.”

“ But not quite so obstinately defended,” said Harvey Riggs, in a half whisper, as he turned round on his saddle to make the remark to Ned Hazard.

“ Amen !” said Ned.

When we arrived at the mill there was a silent pause for some moments, in which every one seemed to be engaged in surveying the ragged, marshy and unprofitable features of the landscape, and wondering in his own mind (at least all but Mr. Tracy) how such a piece of land could possibly have furnished a subject for such a protracted litigation. Philly Wart appeared to be aware of the common

surprise, and looking round, somewhat jestingly, in the faces of the group, remarked,—

“Yes, there it is! And all that we have to do is, to get down from our horses, organize the court, and fall to work to determine whether the heirs of Swallow Barn or of the Brakes are hereafter to be pestered with this fine garden of wankopins and snake-collards!”

We dismounted; and some moments elapsed before the parties were ready to proceed to the business in hand. In this interval, the counsellor had walked up to the tutor, who stood upon a hillock, with his glass up to his eye, surveying the scene.

“What do you think of the prospect, Mr. Chub?” asked Philly Wart. “By what name would you venture to describe this luxuriant, refreshing, and sightly piece of land? Is it *mariscus*, or *mora*, or *hulmus*, or simple *locus paludosus*?”

“Sure it is not to look at this ill-favoured quagmire, that we have been risking our necks under boughs of trees, and dodging through brambles this morning!” exclaimed the tutor.

“Aye,” answered Philly, “this is the very ground of contention that has enlivened the annals of two families and their descendants, for half a century. It has been a gay quarrel, Mr. Chub, and has cost something more than breath to keep it up. It has lost nothing of its dignity, I warrant you, for want of long opinions and sober counsel! Floreat Lex, Mr. Chub, is our motto! It is a merry day for our craft,

when laymen take to reading the statutes, and pride holds the purse strings."

"This is a great Sirbonian bog," said the tutor. "It is as worthless as the Pomptinæ Paludes,—Gad-a-mercy! it should be relinquished by unanimous consent to the skunks and the muskrats!"

"It is a hereditament,—as we lawyers say, Mr. Chub, that would pass under the name *runcaria*, which signifies, full of brambles and briars, or rather, by the title in our law Latin, (I doubt if you have studied that kind of Latin, Mr. Chub?) of *jampna*, which comes, as Lord Coke says, of *jonc*, the French for bulrush, and *nower*, a waterish place."

"Truly, your dog Latin suits the description of the place marvellously well, Mr. Philpot Wart," said the tutor, laughing. "And what do you consider, Mr. Meriwether," he continued, addressing Frank, who had just come to the spot, "the value of this ground to be, per acre?"

"About sixpence," answered Frank, smiling.

"Too high; you hold it all too dear," interrupted Philly, "threepence at the outside, and dear at that. But come, gentlemen,—Mr. Swansdown we lose time. Let us to business."

Upon this, the principal personages concerned in the business of the day, withdrew to a convenient spot, and selecting a piece of square timber, that constituted a part of the ruins of the mill, they took their seats.

Old Mr. Tracy now very deliberately proceeded

to empty his pocket of a bundle of papers, neatly tied up together, and loosening the string that bound them, he spread them out upon his knees. Then, after some rummaging, he produced a pair of spectacles, which, with great caution, he adjusted upon his nose; and taking up one of the papers, he presented it to the arbitrators, saying, "here is the first letter in the correspondence which arose between the lamented Mr. Walter Hazard, and myself, touching the present subject of difference. If you prefer it, gentlemen, I will give you the copy of the letters that passed in the year 1759, between my immediate ancestor and the first Mr. Edward Hazard, in regard to that latter gentleman's plan of erecting this mill, at that date."

"If you will be so kind," said Philly, with an air of affectionate courtesy towards the old gentleman, "as to leave these papers with us, Mr. Tracy, we will digest them at our leisure. In the mean time, we will look at the deed from Gilbert Tracy to Edward Hazard—I have it here—" Saying this, he produced the roll of papers which had been so conspicuous about his person all the morning, and took from it the deed in question.

Here Philly mounted his spectacles, and began to read, in a clear voice, such parts of the deed as related to the nature and character of the grant; and which parts, in order that my reader might thoroughly understand the precise question in dispute, I have substantially set forth in a former chapter.

“ This deed, Mr. Swansdown,” said Philly, as he finished reading, “ lays the whole foundation of the controversy. The pretensions of the parties, as based upon this instrument are well understood, and all that remains for us is to ascertain what was the specific meaning of the parties thereto.”

“ That must be seen,” said Mr. Tracy, “ by the letters which I have just given you.”

“ Upon that point,” said Philly Wart, “ the courts have uniformly decided —”

“ We are not to be governed by the adjudications of the courts upon any of these questions,” interrupted Mr. Tracy; “ it is understood that the case is to be adjudged according to the principles of equity.”

“ *Equitas sequitur legem*, my friend,” said Philly, smiling. “ If there be ambiguity patent, that is, apparent upon the face of the deed, the law allows testimony to be received as to the intent of the parties concerned in the covenants. But where the intention may be derived from the construction of the covenants themselves, according to their plain letter, the law doth not permit acts and matters *in pais* to be used to set up an intention *dehors* the written instrument.”

“ Pray, Mr. Wart,” said Swansdown, “ permit me to ask, whether this case, agreeably to your understanding of it, is governed by the Roman or civil law, or strictly according to the technical principles of the common law?”

“ Only, sir, according to the course of the laws of this commonwealth,” replied Philly, with an air of

surprise at the question, and as if nettled by the foppery of Swansdown's manner. "Your suggestion, Mr. Tracy, will be a subject for our consideration," he continued, assuming his former mild tone, to the gentleman he addressed.

Various other papers were now produced and read; and when all this documentary evidence had been brought to view, Philly remarked, with a manner that seemed to indicate profound reflection upon the case in hand;—

"An idea strikes me, which appears to have an important influence upon the subject under consideration. I confess I should like to be satisfied upon this point. Mr. Swansdown and myself, I presume, will not differ about the construction of the deed, nor upon the nature of the law by which it is to be determined," he added, smiling; "but, if my present suspicions be confirmed, it is more than probable that our labour will be very much abridged. I rather suspect that this case will be found, upon examination, to turn upon certain matters of fact which have never yet been brought into the view of the courts—"

"A very shrewd old gentleman that, Mr. Hazard," whispered the tutor, who stood by all this time, listening with profound attention; "a man of genius, I assure you, Mr. Edward!"

"—The facts to which I allude are these; namely, in the first place, to what distance did the mill-dam anciently and originally extend, from the present margin of the Apple-pie, in upon the land belonging

to the tract called the Brakes? Secondly, how long did the mill-pond exist within the said original limits; and when did it first begin to recede from the same? And, thirdly, which is the most important point of all, did the same mill-pond contract in its dimensions by gradual and imperceptible stages, or did it sink into the present narrow channel of the Apple-pie, by any violent and sudden disruption of its banks?

“The bearing and value of these questions,” continued the lawyer, “will be understood by referring to the conceded fact, namely, that the two contiguous estates were divided by the water-line or margin of the mill-dam on the side of the Brakes. Now, it is a principle of law, upon which Mr. Swansdown and myself cannot possibly disagree,—for it is asserted without contradiction by the ablest writers,—both in the common and civil law, Mr. Swansdown, that where a river, holding the relation which this mill-dam occupied between these two estates, changes its course by slow and invisible mutations, so as to leave new land where formerly was water, then he to whose territory the accretions may be made in such wise, shall hold them as the gain or increment of his original stock. But if the river change its course by some forcible impulse of nature, as by violent floods, or the like, then shall he who suffers loss by such vicissitude, be indemnified by the possession of the derelict channel. And it would seem to me, that in case the river, in the instance put, should merely dwindle and pine away, as this famous mill-pond seems to have done,” said Philly, with a smile,

“then, the possessors of the banks on either side should consider it to be the will of heaven that they should be separated by narrower partitions, and should, straightway, follow the retreating waters; and, when these become so small as to allow them to do so, they should shake hands from the opposite banks, and thank God they were such near neighbours.”

“He’s a man of a clear head, Mr. Riggs,” said the tutor again, with increased admiration, “and expounds law like a book:—and with a great deal of wit too!—He reminds me of the celebrated Mr. Ponsonby whom I once heard at the Four Courts, in a cause—”

“I am entirely of Mr. Warts’ opinion of the value of these considerations,” said Swansdown.

“They seem to me sagacious and reasonable,” said Mr. Tracy, “and concur to strengthen the first views which I took upon this subject.”

“Let these facts then, gentlemen, be inquired into,” said Meriwether.

Wart arose from his seat and walking carelessly a short distance from the group, beckoned Meriwether to follow him, and, when they were together said,—

“I have thrown out enough to put Mr. Tracy upon a new scent, which, if it be well followed up, will answer our purpose; and now, I think I will give our friend Swansdown a walk into the marsh.”

“Since it is agreed, Mr. Swansdown,” said Philly, returning to the party, “that testimony should be

heard upon the questions I have proposed, we shall be able to form a better judgment by a cautious survey of the ground ourselves. It is scarcely possible that the mill-pond should have vanished without leaving some traces to show whether it went off in a night, or wasted away, like a chesnut fence-rail under the united attacks of sun and wind. There is nothing like the Trial by View."

"In what manner do you propose, Mr. Wart, to enjoy this view?" asked Swansdown, with some concern. "Can we see it from the hill side? for it seems rather hazardous for a passage on horseback."

"By walking over it," replied Philly very coolly. "With a little circumspection we can get across tolerably dry. Leap from one tuft to another, and keep your balance. The thing is very easy."

"We shall find brambles in our way," said the reluctant Swansdown.

"E squillâ non nascitur rosa, Mr. Swansdown," replied the other. "It is not the first time I have explored a marsh. Why man, if you had your gun with you, the woodcock would take you twice through the thickest of it! This is a notorious place for woodcock—"

"There are snakes, and some of them of a dangerous species. I have an utter horror of snakes," persisted Swansdown.

"There are some copperheads and a few moccasins," replied Philly, "whose bite is not altogether harmless. As to the black snake, and viper and common water snake, you may amuse yourself with

taking them in your hand. Or take St. Patrick's plan, Mr. Swansdown; cut a hazle rod, and if you use it properly you may conjure every snake of them out of striking distance."

"Ha, ha! A facetious man, that Mr. Philly Wart," said the parson again, to Harvey Riggs.

"Come, Mr. Swansdown, I will lead the way. Don't be alarmed: We shall be better acquainted with the boundary when we get back."

Saying these words, Philly walked forward along the margin of the marshy ground which was once the bed of the dam, and having selected a favourable point for entering upon this region, he turned into it with a prompt and persevering step, making advantage of such spots as were firm enough to sustain his weight, and, pushing the shrubbery to one side, was soon lost to view. Swansdown, ashamed of being outdone, but protesting his reluctance, and laughing with a forced and dry laugh, cautiously entered at the same point, and followed in Philly's footsteps. When they were both still within hearing Philly's voice could be recognized, saying—

"Look where you step, Mr. Swansdown! That's the true rule of life, and particularly, for a man who meddles with law. Have your eyes about you man! *Latet anguis in herbâ*, ha, ha, ha!"

"Hear to him!" exclaimed the parson, "a prodigious smart man, that Philly Wart!"

"After a short interval, Philly's voice was heard calling out, "Mr. Swansdown, Mr. Swansdown, where are you? Not lost, I hope! This way, man;

take the left side of the gum-tree and you will reach the bank of the Apple-pie as dry as a bone. And a monstrous stream it is, as you will find when you get here !”

“ I have encountered shocking obstacles, Mr. Wart,” exclaimed the voice of Swansdown, at some distance; “ I have one leg submersed in water and mud, up to the knee; and have had a score of black snakes hissing at me, ever since I got into this cursed place. Pray allow me to return !”

“ Come on man !” was the reply, “ you will reach dry ground presently. What signifies a wet foot ! Here’s a noble prospect for you.”

Another interval of silence now ensued, and this being followed by a distant hum of conversation, showed us that the two wanderers had fallen again into company.

Whilst we sat amongst the willows that skirted the original margin of the dam, expecting to see the counsellor and his companion emerge from the thicket on the opposite side, our attention was all at once aroused by the deep tongue of Wart’s hounds, who had been exploring the fastness coterminously with their master. They had evidently turned out a fox; and the rapidly retreating and advancing notes informed us of the fact that the object of their pursuit was doubling, with great activity, from one part of the swamp to another. This sudden outbreak threw a surprising exhilaration into our party.

We sprang to our feet and ran from place to place, expecting every moment to see the fox appear upon

the field: these movements were accompanied with a general hallooing and shouting, in which the voice of Philly Wart, amongst the recesses of the marsh, was distinctly audible. Rip, at the first note, had run to his horse, and now came galloping past us, half wild with delight. Mr. Chub was in a perfect ecstasy, jumping, flinging out his arms, and vociferating all the technical cries of encouragement usual amongst the votaries of the chace. Even old Mr. Tracy was roused by the vivacity of the scene. His eyes sparkled and his gestures became peculiarly animated. All the dogs of our train had taken into the swamp, and barked with a deafening clamour as they pursued the track of the hounds, whose strong musical notes were now fast dying away in distance, as these eager animals pursued their prey directly up the stream for more than a mile. For a time, they were even lost to the ear, until, having made another double, they were heard retracing their steps, and coming back to their original starting point, as their short and sonorous notes crowded upon the ear with increasing distinctness.

At length, the little animal, that had given rise to all this uproar, was descried on the opposite side of the swamp, some distance ahead of her pursuers, speeding, with terrified haste, to a hole in the bank, where she was observed safely to accomplish her retreat.

The duration of this animating episode was not above half an hour; and for the greater portion of that period we had totally lost all intelligence of

Wart and Swansdown, but were now greatly amused to perceive the old lawyer breaking out of the cover, immediately at the spot where the fox had taken to the earth. And there he stood, guarding the place against the invasion of the dogs, who seemed to be frantic with disappointment at not being permitted to enter this entrenchment of their enemy. By whipping, hallooing and scolding, Philly succeeded in drawing them away; and now, for the first time during this interval, turned his attention to the fate of his comrade. Swansdown was no where to be seen. Wart called aloud several times without receiving an answer; and at length the party on our side, also, began to vociferate the name of the lost gentleman. This was no sooner done than we were surprised to receive an answer from the midst of the bushes, within ten paces of the spot where we stood. In one instant afterwards, Mr. Swansdown reappeared, almost exactly at the point where he had first entered the swamp. His plight was sadly changed. A thick coat of black mud covered the lower extremities of his pantaloons, and his dress, in places, was torn by briars; but as if glad to be extricated from his perils, on any terms, he came forth with a face of good humour, and readily joined us in the laugh that his strangely discomfited exterior excited.

“ Well,” he remarked, “ to gratify Mr. Wart, I have seen the Apple-pie; and I can truly say that I have enjoyed more pleasure in my life, at less cost. A fine figure I make of it !” he exclaimed, pointing

to his clothes. "We had no sooner reached what Mr. Wart called the bank of the rivulet, than those misbegotten whelps set up such a hideous yelling as turned my excellent friend, the counsellor, crazy upon the spot ; and thereupon he set off at full speed, like an old hound himself, leaving me to flounder back or forward, as best I might. I scarcely know what course I took, and when I thought I had reached the other side, it seems I had arrived just where I started. I can't say I think as highly of Mr. Wart's trial by the view, as he does !"

We gave the unfortunate gentleman all the consolation his case admitted of ; and returning to the ruins of the mill, there took our seats to await the return of Mr. Wart.

It was not long before he appeared, followed by the two dogs. He had crossed from the side on which we left him, with as little concern as if he had been walking on the firmest ground, and joined our company, more in the guise of an experienced woodman than of a gentleman of the learned profession intent upon disentangling points of law.

It may well be supposed that the labours of the day terminated at this point. Our spirits had been too much roused by the events of the morning to allow us to sit down again to the business of the lawsuit ; and the uncomfortable condition of Swansdown made it necessary that he should, as soon as possible, be allowed an opportunity to change his dress. It was therefore intimated by Mr. Wart, that the question of the boundary line should be adjourn-

ed until the next morning, when, he remarked, he thought he should be able to give testimony himself that would be material to the cause.

In accordance with this intimation, it was arranged that the parties should convene the next morning at the Brakes; and having determined upon this, old Mr. Tracy and Swansdown mounted their horses and pursued their road to the mansion house at the Brakes, which was not above two miles distant.

The rest of the party returned to Swallow Barn.

CHAPTER XXIV.**MERRIMENT AND SOBRIETY.**

It was at a late dinner hour that our party returned to Swallow Barn, from the expedition of the boundary line. The absence of Mr. Tracy and his champion Swansdown, caused some anxious solicitude in the family, which, together with the curiosity of the ladies to hear all the particulars of the day's adventure, gave rise to a multitude of inquiries that served to produce much animation at the dinner table. Ned and Harvey detailed what they called the facts, with exorbitant amplification, and with an assumed earnestness, that baffled all attempts to arrive at the truth. A great deal, they affirmed, was to be said on both sides. And then they gave a piteous account of Swansdown's misfortunes; praising his calm and dignified composure, notwithstanding he was so torn by brambles, and so disfigured with mud, and so frightened with snakes—

"He was not attacked by these reptiles!" cried Prudence, with a marked concern.

"They did not absolutely strike their fangs into him," said Harvey; "but they reared up their grizzly heads at his feet, and hissed hideously at him."

"And then he was so drenched to the very skin!" said Ned.

"Poor gentleman!" exclaimed Harvey, "an he 'scape a cold or an ague, his friends should be thankful. Heaven knows what would become of the boundary line, if any thing were to happen to him at this critical juncture!"

"And he looked so forlorn!" continued Ned.

"And so interesting!" said Harvey, "with the black mud up to his knees, and his white pocket-handkerchief up to his face, wiping away the blood where the briars had made free with his chin."

"Don't you believe them, aunt Pru!" cried Rip. "Mr. Swansdown was laughing all the time,—for we had a most an elegant fox-hunt, only it was all in the swamp, and the bushes would not let us see any thing!"

"After all then, cousin Harvey," said Catharine, "tell us seriously how this famous arbitration has ended."

"Most appropriately," said Harvey. "About forty years ago, the law-suit began with the quest of a wild goose, and, having exercised the ingenuity of all the low-country lawyers in succession, during all this time, it has now turned into a fox-chace, and ended by earthing a poor little harmless quadruped, precisely at the place of beginning."

"That's true," said Philly Wart, laughing, "the hole was as nearly as possible at the commencement of the first line laid off in the survey of the mill-dam. But, Miss Tracy," he continued, "you must not sup-

pose that there was any design on our part in putting up the fox this morning. This is not the time of the year for such sport, because these animals have all young families to take care of, and it is deemed cruel to disturb them : but my dogs happened to fall upon the trail of madam, as she was looking out for her breakfast. And so, off they went, Miss Catharine, making excellent music. It was a cunning thing for the little animal, too, to take right up the swamp ; for, besides the wind being in that direction,—which you know would carry the scent away from the dogs, —she had the water to wash away the foot-prints ; and, in addition to this, she was leading them off, as fast as she could, from her den, which is a motherly trick these creatures have. But, you see, Miss Tracy, the more she ran the warmer she got ; and so, she left her scent upon the bushes and brambles. If you could have seen the dogs you would have found them with their noses up, as unconcerned as if they had had her in view all the time. Presently, she got the foot of them so far, that she found she could get back to her nest before they could come up ; and so, she doubled beautifully down the swamp again, and straight to her holè, as fast as her legs could carry her. I knew what her trick was from the first ; and was, therefore, on the lookout, which enabled me to reach her just as she entered it ; and there I defended her gallantly against the invasion of her enemies.”

“For which you deserve the thanks of all mothers, Mr Wart,” said my cousin Lucretia.

“And of all sportsmen too,” said Harvey Riggs.

“For a fox that is hunted and runs away,
May live to be hunted another day.”

Philly Wart had become exceedingly animated in the course of the recital above detailed, and notwithstanding it was ludicrously out of place, considering the person to whom it was addressed, Philly was too full of his subject to let it drop. His description was accompanied by a vivacious and expressive gesticulation, that prevented him from eating his dinner; and Catharine had become so much amused with his manner, that she listened with a marked approbation, and encouraged him to proceed, by frequent nods of her head.

“It is quite lawful and customary, Miss Tracy,” continued the counsellor, “to hunt young foxes at this season, at moonlight; and it is a fine sport, I assure you! If you were to get on your horse to-night, about twelve,—for we shall have a bright moon by that hour,—and ride over to the old mill-dam, and take my two dogs with you, you would be sure to get two or three of the cubs on foot almost immediately, and the mother besides; and then you might take a seat upon the rider of a fence, with your great coat well wrapped about you, and your hands in your pockets, and see a fine run. For, at this time of year, they (especially the young ones,) won’t run far from the nest; but they are apt to play in circles round it, which gives you a chance, in a clear moonlight, to see them twenty times in an hour. And

then, when they get tired, Miss Tracy, they have only to pop into the nest, and there they are as snug as you could wish them!"

"I have read," said Catharine, "of ladies indulging in the sports of the chace; but it would be a great novelty, Mr. Wart, to find one of our sex pursuing such a pastime alone, on the borders of a desolate marsh, at midnight, and seated, as you propose, on the top-rail of a fence, with her hands in her pockets!"

Here followed a general laugh from the company.

"To make the picture complete," said Harvey Riggs, "cousin Kate, you should have a scant mantle of scarlet, and a pipe in your mouth."

"And a broom-stick, I suppose you would say, cousin Harvey, instead of a pony," added Catharine.

"When I said you, Miss Tracy," said the counsellor, smiling, "I meant Ned Hazard here and his friends, who profess to be fond of manly exercises."

"I profess," said Ned, "a sovereign aversion to agues, and an especial proclivity to the comforts of a warm bed."——

Towards the hour of sunset the ladies from the Brakes were preparing to return home, and, as the arrangements for the following day contemplated a meeting at Mr. Tracy's, we promised to assemble there at an early hour. Prudence had yielded to the entreaties of Catharine and Bel to accompany

them that evening, and a horse was accordingly brought to the door for her. Our guests, with this addition, soon afterwards left Swallow Barn.

When we had concluded our evening repast,—that substantial country meal which it would be altogether inadequate to call by the feeble, but customary name of tea—the pleasant change wrought upon the atmosphere by the dew, which in the low-country, at this season, falls heavily after night, had, as usual, brought the inmates of the house to the doors. Mr. Wart and Frank Meriwether had taken their seats in the porch; and here, dismissing the tone of levity with which the events of the day had been conducted, they fell into a grave conference upon sundry matters of public concern. The rest of us sat quietly listening to the conversation, which became interesting from the sensible and shrewd character of the interlocutors. Philly Wart, notwithstanding the mixture of jest and almost frivolity, that, during the day, had shown itself in his demeanor, now exhibited the thought and reflection of one versed in the secrets of his nature, and that keen insight into the merits of men and their actions, that can only be gained by extensive intercourse with the world. His remarks had a strong flavour of originality, and although now and then brought to the verge of the ludicrous by a rash and unsuccessful attempt to be figurative, they were, nevertheless, pithy and forcibly illustrative of his subject. Meriwether, with less pretensions to a knowledge of men, was calm, philosophical and benevo-

lent; his character principally manifesting itself in certain kindly prejudices, and in a tone of observation, which, in reference to political conclusions, might be said to be even desponding. Frank has never found the actions of those who administer our government squaring with that lofty virtue which the excellence of his own principles has taught him to exact from all men who aspire to control the interests of society. In fact, he speaks like an ancient stoic, removed from all ambition to figure on the theatre of life, and quietly observing the tumult of affairs from a position too distant to be reached by the sordid passions that sway the multitude; or, in other words, he discourses like an easy and cultivated country-gentleman.

It was in summing up a train of reflections, in this temper, upon the general aspect of the great political movements of the day, that he concluded—as we broke up our party—

“ Well, Mr. Wart, you think better of these things than I do; but, to my mind, there is no satisfaction in this survey. Look which way I may, to the one side or to the other, to me it seems all equally vile and contemptible; and so, good night !”

CHAPTER XXV.

THE OLD SCHOOL.

I AROSE on the following morning soon after daylight, and was quietly descending the staircase when I was saluted by the voices of Lucy and Vic, who, at this early hour, were equipped for the day. They were looking out with some eagerness at the clouds. A heavy rain had fallen during the night, but the eastern horizon was nevertheless tinted with the rosy flush of morning, and the indications were favourable to the dispersion of the few black vapours that still rolled across the heavens. My little cousins soon made me acquainted with the cause of their early appearance. They were to accompany us to the Brakes, and had planned it to ask me to take a seat with them in the carriage, telling me, that if I did not go with them they would be obliged to take Rip, which, as Vic said, "Rip never *did* like."

I assented heartily to their proposal; and upon this they fell to dancing round me, and amusing me with a great deal of prattle. They insisted upon my going with them to the stable yard, "just to make sure that uncle Carey was cleaning up the carriage, and getting ready." Here we found the

old menial with a bucket of water and sponge, busily employed in the task the little girls had coaxed him to perform. He was affectionately obliging to his young mistresses, and spoke to them in a tone that showed how largely he partook of the family interest in them, although it was sufficiently apparent that he deferred but little to their authority.

As soon as breakfast was over, Carey brought the coach to the door. It was a capacious old vehicle, that had known better days, being somewhat faded in its furniture, and still clothed with its original cover of yellow oil-cloth, of which, I suppose, it had never been stripped, although now arrived at the latter stage of its existence. The plainness of this part of the equipage was compensated in a pair of high-mettled, full-blooded chesnut horses, in excellent keeping, but rather light in comparison with the size of the coach to which they were harnessed.

Meriwether having unexpectedly received intelligence that rendered his presence necessary at a remote part of the farm, was obliged to forego his visit to the Brakes; and Ned was accordingly commissioned by him to make his excuses and act as his representative. This matter being arranged, and all things being in readiness for our departure, Mr. Wart, attended by Ned Hazard and Rip, set out on horseback; whilst the two little girls and myself took our seats in the carriage, and old Carey, mounting the box, put off his horses at a brisk speed.

As we ascended the hill, and came in full view of the mansion house at the Brakes, we could observe

Mr. Tracy walking backward and forward with his arms behind him, on a level plat at the door; and as soon as our party attracted his attention, he was seen to halt, with his hat raised off his head, and held in such a manner as to shield his eyes from the sun, until we got near enough for recognition. There was an unwonted alacrity in his salutations; and he helped Lucy and Vic from the carriage himself, with a gallantry that showed the cheerful state of his feelings, not forgetting to take a kiss from each as he handed them to the door.

When we entered the house, Harvey Riggs and Bel were observed walking leisurely up the lawn, from the direction of the river. At a parlour window sat Catharine and Prudence, in an absorbing conversation with Mr. Swansdown, who was apparently regaling his interested auditors with a narrative of deep attraction; and perhaps it may have been an idle preconception of mine, but I thought Prudence, especially, listened with a more intelligent and changeful sympathy than was her wont. What was the topic, and in what language urged, I am altogether ignorant; but to my prejudiced vision it seemed that either the story or the speaker had charmed "never so wisely."

In describing the mansion house at the Brakes, in a former chapter, I have informed my reader that it is without architectural embellishment. One front faces the river, from which it is separated by a long, sloping and unshaded hill. At the foot of this slope the bank of the river is some eight or ten feet above

the water, and is clothed with a screen of native shrubbery. The road winds round the hill from the river, so as to approach the house on the opposite side. This front of the dwelling differs widely from that I have described. Its plainness is relieved by a portico supported by stuccoed columns, massive and rough, and over which the second story of the building projects, so as to form a small apartment that has rather a grotesque appearance,—as it may be said to resemble a box perched upon a four-legged stool. This superstructure is built of wood painted blue, though a good deal weather-beaten; and it is illustrated with a large bow-window in the front, surrounded with a heavy white cornice filled with modillions and other old-fashioned ornaments: it strikes the observer as an appendage to the edifice of questionable utility, and as somewhat incongruous with the prevailing simplicity that characterizes the exterior of the mansion. A range of offices, old, and interpolated with modern additions, sweeps rectangularly along the brow of the hill, and shows the ample provision made for the comforts of solid house-keeping. The whole of this quarter is thickly embowered with trees, amongst which the line of lombardy poplars, that I have before had occasion to notice, is marshalled along the avenue, from the mansion downwards, like a gigantic array of sylvan grenadiers. Over all the grounds in the vicinity of the buildings, an air of neatness prevails, even to an extent that might be called pedantic.

The interior of the house is in full contrast with its

outward appearance, and shows the relics of a costly grandeur. The rooms are large, and decorated with a profusion of wood work, chiselled into the gorgeous forms of ancient pomp. The doors have huge pediments above them, with figures carved upon the entablatures; garlands of roses, as stiff as petrifications, are moulded, with a formal grace, upon the jambs of the window-frames; and the mantel-pieces are thickly embossed with odd little mythological monsters, as various as the metamorphoses of Ovid. The walls are enriched with a fretted cornice, in the frieze of which cupids, satyrs and fauns are taking hands, and seem to be dancing country-dances through thickets of nondescript vegetables. The fire-places are noble monuments of ancient hospitality, stately and vast, and on either side of them are deep recesses, surmounted by ornamented arches, and lighted by windows that look out from the gable-ends of the building.

The furniture of these apartments retains the vestiges of a corresponding splendour. The tables seem to have turned into iron from age, and are supported upon huge, crooked legs: the chairs, sofas, fire-screens, and other articles of embellishment, though damaged by time, still afford glimpses of the lacker and varnish that gave effulgence to their days of glory. Amongst these remnants of the old time I recognized, with an affectionate interest, two elliptical mirrors,—no doubt the marvel of the country when they first reached this strand,—set in frames of

tarnished gilt, and curiously carved into droll resemblances of twisted serpents, each swallowing his own tail.

I must return from this digression to continue my narrative of the important affair that had now brought us to the Brakes.

From an early hour, Mr. Tracy had been in a state of agitated spirits with the thoughts of the arbitration. Although his zeal had latterly subsided, it had been waked up by the recent movements, like a snake at the return of spring. The old gentleman rises from his bed, at all seasons, with the dawn of day; but this morning he was observed to make an unusual stir. It was remarked that his dress was even more scrupulously adjusted than ordinarily; the ruffles of his sleeves protruded over his hands with a more pregnant strut; his cravat was drawn, if possible, tighter round his neck; and his silvery hair was combed back into the small, taper cue that played upon his cape, with a sleekness that indicated more minute attention to personal decoration than the family were accustomed to expect. He is the very picture of a man for a law-suit. His tall figure and care-worn face have such an emaciated air! and when to this is added the impression made by his tight, brown kerseymere small-clothes, and his long, stocking-like boots, buttoned by straps to his knees, and the peculiar capacity of stride which this costume discloses, we have the personation of a man eminently calculated to face the biting blast of the law, or to

worm through the intricacies of a tangled and long-winded suit, with the least possible personal obstruction.

Harvey Riggs told us that Mr. Tracy had scarcely eaten any breakfast, being in that fidgety state of mind that takes away the appetite; and, what was a little out of his common behaviour, he was even jocose upon the existing relations betwixt himself and Meriwether. It was also observable that, notwithstanding this elevation of spirits, he would occasionally break out into a slight expression of peevishness when any thing balked his humour. It fell upon Ned Hazard to encounter one of these passing rebukes, as will appear in the dialogue I am about to detail.

Mr. Tracy has reached that age at which old persons lose sight of the true relations of society. He considers all men, not yet arrived at middle age, as mere hair-brained boys; and does not scruple, especially in matters of business, to treat them accordingly. I believe he is of opinion that Frank Meriwether himself has scarcely attained to manhood. But as for Ned Hazard, or even Harvey Riggs, he thinks them not yet out of their teens. This temper is apparent when the old gentleman experiences any contradiction; for he is then apt to become dogmatic and peremptory, and sometimes a little harsh. But he likes Ned very well; and frequently, when he is in good humour, laughs at his pranks, until the tears come into his eyes, and roll

over his dry cheeks, like vinegar trickling over a piece of leather.

Now it happens that Ned stands precisely in that category that renders him nervously solicitous to appear well in the eyes of Mr. Tracy. He is sadly aware that Bel's father has taken up an idea that he is a thoughtless, unballasted youth, and utterly deficient in those thrifty business-habits that are most pleasing to the contemplation of age; and he is therefore perpetually making awkward attempts to produce a different opinion. My reader has perhaps already had occasion to remark that Ned's character is utterly inauspicious to the management of such a matter. He is purblind to all the consequences of his own conduct, and as little calculated to play the politician as a child.

When the gentlemen of our party had gathered together, Mr. Tracy was anxious that no time should be lost to the prejudice of the principal concern of our meeting; and having announced this, he was approached by Ned, who, with a solemn face,—endeavouring to assume as much of the look of a negotiator as he was able,—made a formal communication of the cause of Meriwether's absence, and of the arrangement that he himself was to appear as the representative of Swallow Barn. Mr. Tracy did not like it; he could not imagine how any domestic engagement could claim precedence over one so important as this. He was on the verge of saying so; but, as if struck with a sudden thought, he paused, stared at Ned, without uttering a word,

grasped his nether lip with his left hand, and fell into a study. Ned stood by, looking as respectfully as he could. The conclusion was favourable ; for the old gentleman brightened up, and delivered himself, with some hesitation, pretty much in this way :—

“ Well, well! It is all right that you should give your attention to this matter. We old folks labour altogether for the young ; and they that come after us must live and learn. I wish I could make my Ralph feel the interest he ought to take in this subject ; but he is wayward, and plays his own game. As to you, Mr. Hazard, although you are young and thoughtless, and not of an age to take care of your property, this may be said to be your own case, sir, seeing that you are the heir to Swallow Barn under your father’s will. And I am told Mr. Meriwether is clearing the track for you ; he is wiping off the incumbrances. So it is your own case you have to look after.”

“ For my part, Mr. Tracy,” replied Ned, with a timid deference, and with a singular want of shrewdness, considering the person he addressed, “ I have never seen the use of this controversy. Our family ought to have given up to you, rather than trouble the courts with such an inconsiderable matter. I have always expressed my willingness to end the affair by making you a deed.”

“ Young gentleman,” said Mr. Tracy, rather briskly, and looking with an air of surprise at Ned, “ you reckon without your host if you consider this a mat-

ter of acres at all. Your father, sir, and I had an honest difference of opinion; he thought he was right; I thought I was; and we both knew that the other would expend twenty times the value of the land, before he would take an inch of it but as matter of right. I am not accustomed to take up or put down opinions upon light grounds. In such matters I do not count the cost. A deed, sir!"—

"I beg pardon," replied Ned confusedly, and alarmed by this flash of temper, which set him, like a boy who has mistaken the mood of his master, to a speedy recantation. "You mistook my meaning,—I meant to say—"

"Yes, yes," interrupted the old gentleman, relapsing into the opposite tone of kindness, as if aware that his feelings had been unnecessarily roused, "so I suppose, my young friend! You are but a novice in the world; but you know Isaac Tracy well enough to be quite certain that he does not fling away five hundred pounds,—aye, twice five hundred,—to maintain his title to a bed of splatterdocks, unless there was something at the bottom of the dispute that belonged to his character."

This remark was concluded with an emotion that amounted almost to a laugh; and so completely reassured Ned, as to embolden him to venture upon a joke.

"Such character," said Ned, "is like the goose in the fable; it lays golden eggs."

"And there is nothing in it when you cut it up,

Mr. Edward, that is what you were going to say," added the old gentleman, greatly amused with the remark. "You are a facetious young gentleman. You say pretty sharp things now and then, Edward, and don't spare such old codgers as I, ha, ha!" he continued, laughing, and tapping Ned familiarly on the back. "Why, what a plague! Here we are wasting our time with this merry Ned Hazard, when we ought to be at our business. Dogs take you, for a jester as you are!" he exclaimed, jogging Ned with his elbow, "You will trick us out of our proper vocation with a laugh, would ye! Harvey, call Mr. Swansdown from the parlour; tell him he must leave the women; we have our hands full."

After this burst from the old gentleman, he opened a door that admitted us to a small room that he calls his study. It is an inner shrine that is deemed a prohibited spot to the members of the household, as the key of it is generally carried in Mr. Tracy's own pocket. This apartment is so characteristic of its inhabitant, that I must take advantage of my introduction to it, to make my reader acquainted with its general appearance.

Some heavy volumes in quarto, such as constituted the guise in which the best authors of Queen Anne's time were accustomed to be exhibited to the public, were scattered over a range of shelves that occupied one side of the room. There was one large window only to the apartment, through which the sun flung a broad light, that served to heighten the for-

lorn impression made by the obsolete and almost shabby air of the furniture ; on the sill of this window a collection of pods and garden seeds were laid out to be dried. In another quarter of the room, a shelf was appropriated to the accommodation of a motley assemblage of old iron, of which the principal pieces were rusty hinges, bolts, screws, bridle-bits, stirrups, and fragments of agricultural implements ; and upon the floor, below these, stood a chest of tools. The fire-place had a ragged appearance, being strewed with scraps of paper and other rubbish, and upon one side of it was placed an old-fashioned secretary, with a lid like the roof of a house. One or two paintings, too obscure to be guessed at, hung over the mantel-piece ; and on the wall near the door, was suspended an almost illegible map of Virginia. A small table was opened out in the middle of the floor, and provided with a writing apparatus : around this table were three or four broad, high-backed mahogany chairs, with faded crimson seats stuck round with brass nails. The cobwebs on various parts of the walls, and the neglected aspect of the room, showed it to be an apartment not much resorted to or used by the old gentleman, except as a mere place of deposit for lumber.

When Mr. Swansdown, at Harvey's summons, made his appearance, our friend Phully Wart indulged in some little raillery upon the mischances of the day before, and accused the sentimental gentleman of deserting him ; but finding old Mr. Tracy already

provided with a mass of documents, and standing ready, with spectacles on nose, to plunge into the middle of affairs, the several parties sat down and addressed themselves to their tasks like men determined to make an end of matters. Ned put on a farcical gravity, and began to rummage over the papers, as if he was thoroughly acquainted with every document in the bundle, until Mr. Tracy, raising his glasses up to his forehead, asked him, with a fretful earnestness, what he was in search of. This simple interrogatory, and the look that accompanied it, so disconcerted the representative of Swallow Barn, that he was obliged to reply, for lack of something better to say, that "he was looking for nothing in particular!"

"I thought so, by your haste," said the old gentleman, as he brought his spectacles back to their original position. Ned, to conceal his confusion, picked up a large sheet of parchment, and set about reading its contents regularly through from the beginning.

As soon as we saw this little wittenagemote fairly at work with the law-suit, Harvey and myself quietly stole away, not, however, without receiving a glance from Ned Hazard, who turned his head and gave us a look of sly perplexity as we disappeared at the door.

The ladies had retired to their rooms. Ralph had taken away our young cavalier Rip to the river; and being thus left to ourselves, Harvey and I sat down at the front door, attracted by the commanding view

of the scenery, and the appearance of a large ship that, with all her canvass spread, was winging her way round the headlands of the James River, towards the Atlantic.

In this situation, Harvey gave me the particulars of the scene I am about to describe in the next chapter.

CHAPTER XXVI.**THE RAKING HAWK.**

I SAID that when we arrived at the Brakes, Bel and Harvey Riggs were seen approaching the house from a distance. The morning was still cool from the evaporation of the dew before the rays of the sun. A pleasant breeze swept across the lawn from the direction of the river. Bel was leaning upon Harvey's arm in earnest conversation; her face shaded by a kind of hood of green silk, and her dress such as ladies wear in the earlier part of the day, before they perform the more studied labours of the toilet; it was of a light fabric, neatly fitted to her person. Exercise had thrown a healthy hue over her cheek; and the fresh breeze fluttering amongst the folds of her dress imparted an idea of personal comfort that accorded with the coolness of the costume, and the blooming countenance of its wearer. It did not escape my notice, that her foot, which is exceedingly well shaped, appeared to great advantage in an accurately fitted shoe, bound to her ankle with black ribbons laced across stockings of spotless white. Her exterior was altogether remarkable for a becoming simplicity of attire, and seemed to speak

that purity of taste which is the most beautiful and attractive quality in the character of a woman.

I must admonish my reader that, as my design in this work has been simply to paint in true colours the scenes of domestic life as I have found them in Virginia, I do not scruple to record whatever has interested me; and if, perchance, my story should not advance according to the regular rules of historico-dramatic composition to its proper conclusion, I do not hold myself accountable for any misadventure on that score. I sketch with a careless hand; and must leave the interest I excite—if such a thing may be—to the due developement of the facts as they come within my knowledge. For the present, I have to tell what Harvey Riggs and Bel had been concerning themselves about, before we met them in the hall. If any thing is to grow out of it hereafter, it is more than I know.

It had been hinted to me from two or three quarters, but principally by Ned Hazard, and I believe I have said as much to my reader in some former chapter, that Bel Tracy is a little given to certain romantic fancies, such as country ladies who want excitement and read novels are apt to engender. Her vivacity and spirit show themselves in the zeal with which she ever cultivates the freaks that take possession of her mind. For some time past, she had devoted her time to training a beautiful marsh-hawk, a bird resembling the short-winged hawk known by the name of the hen-harrier in the old books, and had nurtured it with her own hand from

its callow state. By an intimacy of one year she had rendered this bird so docile, that, at her summons, he would leave a large wicker cage in which he was ordinarily imprisoned, and which was suspended from an old mulberry-tree in the yard, to perch upon her wrist. The picturesque association of falconry with the stories of an age that Walter Scott has rendered so bewitching to the fancy of meditative maidens, had inspired Bel with an especial ardour in the attempt to reclaim her bird. In her pursuit of this object she had picked up some gleanings of the ancient lore that belonged to the art; and, fantastic as it may seem, began to think that her unskilful efforts would be attended with success. Her hawk, it is true, had not been taught to follow his quarry, but he was manned—as Bel said of him—in all such exercises as made him a fit companion for a lady. She had provided him with leather bewets, that buttoned round his legs, and to each of these was attached a small silver bell. A silver ring, or varvel, was fitted to one leg, and on it was engraved the name of her favourite, copied from some old tale, “Fairbourne,” with the legend attached, “I live in my lady’s grace.” I know not what other foppery was expended upon her minion; but I will warrant he went forth in as conceited array as his “lady’s grace” could devise for him. A lady’s favourite is not apt to want gauds and jewels.

Immediately after breakfast, Bel stole forth alone to Fairbourne’s perch. She held in her hand a pair of leather jesses, a leash, and a ball of fine cord,

which she termed a creance. Now, the thought that had taken possession of her brain was, to slip off with Fairbourne into the field, and give him a flight; a privilege that he had never enjoyed during the whole period of his thralldom. Bel supposed that by fastening the jesses to his legs,—or I should say, speaking like one versed in the mystery, his arms,—and the leash to the jesses, and the creance to that, Fairbourne would be as secure in the empyrean as on his perch: she had only to manage him as a boy manages his kite. Her purpose, however, was to try the first experiment alone, and, upon its success, she designed to surprise her visitors, as well as the family, with the rare entertainment of a hawking scene.

As she stood under the mulberry-tree, looking at Fairbourne tiring at the limb of a pullet, or, in other words, whetting his voracious appetite with the raw leg of a chicken, and had just snatched the morsel from his beak to make him the more keen, Harvey Riggs accidentally came into the porch, and, stooping down, picked up from the floor a strange resemblance of a bird compacted of leather and feathers.

“What child’s toy is this, Bel?” cried he, loud enough to startle the lady with the question. “What crotchet have you in your head now?”

“Pray, cousin Harvey, come this way,” said she, turning round with the hawk upon her hand. “It is my lure; bring it to me, for I want your help. I am going to give Fairbourne a holiday. You shall see him presently dabbling his wing in yonder cloud.”

Harvey approached with the lure in his hand; and Bel, patting the bird upon the back, as he alternately stretched out first one wing, and then the other, along his leg,—in the action known by the name of mantling,—explained her whole design to her cousin. Then binding on the jesses, with the leash and creance, each made fast to the other, she sallied out upon the lawn, attended by her squire, until she reached a spot at a distance from any tree, where she intimated to Harvey that she would now let Fairbourne fly.

“But if he should not come back, Bel?” inquired Harvey. “For it seems to me not altogether so safe to trust to his love of his perch, or even of his mistress; although in that he is not of my mind. In spite of your lure, which I know is a great temptation to some persons, my pretty cousin, there are creatures that prefer the open world to your hand, strange as it may seem!”

“Is not here my creance?” asked Bel, in reply. “And then, when the lure fails, have I not only to pull the string?”

“Your light flax is not so strong as a wild bird’s love of freedom,” said Harvey.

“Ah, cousin, you forget that Fairbourne is a gallant bird, and loves to hear me call him. I will whistle him down without compulsion. Now, mark how loth he is to leave my hand,” continued Bel, rapidly endeavouring to cast the bird off, who, instead of flying, merely spread his wings with a motion necessary to preserve his balance. At length,

she succeeded in disengaging him from her hand, when, instead of mounting into the air, he tamely lit upon the ground some few paces from her feet.

"Oh villain Fairbourne!" cried Harvey, "you grovel when you should soar."

"This comes of my not hooding him," said Bel. "But it seemed so cruel to pass a thread through his eyelids,—which is called seeling, and must be done before he would bear the hood,—that I could not think of it. I don't believe these ladies of the old time could have been so very tender-hearted. Cousin, if he will not fly, the direction is to strike at him with your wand."

"Which means my foot," said Harvey, "so, master Fairbourne, up, or my wand shall ruffle your feathers for you!" With these words, Harvey approached the bird, and, striking at him with his boot, had the satisfaction to see him spring briskly from the ground, and mount into the air with a rapid, bickering flight. He took his course against the wind, and, as he ascended, Bel played out her line, with rapturous exclamations of pleasure at the sight of her petted bird flinging himself aloft with such a spirited motion. When he had risen to the utmost reach of his creance, he was observed to dart and wheel through the air in every variety of perplexed motion, canceliering—as it was anciently termed—in graceful circles through the atmosphere, and turning, with quick flashes, the bright lining of his wings to the sun. It was beautiful to look upon the joyous bird gambolling at this lordly height, and the

graceful girl watching his motions with a countenance of perfect transport.

“To my thinking,” said Harvey, “Fairbourne is so well pleased with his pastime that he will not be very willing to return.”

“Oh, you shall see !” cried Bel ; “ I can lure ‘ my tassel-gentle back again.’ Look you now, cousin, here is Fairbourne shall come back to me like a spaniel !”

Saying this, she flourished her lure in the air, and called out the words of her customary salutation to the hawk as loud as she was able. “ He sees and hears with extraordinary acuteness,” she continued, as she still waved the lure above her head, “ and will obey presently.”

“ Faith, if he hears or sees, he does not heed !” said Harvey.

“ He has been so overfed with delicacies,” replied Bel, a little disappointed at receiving no token of recognition, “ that it is no wonder this lure has no charms for him. My whistle he never neglects.”

Upon this, she put a small ivory pipe to her mouth, and blew a shrill note.

“ You overrate your authority, Bel,” said her cousin. “ Fairbourne has no ear for music. He is fit for treason, stratagem and spoils.”

“ The wretch !” exclaimed Bel, playfully. “ Does he dare defy my whistle ! then, master, I must need take a course with you ! there is some virtue in fetters, however, when milder means fail. So come down, scapegrace, and answer to your mistress for

your truant behaviour! Aha! you obey now!" she added exultingly, as she drew in the line, and compelled her hawk to dart towards the earth.

"After all," said Harvey, "there is no persuasion like a string. Trust me, a loop upon hawk or lover, coz, is safer than a lure any day."

"It did not require the flight of a silly bird to teach me that," said Bel, smiling, "or why did I bring this long line into the field with me?"

At this moment, Fairbourne had almost reached the ground by a swift flight that far outsped Bel's exertions, assisted by Harvey, to draw him down: then, skimming along the surface of the field with the slackened cord, he suddenly shot upwards with such vigour as to snap the string; and, frightened by the jerk that severed his fetters, he arose with an alarmed motion, to a soaring height, and then shaped his career directly up the river.

Bel and Harvey watched the retreating bird in equal amazement, as he winged his flight across the woody promontories in the distance, until he was reduced to a mere speck upon the sky.

Bel's emotion was one of mortification, not unmingled with admiration at the arrow-like swiftness with which her favourite sped from her hand. Harvey's was wonder, whether a bird nurtured in such household familiarity would soar so far from his accustomed haunts as to render his return hopeless.

"I can see him yet," said Harvey, straining his sight up the river, "and, if I am not mistaken, he has darted down to perch near Swallow Barn."

"He will come back," muttered Bel, in a distrustful tone of voice, and with a look of dejection, "I know he will come back! nothing that I have tended so kindly would desert me."

"Make yourself easy, my dear cousin," replied Harvey, "he belongs to an ungrateful tribe, and is not worth reclaiming."

"I could sit down and cry," said Bel.

"You should laugh rather, to think," replied her cousin, "what an arrant coxcomb you have sent abroad amongst the crows and king-fishers of the river. He, with his jangling bells, and his silver ring and dainty apparel! A marvellous fopling he will make in the sedate circles of owls and buzzards! I should not be surprised if, in three days' time, he should be whipped out of all good society in the woods, and be fain to come back to his perch, as torn-down and bedraggled as a certain other favourite of yours, who took refuge at the Brakes yesterday."

"Fye, cousin!" exclaimed Bel, laughing, "what harm has poor Mr. Swansdown done, that you should rail at him?"

"True," said Harvey; "if you had deigned to cast a loop round him, he would not have fled so willingly."

"What shall I do?" asked Bel.

"I will tell Ned Hazard," said Harvey. "This is an incident in his line. Ned has not yet killed seven dragons in your service; and therefore you frown upon him. So, pray let me put him in the

way to signalize himself. He shall bring back Fairbourne, if the renegade is to be found in the Old Dominion."

"I would not give him the trouble," said Bel, carelessly.

"I will," replied Harvey; "and by way of quickening his motion, will tell him that you would take it kindly."

"I am sure," said Bel, "Edward would do any thing I might ask of him."

"He would delight in it," replied Harvey. "He is most horribly in love. The search after this hawk would be occupation for him: it would divert his melancholy."

"Oh, cousin Harvey Riggs!" cried Bel with great animation, "to say that Ned Hazard is melancholy, or in love either, after what we heard on the bank of the river the other day, when we surprised him and Mr. Littleton!"

"Melancholy,—that is, your love-melancholy,—wears divers antics," said Harvey. "Ned was beguiling his sorrows in music, which is very common, as you will find, in all the old romances. It was one of the excesses of his passion, Bel."

"To be singing my name in doggerel couplets on the highway! I assure you I don't forgive him for such passion!" interrupted the other.

"If the gods have not made him poetical," replied Harvey, "you should not blame him for that."

"Talk to me of my hawk, cousin, and pray spare your jests; for you see I need comfort."

"Ned," said Harvey, "is all the comfort I can give you, and if he does not bring back Fairbourne, I would advise you to take the miserable swain himself."

"Why do you talk to me so?" asked Bel.

"To tell you the truth," replied Harvey, "I have a reason for it. Ned, you know, is a good fellow. And here,—what is very natural,—he has fallen in love. He could not help that, you know! Well, it makes him silly, as it makes every man, except those who are so by nature, and they grow wise upon it. He is afraid to talk to you, because his heart gets in his mouth, and chokes him. I can see plainly enough what he wishes to say, and therefore I am determined, as you are my cousin, to say it for him. He wishes to tell you, that as you are inexorable, he has made up his mind to leave this country with Mark Littleton; and then, heaven knows where the poor fellow will go!"

"If no man was ever more in love than Ned Hazard," answered Bel, "the world would be sadly in want of romances. Why, cousin, it is impossible for him to be in earnest long enough to sum up his own thoughts upon the subject."

"How little do you know," cried Harvey, "of my poor friend Ned!"

"Know him, cousin!" exclaimed Bel, laughing, "you won't be so rash as to say Ned Hazard is a man of mystery? Why he is mirth itself."

"You mistake his madness for mirth, Bel; he is

distracted, and, therefore, unaccountable for his actions."

"You are as mad as he, cousin Harvey. That is a pretty kind of love that plays off such merry-andrew tricks as Ned's mummery, with you to back him! Your tragedy of the Babes in the Wood, and your serenades under our windows, look very much like the doings of a distracted lover! Give me a man of reverend manners and dignity for a lover. Now, you know, Ned has none of that, cousin."

"Bel, you are as mad as either Ned or myself," exclaimed Harvey with a laugh, and taking both of Bel's hands; "you will marry some grave rogue or dull pedant, after all!"

"Cousin Harvey, I will not be catechised any longer," interrupted Bel impatiently; "here I come to fly a hawk, and lo, you engage me in a parley about Ned Hazard!"

"Well," replied Harvey, "I have discharged my duty. I see Ned is in a bad way. Poor devil! he ought never to have fallen in love. But it was not his fault. I thought it but just to tell you what I feared. Ned will leave us: and who knows but he may take another trip round the Horn! He will then throw himself into the great struggle for freedom in that hemisphere; become a general, of course; push his conquests across the Andes; and perhaps, reaching the heights of Chimborazo, will fall in some splendid battle, having first engraved with his sword the name of the cold Bel Tracy upon the ice of the

glacier. And there he will leave that mighty mountain to tell posterity how burning was his love, how frozen was his mistress! Now, there's dignity and superlative sentiment both for you! Let Swansdown himself beat that if he can!"

"Why what an irreclaimable jester are you!" cried Bel; "I do not wonder that Edward Hazard should be so little serious, with such a companion!"

"Then, Bel, you do not like him."

"On the contrary," replied Bel, "I like him exceedingly; as well as a brother. But depend upon it, I cannot entertain him in any other relation, until perhaps —"

"He has learned to be more sentimental and scrupulous in his behaviour," interrupted her cousin.

"At least," said Bel, in a more serious manner, and evidently as if she felt what she said, "until he ceases to jest upon me."

"That's in confidence," said Harvey; "I understand you. Ned has some schooling to go through yet. At all events, he must not leave Swallow Barn."

"If you are in earnest, cousin,—for indeed I do not know how to take you,—and he thinks of such a thing, I should be very sorry for it," said Bel.

During this conversation, Bel had taken Harvey's arm, and they had wandered towards the bank of the river, and from thence homeward, so much engrossed with the topics that Harvey had brought into discussion, that Bel gradually forgot her hawk, and fell into a confidential communion upon a sub-

ject that was nearer to her feelings than she chose to confess. The particulars of this further discourse, which was continued until they had reached the house, after our arrival at the Brakes, was not all related to me by Harvey; but the impression made upon his mind was, that Ned Hazard had not taken the pains to conciliate Bel's favour, which the value of the prize deserved. He did not doubt that she had an affection for him; but still, she spoke as if there were prejudices to be overcome, and scruples to be conquered, which stood in the way of her decision. Harvey's object, under all his levity of manner, was to ascertain whether Ned's quest was hopeless or otherwise; and he had therefore availed himself of the adventure of the hawk, to draw her thoughts into the current indicated in the above conversation. His conclusion from it all was, that Ned must either reform his behaviour towards Bel, or relinquish his pretensions. Harvey added, "Ned is falling rapidly into that privileged intimacy that is fatal to the pretensions of a lover. This jesting, careless friendship will lodge him, in a short time, high and dry upon a shoal in her regard, where he will become a permanent and picturesque landmark. He will acquire the enviable distinction of a brother, as she begins to call him already, and he will be certain to be invited to her wedding."

CHAPTER XXVII.**THE AWARD.**

WHILST Harvey and myself were still discoursing over the matters I have imperfectly brought to my reader's attention in the last chapter, Ned Hazard opened the door of the study, and came towards us, with an animated step and a countenance full of merriment. He told us, with much boasting, of his own participation in the exploit, and of the inestimable value of his services, that the old family law-suit, which had been so tempest-tost and weather-beaten, was at length happily towed into port: that the Apple-pie was once more elevated to the rank of a frontier stream, upon whose banks the whilom hostile clans of the Tracy and the Hazard might now assemble in peace: that after wading through a sea of manuscript to oblige Mr. Tracy, and hearing many wise legal apothegms from his lips, and turning Swansdown's brain topsy-turvey with points and discriminations, merely to prevent him from marring the decision, Mr. Wart had succeeded in bringing the matter to a close, and was now busy in drawing up a formal judgment upon the case. "Philly," continued Ned, "is like to suffer injury from retention. It is as much as he can do to prevent himself

from bursting out into a horse-laugh at every line he writes. But he is, I believe, somewhat overawed by Mr. Tracy, who takes the whole matter as gravely as if it were a state business. The best of it is, Swansdown is in doubt as to the propriety of the decision, and, with very little encouragement, would bring in a verdict against the Brakes. Philly's whole endeavour, for the last hour, has therefore been to mystify the case in such a manner as to keep Swansdown from insisting upon the inquiry, whether the mill-pond oozed away in a series of years, or was carried off by some violent accident. Now, you know it is a fact of common notoriety, that it was swept off in a tremendous flood. Philly, finding Swansdown likely to dwell on this circumstance, has made a masterly diversion upon a point of law that has happily quieted the gentleman's scruples. He says, the act of God works no man injury, and that if the dam has been swept away suddenly, it makes no difference, because it would have wasted away at any rate, by this time; and that it is extremely probable it was very much diminished before the flood: that if, therefore, it was not an absolute, imperceptible decrease, it was *quasi* a decrease of that nature. I think Philly has written something of this sort in his report. This jargon has so confounded Swansdown, as to set him to gazing at the ceiling in a brown study, and has thrown Mr. Tracy into an ecstasy of admiration at Philly's learning and acuteness. All this time, however, Mr. Wart has had his mouth puckered up with repressed laughter, which

so affected me, that I could not remain in the room. I have drunk half a dozen glasses of water, and have been thrumming my fingers against the window-panes ever since this debate has been in agitation, merely to escape notice. Mr. Tracy has, in consequence, given me some sharp rebukes for my inattention to the momentous principles that Philly has been expounding. In short, I was obliged to make my escape."

"Will they admit bystanders," asked Harvey, "to be present at the deliberation?"

"Oh! cheerfully," replied Ned; "but you must be very careful how you behave. Mr. Tracy is in the most nervous state imaginable. He is greatly delighted with the result of the trial; but I don't think he is quite satisfied with Philly's waiving an opinion upon the points of law connected with the deed. It is a little curious to observe how pertinaciously the old gentleman adheres to his notion of the facts. He has twenty times asserted that the site of the mill-dam was never surveyed: and there they have the very document of the survey itself, which is shown to him every time he makes the assertion; he looks at it, and, as we all suppose, is convinced;—but, in the next minute, commences anew with the same objection. I remarked that at length he began to get out of humour at this sort of contradiction."

"The old gentleman," said Harvey, "is turning a little sour with age. His temperament is growing chilly; his constitution resembles that waterish, gra-

velly soil that you see sometimes around a spring, where nothing grows but sheep-sorrel."

In a few moments we all repaired to the study. Philly Wart and Swansdown were standing together, at the moment of our entrance, in one corner of the room. The former held in his hand a sheet of paper upon which the award was written, and was silently reading it over, whilst his features expressed that comic perturbation which a man surprised by some droll incident in a church might be supposed to wear. He looked at us, upon our approach, from beneath his spectacles, as his chin rested upon his waistcoat, and smiled, but read on. Swansdown's face wore that air of gravity and doubt, that I can fancy was legible in the countenances of the signers of the Declaration of Independence, after they had put their names to that important document. At the table, with his back to these two, sat Mr. Tracy, with a silk handkerchief folded and laid upon his head, to guard him against the breeze that blew in through the window. His hands were spread flat upon the board, in such a manner as to throw his elbows directly outwards from his body; and he was casting a keen glance over the field of papers that lay unfolded before him. As soon as he was aware of our approach, he raised his head, looked at us with an expression of good humour, and remarked, with his usual slow and distinct utterance,—

"Our friends have had a serious job of it to-day," nodding towards the papers strewed over the table,

“but I believe, by dint of perseverance, we have reached the bottom at last.”

We offered him our congratulations upon the event; but he absolutely refused to allow us to express any pleasure at his success, lest it might be considered as triumphing over his friend Meriwether. He declared, that moderation in victory was a sentiment that he desired particularly to evince in this case; and he therefore checked our advances with a gravity that made us laugh. The old gentleman, however, was too full of his victory to preserve his consistency in this humour; for when Harvey Riggs insinuated a compliment to his judgment, by reminding him that he had frequently predicted the result, whenever this case should come to be fairly considered, he laughed outright for some moments, with his hand across his eyes, and concluded by saying—

“I am not apt to take up fancies unadvisedly. I generally reflect upon my grounds. But, dogs take our friend Wart! he is for pruning the case so much, that he must needs slur over all my law touching the phraseology of the deed. Ha, ha, ha! I see his drift: he will spare our friend Meriwether. Well, well! it is quite immaterial what shot brings down the pigeon, so that we get him, ha, ha, ha!”

“A good judge,” said Mr. Wart, speaking from the spot where we first found him, “will never decide more than the case requires. I am not apt to deal in *obiter dicta*.”

“The commonwealth has done you injustice, Mr.

Wart," said Mr. Tracy; "you should have been on the bench long ago."

"I am afraid my chance has gone for ever now," replied Philly, "for here Mr. Swansdown and myself have overruled the opinions of the whole Court of Appeals."

"These courts are obstinate bodies," said the old gentleman; "it is a difficult thing to bring them to reason, when they have once got a fantasy into their brains. And now, Mr. Wart, pray favour the gentlemen with a reading of your award."

"I will," said Philly, "if I can make out my own scrawl. It has been a rapid business. We have administered justice *velis levatis*, I may say, considering the nature of the case, and the time we have been at it."

Upon this, Philly began to read aloud. The document in his hand, although hastily prepared, was drawn out with all the technical verbiage that belonged to the nature of such an instrument. It gave a brief history of the controversy from the commencement, which part Philly ran over with a hurried voice; but he assumed a more deliberate manner when he came to the grounds of the decision, stating, "that the said arbitrators, having duly considered all and singular the letters, declarations in writing, and other papers touching the exposition of the intent of the said parties, and their motives for making and receiving the said grant, and also duly considering the deeds appertaining thereunto, and

all other matters connected therewith, have not found it necessary to declare their opinion upon the true intent and effect in law of the said deeds, by reason that certain facts and matters in evidence have come to the knowledge of the said arbitrators, whereby the original proprietary rights and relations of the said parties litigant—”

“ I wish you would change that word ‘ litigant,’ Mr. Wart,” said Mr. Tracy, who during the reading of the award sat listening with fixed attention, and nodding his head, somewhat in the manner of one keeping time in a concert: “ I don’t like that word ; it would imply that Mr. Meriwether and myself have been litigious, which is too strong a term.”—

Philly turned up his eyes with a queer expression, inclined his head sidewise, and raised one shoulder so as to touch his ear.

—“ I wish you would say, ‘ of the parties laying claim to the land in dispute ;’ I think that would be better.”

“ As you please,” replied Philly, approaching the table, and altering the phrase in conformity with this suggestion.

—“ Of the said parties claiming the land in dispute,” continued the counsellor, “ have grown to be dependant upon the principles of law brought into view by the said facts and matters in evidence: which said facts and matters in evidence show that the said mill-dam, herein above mentioned, was originally bounded by courses and distances, as laid off and de-

scribed in the survey thereof by a certain Jeremiah Perkins, made under the direction of the said Gilbert Tracy and Edward Hazard, as appears by the said survey filed in the proceedings in this case.”—

“ I don’t think the site of the dam was laid off by course and distance,” said Mr. Tracy, interrupting the lawyer.

“ The paper is here,” replied Philly, stooping over the table, and producing it.

Mr. Tracy took it, and put it down again. “ It must be a spurious document that,” he remarked gravely.

The truth was, this paper, which had been always kept at Swallow Barn, presented a fact that completely overthrew one of Mr. Tracy’s strongest positions, namely, that as the deed granted so much land only as might be used by the dam, the portion granted was necessarily mutable, and incapable of being confined to specific boundaries. This document of the survey, therefore, offended his sight whenever it was produced. And as it had but recently been brought to his consideration, he had pondered too long over the case, in its other aspects, to be able to accommodate his conceptions to this new state of things. It was impossible to break the crust of his prejudices, which now enveloped him like a suite of mail.

“ I thought,” said Philly, with a conciliatory inclination of his head, “ we had settled this point before.”

"Aye, aye," replied the old gentleman, recollecting himself, "go on, sir!"

—"And it hath also appeared that when the said grist-mill fell into disuse and decay, the mill-dam aforesaid was gradually drained of the water therein contained, by the action of wind and weather, in such wise that, during the space of twenty-one years, the bed or site of the said dam became derelict by slow and imperceptible degrees; save and except that by a certain severe tempest, about the period of the vernal equinox, in the year seventeen hundred and —, the actual date not being precisely known, a portion of the said dam was carried away; which, being the act of God, that doth no man harm, it is considered ought not to prejudice the rights of the parties; and the more especially as it hath appeared to these arbitrators, that the said mill-dam had before that time fallen into desuetude, and, notwithstanding the said tempest, would, in the nature of things, have dwindled down, contracted and wasted away into the present natural and original channel of the said Apple-pie Branch. And further, it hath appeared that neither of the said parties litigant —"

"I will alter the word here also," said Philly, taking the pen, and inserting the same periphrasis as before.

Mr. Tracy nodded, and the counsellor proceeded—

—"Has had occasion, during the time aforesaid, to exercise any acts of ownership over the said land,

seeing that the same was barren and unproductive, and altogether unfit for any purpose of tillage,—”

“ True,” said Mr. Tracy.

—“ Therefore the said arbitrators, carefully weighing the said several facts with full and ample consideration, and having heard all that the said Isaac Tracy on the one side, and Edward Hazard, for and on behalf of the said Francis Meriwether, on the other side, had to urge in respect of their said several pretensions —”

“ Devilish little on behalf of Frank!” whispered Ned Hazard.

—“ Do, in virtue of the powers vested in them by this reference, award, adjudge and determine, for the complete and final ending of the said dispute, and for the quieting of actions in all time to come, that the land so left by the recession of the waters as aforesaid, shall henceforth be deemed and taken as followeth, that is to say; all that piece or parcel of land lying eastwardly between the bank of the said Apple-pie Branch, as the same now exists, and the former margin of the said mill-dam, bounding on the line of the tract called the Brakes, is hereby declared to have reverted to the original proprietors of the said tract called the Brakes, to them and their heirs for ever: And that the main channel of the said Apple-pie Branch shall be the only true and established conterminous boundary line of the said tracts of the Brakes and Swallow Barn respectively.”

“Very conclusive and satisfactory !” cried Mr. Tracy, rising from his chair.

“There you are, gentlemen,” said Philly, throwing the paper down upon the table, “exactly in statu quo ante bellum. It is a great thing, Mr. Swansdown, to pacify these border feuds.”

“I have always permitted myself,” replied the worthy thus addressed, “to indulge the hope that our intercession would prove advantageous to the permanent interests of the families. It has been a case, certainly, attended with its difficulties; and has given rise to some curious and recondite principles of jurisprudence.”

“Very curious and recondite !” said Philly, looking archly around him. “It has been a perfect dragnet case. We have fished up a great deal of law, my dear sir !”

“I confess I have been sadly puzzled,” replied Swansdown, “with the intricacies of this whole proceeding.”

“So have I,” said Philly. “But you have had much the worst of it. For there, in the first place, you were lost in the brambles; then, you were soused in the mud; and after that, you were torn with briars: you have some of the marks upon your face yet. Then, you lost entirely our chase of the fox; but I believe you are not fond of that, sir ?”

“These were trifles,” replied the other. “I alluded to the conflicting opinions.”

“I understand you,” interrupted the lawyer. “It takes a good nose and a fleet foot to follow one of

these little old-fashioned ejections through its doublings."

Saying this, Philly opened the door of the study, and walked into the hall, wiping his spectacles with his handkerchief, and casting strange and comic looks upon Hazard, Harvey and myself, who followed him. He was highly excited with the proceedings of the morning, and being relieved from the restraint of Mr. Tracy's presence, gave vent to his feelings by amusing remarks, and a sly, half-quiet and half-jocular demeanor, that never broke out into any open fit of laughter, nor yet fell to the level of his ordinary calmness.

It was now the family dinner-hour, and the household assembled in one of the parlours, where the result of the arbitration was made known, and gave rise to a great deal of animated conversation.

The behaviour of Mr. Tracy at the dinner-table was punctilious and precise. He was even more lavish than usual of the personal civilities that characterize his manners at all times; and it was observable, that during the whole time that he mingled in the family groups where the decision that had just been made was a subject of constant recurrence, he never permitted an expression relating to it to escape his lips. He sat but a few moments after the cloth was drawn, leaving the table in the occupation of his company, and retired to the study, where he employed himself amongst the papers belonging to the law-suit.

As the long afternoon wore away, the boundary

line and all its concerns were forgotten ; and our party fell into the various amusements that their situation afforded. At length, the hour came for our return to Swallow Barn. Prudence, at the persuasion of the ladies, had consented to remain during the night. Ned Hazard informed Mr. Tracy that he was requested by Meriwether to invite the whole family, with Mr. Swansdown, to dinner at Swallow Barn the next day. The old gentleman expressed great pleasure in accepting the invitation, and the rest promised to keep the appointment without fail.

Having despatched these matters, Mr. Wart and Rip mounted their horses, and rode slowly down the hill from the mansion. But just as Hazard, who had delayed a moment after his comrades, was leaving the door, his horse, grown restive by seeing his two companions moving off, after neighing, and tossing up his head, and champing his bit, made a sudden start, broke his bridle, and went off at full speed, leaping and flinging himself into wild and playful motions as he disappeared in the direction of the road.

All pursuit was vain. And as it was apparent that he would make the best of his way to his own stable, Ned got into the carriage with the little girls and myself ; and, followed by Wilful, we were wheeled off from the Brakes as rapidly as old Carey could urge his mettlesome cattle forward.

CHAPTER XXVIII.**THE GOBLIN SWAMP.**

THE sun was not above half an hour high when we took our departure from the Brakes; and the heat of the atmosphere was beginning to yield to the partial distillation of the dew, and the slow invasion of the night breeze. The road lay principally along the river, upon a bank some ten or twelve feet above the tide, shaded with low black-jacks, dogwood, cedar, or tall pines. It occasionally digressed to head an inlet, or thread a brake; and sometimes extended, with a single meandering track, through the neighbouring fields, which were guarded,—according to a common arrangement in the Old Dominion,—by a succession of peculiarly inconvenient, rickety and weather-worn gates, that dragged heavily upon their wooden hinges, and swung to again, with a misdirected aim at their awkward bolts, to the imminent peril of the tails of all wayfaring animals that travelled through them.

In a short time, we reached a point where the road turned abruptly from the river and took an inland direction, making a circuit of a mile or more, to pass the famous Apple-pie, which it does at some distance

below the old mill, so conspicuous in my former sketches. At this turn Ned Hazard proposed that we should perform the rest of our journey on foot. He wished to show me the Goblin Swamp; a region of marsh, about half a mile distant, formed by the diffusion of the Apple-pie over the flat grounds, near its confluence with the James River. An old road had once traversed the swamp at this place; and the remains of the causeway were yet, Ned affirmed, sufficiently solid to afford a passage to pedestrians; besides, the Goblin Swamp showed to great advantage about twilight.

We accordingly committed our little companions to the guardianship of Carey; and, quitting the coach, entered a wood that bordered the road, where we soon found ourselves involved in a labyrinth of young pine-trees springing up so close together as almost to forbid a passage through them. The ground was strewed with a thick coat of pine-straw,—as the yellow sheddings of this tree are called,—so slippery as to render it difficult to walk over it; and the tangled branches caught in our clothes, and frequently struck our hats from our heads. But we succeeded at last in gaining an obscure path, so much embowered in shade as to be scarcely discernible. This conducted us through the mazes of the wood, and in a few moments we emerged upon the confines of an open country.

Before us lay a plain, surrounded by forest which in front towered above a copse that sprang from an extensive marsh at the further extremity of the

plain. The earth was clothed with a thin vesture of parched grass ; and the still distinct furrows of ancient cornfields furnished proof that the tract had been, at some remote period, under cultivation, but long since abandoned, perhaps on account of its sterility. A few clumps of meager persimmon-trees were scattered over this forsaken region, and deep gullies, washed into the gravelly soil, exposed to view its signal poverty.

Somewhere near the middle of this open ground stood a solitary, low brick chimney, conspicuous for its ample fire-place, and surrounded by a heap of ruins, to which a more striking air of desolation was added by a luxuriant growth of weeds that had taken root in the rank compost formed by the wreck of household timber. Amongst these relics of former habitation were the vestiges of a draw-well, choked by the wash of the land ; the weeds sprang from its mouth ; and the tall post, with the crotch in its upper extremity, still supported the long piece of timber that balanced the bucket, according to a device yet in use in many parts of the country. Immediately around the ruin, in what was once the curtilage of the dwelling, a few crabbed fruit-trees, with chalky joints, and bowed down with years, flung their almost leafless and distorted limbs athwart the mouldering homestead. There were also to be seen, about fifty paces off, a black heap of dross, and some faint traces of the fire of a former smithy, of which the evidence was more unequivocal in the remains of a door, on which was burnt the figure of a horse-shoe.

When we arrived at this spot the sun was just peering, with his enlarged disk, through the upper branches of the trees, in the western horizon. The clouds were gorgeous with the golden and purple tints that give such magnificence to our summer evenings; and the waning light, falling on the volume of forest around us, communicated a richer gloom to its shades, and magnified the gigantic branches of some blasted oaks on the border of the plain, as they were seen relieved against the clear sky. Long and distorted shadows fell from every weed, bush and tree, and contributed, with the forlorn aspect of the landscape, to impress us with an undefined and solemn sensation, that for a moment threw us into silence. Flights of crows traversed the air above our heads, and sang out their discordant vespers, as they plied their way to a distant roost; the fish hawk had perched upon the highest naked branch of the tallest oak, and at intervals was seen to stretch forth his wing and ruffle his feathers, as if adjusting his position for the night. All animated objects that inhabited this region seemed to be busy with individual cares; and the nocturnal preparations for rest or prey resounded from every quarter.

Hazard, taking advantage of the impression made by the sombre imagery around us, as we marched onward to the ruin, threw out some hints that we were now upon a haunted spot, and began to converse in a lower tone, and walk closer to my side, with an air of mystery and fear, put on to sort with

the nature of the story he was telling. The ruin, he informed me, was formerly the habitation of Mike Brown, who had strange doings with the devil, and both Mike and his companion were frequently seen in the swamp after dark ; the negroes, he said, and many of the white people about the country, held this place in great terror ; which, he believed, was one reason why the road that formerly crossed the marsh at this place, had been disused. Certainly, the devil and Mike Brown could not have chosen a more secluded and barren waste for their pranks.

At length we reached the opposite side of the plain, where it became necessary to halt, and examine more minutely our road. Ned was under great embarrassment to discover the old causeway. The shrubbery had grown up so thick as to render this a task of uncertain accomplishment. There were several paths leading into the morass, made by the tramp of cattle. These so far perplexed my companion, that he was obliged to confess his ignorance of the right way. We determined, however, to go on ; the approaching night began already to darken our view, and the undertaking seemed to be sufficiently perilous, even in daylight. I kept pace with Hazard, and shared with him the difficulties of a path that at every step became more intricate ; until, at last, we found ourselves encompassed by deep pools of stagnant water, with a footing no better than that afforded by a mossy islet, scarcely large enough for one person to stand upon, where we were obliged to cling to the bushes for support ; whilst the soft texture of

the earth yielded to our weight, and let in the water above our shoe-tops.

Here Ned began to swear that the place was strangely altered since he had last visited it, and to charge himself with a loss of memory, in not knowing better how to get through this wilderness. He protested that Mike Brown or his comrade had bewitched him, and brought him into this dilemma, as a punishment for his rashness. "I wish their devilships," he continued, "would condescend to favour us with the assistance of one of their imps, until we might arrive safely beyond the confines of their cursed dominion. What ho, good Mr. Belzebub!" he cried out jocularly, "have you no mercy on two foolish travellers?"

Ned had no sooner made this invocation, which he did at the top of his voice, than we heard, at a distance from us, the indistinct rustling of leaves, as of one brushing through them, and the frequent plash of a footstep treading through the marsh. The sounds indicated the movement of the object towards us, and it became obvious that something was fast making its way to the spot where we stood.

"Truly," said Ned, "that Mr. Belzebub is a polite and civil demon. He scarce has notice of our distresses, before he comes himself to relieve them."

By this time a grotesque figure became faintly visible through the veil of twigs and branches that enveloped us. All that we could discern was the murky outline of something resembling a man. His stature was uncommonly low and broad; apparent-

ly he wore no coat, and upon what seemed his head was an odd-shaped cap, that fitted closely to his skull.

“Who goes there?” cried Ned briskly, as the figure came to a halt, and looked wildly about; “ghost or devil?”

“Neither,” replied the figure, with a husky voice,—such as that of a man with a bad cold,—and at the same instant stepping boldly before us, “but an old sinner, who is a little of both: a sort of cast-away, that has more gray hairs than brains; yet not so much of a buzzard as to be ignorant that the round-about way is often the nearest home.” Hereupon, the figure broke out into a loud, hollow, and unnatural laugh.

“What, Hafen? Is it possible? what, in the name of the foul fiend, brings you here?” cried out Ned, recognizing the speaker, who was Hafen Blok, a short, thick-set, bandy-legged personage, bearing all the marks of an old man, with a strangely weather-beaten face, that was intersected by as many drains as the rugged slope of a sand-hill. He had a large mouth, disfigured with tobacco, and unprovided with any show of teeth. He had moreover a small up-turned nose, a low forehead, and diminutive eyes that glistened beneath projecting brows of grizzled and shaggy hair. For a man verging upon sixty-five, his frame was uncommonly vigorous; although it was apparent that he was lame of one leg. His head-gear, which had attracted our attention even at a distance, was nothing more than the remnant of an

antique cocked hat, now divested of its flaps, so as to form a close, round cap. His scraggy throat was covered with a prurient beard of half an inch in length, and laid open to view between the collar of a coarse brown shirt. Across his arm was flung a coat of some homely material, with huge metal buttons appearing to view; and his trowsers and shoes were covered with the mud of the swamp. A belt crossed his shoulder, to which was suspended a bag of hempen cloth; and in his hand he bore two or three implements for trapping. There was a saucy waggishness in his gestures, of which the effect was heightened by the fox-like expression of his countenance, and the superlatively vagabond freedom of his manners.

"You are well met, Hafen," continued Ned. "The devil of the swamp could never have sent us a better man. How are we to get through the bog?"

"It is easy enough, Mister Ned Hazard, for a traveller that knows a tussock from a bulrush," replied Hafen.

"And pray, how old should he be to arrive at that knowledge?"

"He should be old enough to catch a black snake in the water, Mister Ned; or, at least, he ought to have cut his eye-teeth," said Hafen, with another of his strange, hollow laughs.

"Save your jest for dry land, old fellow!" interrupted Hazard, "and tell us plainly how we shall find our way to Swallow Barn without going round."

"They that have the folly to get in, ought to carry wit enough with them to get out," replied Hafen dryly.

"Come, old gentleman," said Ned, with a tone of entreaty, "we shall take an ague if you keep us here. It grows late; and if we can save a mile by crossing the swamp, who knows but you may be all the better for it when we get safe to the other side?"

"You see, sir," said Hafen, with more respect in his manner than before, "a fool's counsel is sometimes worth the weighing; but an old dog, you know Mister Ned, can't alter his way of barking; so you and that gentleman must excuse my saucy tongue; and if you will follow me, I will put you across the swamp as clean as a bridge of gold. Though I don't mean to insinuate, Mister Hazard, that you couldn't soon learn the way yourself."

Saying this, he conducted us back to the margin of the marsh, and passing some distance higher up, entered the thicket again by the path of the old causeway, along which we proceeded with no other caution than carefully to step in the places pointed out by Hafen, who led the way with the vigorous motion of a man in the prime of life; and in a brief space we found ourselves in safety on the opposite side.

Here we gave our guide a liberal reward for his services, that so elated the old man as to rouse all his talkativeness.

Hafen is a person of some notoriety in this district. He is a Hessian by birth, and came to America with

Count Donop, during the war of the Revolution, as a drummer, not above fourteen years old; and he was present at the action at Red Bank on the Delaware, when that unfortunate officer met his fate. He was afterwards engaged in the southern campaigns, when he found means to desert to the American lines in time to witness the surrender of Lord Cornwallis. At the close of the war Hafen took up his quarters in the neighbourhood of Williamsburg, where he set up the trade of a tinker, as being most congenial with his vagrant propensities. Being a tolerable performer on the violin, he contrived to amass a sufficient capital to purchase an instrument, with which he ever afterwards sweetened his cares and divided his business, wandering through the country, where he mended the kettles, and fiddled himself into the good graces, of every family, within the circuit of his peregrinations. This career was interrupted by but one episode, which happened in the year seventeen hundred and ninety-one, when, being attacked by an unusual restlessness, he enlisted in the army, and marched with St. Clair against the Indians. The peppering that he got in the disastrous event of that expedition, brought him home in the following year with a more pacific temper and a lame leg. It was like Cincinnatus returning to his plough. He took up his nippers and fiddle again, and devoted himself to the affairs of the kitchen and parlour. Being one of those mortals whose carelessness of accommodation is mathematically proportioned to their aversion to labour, Hafen was equally idle and ragged, and con-

trived generally, by a shrewd and droll humour, to keep himself in good quarters, though upon a footing that rendered him liable at all times to be dismissed without ceremony. He has always been distinguished for his stores of old ballads; and the women about the families where he gained a seat in the corner of the kitchen fire, were indebted to him for the most accepted versions of the Gosport Tragedy, Billy Taylor, and some other lamentable ditties recording the fates of "true lovyers" and "ladies fair and free," which he taught them to sing in long metre, with a touching sadness, and agreeably to their authentic nasal tunes. Besides this, he was the depository of much of the legendary lore of the neighbourhood, picked up from the old people of the Revolutionary time: and, according to his own account, he had a familiar acquaintance with sundry witches, and was on good terms with every reputable ghost that haunted any house along the James river.

These characteristics gave him many immunities, and often gained him access to bower and hall; and as he was gifted with a sagacity that always knew how to flatter his patrons, he was universally regarded as a well-meaning, worthless, idle stroller, who, if he could not make himself useful, was at least in nobody's way. On all festive occasions his violin was an ample recommendation; and as he could tell fortunes, and sing queer old songs, he was connected in the imaginations of the younger folks with agreeable associations. From these

causes he was seldom an unwelcome visitant ; and not being fastidious on the score of personal entertainment, he was well content to get his supper in the kitchen, a dram,—for which he had the craving of the daughter of the horseleech,—and the privilege of a corner in the hay-loft.

Of late Hafen had lost some favour by his increasing propensity for drink, and by the suspicion, that stood upon pretty strong proofs, of not being over-scrupulous in his regard for the rights of property. Besides, for many years past, his tinkering had fallen into disuse, by reason, as he said, of these Yankee pedlars breaking up his honest calling. So that, at this time, Hafen may be considered like an old hound whose nose has grown cold. His employments are, in consequence, of a much more miscellaneous character than formerly.

Such was the individual who had rescued us from the perils of the swamp, and who now, having brought us to firm ground, had no further pretext for keeping our company. But he was not so easily shaken off. His predominant love of gossip took advantage of the encouragement he had already met, and he therefore strode resolutely in our footsteps, a little in the rear, talking partly to himself and partly to us, without receiving any response. At length, finding that no further notice was likely to be taken of him, he ventured to say in a doubtful tone—

“ The next time the gentlemen have a fancy to cross this way, perhaps they’ll think a few pennies

in the tinker's pouch, better than a pair of swamp stockings."

"And many thanks beside, Hafen," said I. "But how came you to be so close at hand this evening?"

"O sir," replied Hafen, availing himself of this overture, and coming up to our side, "bless you! this is a quite natural sort of place to me. I am too good for nothing to be afraid of spirits, for I am not worth the devil's fetching, sir;" here he laughed in his usual singular way. "The swamp is a very good mother to me, although I am a simple body, and can pick up a penny where rich folks would never think of looking for it."

"How is that?" I asked.

"There is a power of muskrats about these parts, sir," he replied, "and with the help of these tools," holding up his snares, "I can sometimes gather a few ninepences with no more cost than a wet pair of breeches, which is fisherman's luck, sir, and of no account, excepting a little rheumatism, and not even that, if a man has plenty of this sort of physic."

So saying, he thrust his hand into his bag, and pulled out a green flask that contained a small supply of whiskey.

"Perhaps the gentlemen wouldn't be above taking a taste themselves?" he continued, "for it's a mighty fine thing against the ague."

We excused ourselves; and Hafen put the flask to his mouth, and smacking his lips as he concluded his draught, observed—

"It's a kind of milk for old people, and not bad for young ones."

"What success have you had to-day, with your traps?" I inquired.

"I have come off poorly," he replied; "the vermin are getting shy, and not like what they used to be. Now, I have got no more than two rats. Some days even I don't get that much."

"Then, I take it, Hafsen, that you do not thrive much in the world," I remarked.

"Ah, sir," replied Hafsen, still holding the flask in his hand, and beginning to moralize, "it is a great help to a man's conscience to know that he earns his bread lawfully: a poor man's honesty is as good as a rich man's gold. I am a hobbling sort of person, and no better than I ought to be, but I never saw any good come out of deceit. Virtue is its own reward, as the parson says; and away goes the devil when he finds the door shut against him. I am no scholar, but I have found that out without reading books—"

At this moment the half smothered cluck of a fowl was heard from Hafsen's bag.

"God never sends mouths," continued Hafsen, "but he sends meat, and any man who has sense enough to be honest, will never want wit to know how to live; but he must plough with such oxen as he has. Some people have bad names, but all are not thieves that dogs bark at."

"So, you have only taken two muskrats to-

day?" said Ned. "Have you nothing else in the bag?"

"Nothing else, Mister Hazard."

"Are they dead or alive?" asked Ned.

"Oh dead! dead as old Adam! they were swinging by their necks long enough to strangle nine lives out of them."

"This swamp is haunted, Hafen," said Ned archly.

"Yes, sir," replied Hafen, "there are certainly some queer doings here sometimes. But, for my share, I never saw any thing in these hobgoblins to make an honest man afraid. All that you have to do is to say your prayers, and that will put any devilish thing out of heart."

"Did you ever know a dead muskrat," asked Ned, "to be changed into a live pullet? Now, master honest tinker! I can conjure up a devil to do that very thing."

Here Hafen put on a comic leer, and hesitated for a moment, as if collecting himself, whilst he was heard giving out a confused chuckling laugh. At length he observed,—

"Mister Ned Hazard has always got some trick. I often tell folks Mister Hazard is a pleasant man."

"See now," said Hazard, striking the bag with his hand, "does not that sound marvellously like a clucking hen?"

"Oh, I grant you," exclaimed Hafen, assuming a tone of surprise, "I had like to have forgotten; when

I said there was nothing but the rats in my bag, I set no account upon a pullet that Sandy Walker gave me this evening, for putting a few rivets in his copper still."

"Come, Hafen," said Ned, "no lies amongst friends. Sandy Walker never owned a still in his life."

"Did I say a still, Mister Hazard? I spoke in a sort of uncertain way, which was as much as to signify,—" said Hafen, puzzling his brain for a better account of the matter, and twisting his face into some shrewd contortions, which at last ended by his coming close to Hazard, and putting his finger against his nose, as he said in a half whisper, "it was an old grudge against Sandy that I had, upon account of his abusing me before company for drinking, and insinuating that I made free with a shirt that his wife lost from the line in a high wind, last April, and some other old scores I had. So, I thought a pullet was small damages enough for such a scandal. Pick-up law is the cheapest law for a poor man, Mister Hazard; and possession is nine points out of ten. Isn't that true?" Here he laughed again.

"I think a gentleman who brags so much of his honesty and virtue, might practise a better code. But as between you and Sandy," said Ned, "your merits are so nearly equal, that take what you can, and keep what you get, is a pretty sound rule; although you are like to get the best of that bargain."

"Oh," replied Hafen, "I want nothing more than justice."

The night was now closing in fast. We were walking along a narrow tongue of land that stretched into the swamp, from the bosom of which, on either side, arose a forest of lofty trees, whose topmost branches were traced upon the sky with that bold configuration that may be remarked at the twilight, whilst the dusk rapidly thickened below, and flung its increasing gloom upon our path. Here and there a lordly cypress occurred to view, springing forth from the stagnant pool, and reposing in lurid shade. Half sunk in ooze, rotted the bole and bough of fallen trees, coated with pendant slime. The ground over which we trod took an easy impression from our footsteps; and the chilling vapour of the marsh, mingled with the heavy dew, was to be felt in the dampness of our clothes, and compelled us to button up our coats.

This dreary region was neither silent nor inanimate; but its inhabitants corresponded to the genius of the place. Clouds of small insects, crossed now and then by a whizzing beetle, played their fantastic gambols around our heads, displaying their minute and active forms against the western horizon, as they marshalled us upon our way. The night-hawk arose, at intervals, with a hoarse scream into this fading light, and swept across it with a graceful motion, sometimes whirling so near that we could hear the rush of his wing, and discern the white and spectral spot upon it, as he darted past our eyes. Thousands of fire-flies lit up the gloom, and sped about like sprites in masquerade; at one moment lifting their

masks, as if to allure pursuit, and instantly again vanishing, as in a prankish jest. A populous congregation of frogs piped from the secret chambers of the fen with might and main. The whip-poor-will reiterated, with a fatiguing and melancholy recurrence, his sharp note of discord. The little catadid pierced the air with his shrill music. The foxfire,—as the country people call it,—glowed hideously from the cold and matted bosom of the marsh; and, far from us, in the depths of darkness, the screech-owl sat upon his perch, brooding over the slimy pool, and whooping out a dismal curfew, that fell upon the ear like the cries of a tortured ghost.

We trudged briskly upon our way, but almost without exchanging words; for the assemblage of striking objects in the scene had lulled us into silence. I do not wonder that a solitary traveller should grow superstitious, amidst such incentives to his imagination. Hafen followed our steps, and, as I fancied, completely subdued by faintheartedness. I thought he walked closer on our skirts than a man perfectly at ease would do, and his loquacity was entirely gone. He firmly believed in the stories of the Goblin Swamp, and I was anxious to get them from his own lips, as Hazard had given me to understand that I could not meet a better chronicler. With this purpose, I gave him timely encouragement to follow us to Swallow Barn. And now, having passed the confines of the wood, we found but little to attract our attention for the rest of the journey.

“ You must tell me the story of Mike Brown to-

night," said I to Hafén, as I invited him to bear us company.

In an instant, Hafén's imagination was full of the comforts of the kitchen at Swallow Barn, as well as of the self consequence that belongs to a genuine story-teller. He consented with a saucy alacrity, and then remarked,—

"That the gentlemen always knew how to get something to please them out of Hafén; and that he always did like himself to keep company with quality."

It was after candlelight when we arrived at Swallow Barn.

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