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ME II

SWALLOW BARN,

OR

A SOJOURN IN THE OLD DOMINION.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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
therein, ye be at your own liberty.

Prologue to the Morte D'Arthur.

VOL. II.

PHILADELPHIA :

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ERRATA.

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Page 12, line 11,	from the top,	instead of	'had died of,'	read	'had died off.'
42,	" 2,	"	"	'imbued,'	read 'imbibed.'
103,	" 11,	"	"	'appertences,'	read 'appertenances.'
103,	" 13,	"	"	'disease,'	read 'disuse.'
221,	" 21,	"	"	'trays,'	read 'treys.'
223,	" 10,	"	"	'Megara,'	read 'Mægara.'

CHAPTER I.

STORY-TELLING.

IN the time of the Revolution, and for a good many years afterwards, Old Nick enjoyed that solid popularity which, as Lord Mansfield expressed it, follows a man's actions rather than is sought after by them. But in our time he is manifestly falling into the sere and yellow leaf, especially in the Atlantic states. Like those dilapidated persons who have grown out at elbows by sticking too long to a poor soil, or who have been hustled out of their profitable prerogatives by the competition of upstart numbers, his spritish family has moved off, with bag and baggage, to the back settlements. This is certain, that in Virginia he is not seen half so often now as formerly. A traveller in the Old Dominion may now wander about of nights as dark as pitch, over commons, around old churches, and through graveyards, and all the while the rain may be pouring down with its solemn hissing sound, and the thunder may be rumbling over his head, and the wind moaning through the trees, and the lightning flinging its sulphurous glare across the skeletons of dead horses, and over the grizzly rawheads upon the tombstones; and, even, to make the case stronger, a

drunken cobbler may be snoring hideously in the church door, (being overtaken by the storm on his way home,) and every flash may show his livid, dropsical, carbuncled face, like that of a vagabond corpse that had stolen out of his prison to enjoy the night air; and yet it is ten to one if the said traveller be a man to be favoured with a glimpse of that old-fashioned, distinguished personage who was wont to be showing his cloven foot, upon much less provocation, to our ancestors. The old cronies can tell you of a hundred pranks that he used play in their day, and what a roaring sort of a blade he was. But, alas! sinners are not so chicken-hearted as in the old time. It is a terribly degenerate age; and the devil and all his works are fast growing to be forgotten.

Except Mike Brown's humoursome pot-companion, I much question if there is another legitimate goblin in the Old Dominion; and in spite of Ned Hazard and Hafen Blok, who do all they can to keep up his credit, I am much mistaken if he does not speed away to the Missouri or the Rocky Mountains one of these days, as fast and as silently as an absconding debtor. Lest, therefore, his exploits should be lost to the world, I will veritably record this "Chronicle of the Last of the Virginia Devils," as it has been given to me by the credible Hafen, that most authentic of gossips, as may be seen by the perusal of what I am going to write.

The substance of this narrative—for I do not deny some rhetorical embellishments—was delivered by Hafen after supper, as we sat in the porch at Swal-

low Barn until midnight, Hafsen all the while puffing a short pipe, and only rising on his feet at such times as his animation got beyond control, and inspired him to act the scene he was describing. The witnesses were Mr. Wart and Frank Meriwether, who sat just inside of the door, attended by Lucy and Vic, who for the greater part of the time had their arms about Frank's neck; and Mr. Chub, who, though within hearing,—for he was seated at the window, also smoking,—I do not believe paid much attention to the story; although he was heard once or twice to blow out a stream of smoke from his mouth, and say “balderbash!”—an epithet in common use with him. But there were Ned and myself close beside Hafsen; and Rip, who sat on the steps in the open air, with his head occasionally turned over his shoulder, looking up at the storyteller with the most marked attention: and lastly, there were sundry wide-mouthed negroes, children and grown, who were clustered into a dusky group beneath the parlour window, just where a broad ray of candlelight fell upon them; and who displayed their white teeth, like some of Old Nick's own brood, as they broke out now and then into hysterical, cowardly laughs, and uttered ejaculations of disbelief in Hafsen's stories that showed the most implicit faith.

MIKE BROWN.

MIKE BROWN was a blacksmith, who belonged to Harry Lee's light-horse, and shod almost all the hoofs of the legion. He was a jolly, boisterous, red-faced fellow, with sandy hair, and light blue eyes so exceedingly blood-shot, that at a little distance off you could hardly tell that they were eyes at all. He had no leisure, during the Revolutionary war, to get them clarified; for, what with the smoke of his furnace, and keeping late hours on patrols, and hard drinking, his time was filled up to the entire disparagement of his complexion. He was a stark trooper, to whom no service came amiss, whether at the anvil or in the field, having a decisive muscle for the management of a piece of hot iron, and an especial knack for a marauding bout; in which latter species of employment it was his luck to hold frequent velitations with the enemy, whereby he became notorious for picking up stragglers, cutting off baggage-wagons, and rifling rum-casks, and, now and then, for easing a prisoner of his valuables. He could handle a broadsword as naturally as a sledge-hammer; and many a time has Mike brandished his blade above his beaver, and made it glitter in the sun, with a true dragoon flourish, whilst he gave the huzza to his companions as he headed an onset upon Tarleton's cavalry.

Towards the close of the war, he served with Colonel Washington, and was promoted to the rank of a sergeant for leading a party of the enemy into an ambuscade; and, in addition to this honour, the colonel made him a present of a full suit of regimentals, in which, they say, Mike was a proper-looking fellow. His black leather cap, with a strip of bearskin over it, and a white buck-tail set on one side, gave a martial fierceness to his red flannel face. A shad-bellied blue bobtail coat, turned up with broad buff, and meeting at the pit of his stomach with a hook and eye, was well adapted to show the breadth of his brawny chest, which was usually uncovered enough to reveal the shaggy mat of red hair that grew upon it. A buckskin belt, fastened round his waist by an immense brass buckle, sustained a sabre that rattled upon the ground when he walked. His yellow leather breeches were remarkable for the air of ostentatious foppery that they imparted to the vast hemisphere of his nether bulk; and, taken together with his ample horseman's boots, gave the richest effect to his short and thick legs, that, thus appareled, might be said to be gorgeous specimens of the Egyptian column.

Such was the equipment of Sergeant Brown on all festival occasions; and he was said to be not a little proud of this reward of valour. On work days he exhibited an old pair of glazed, brown buckskin small-clothes, coarse woollen stockings, covered with spatterdashes made of untanned deer hide, and shoes garnished with immense pewter buckles; though, as

to the stockings, he did not always wear them. Hose or no hose, it was all the same to Mike! I am minute in mentioning the regimentals, because, for a long time after the war, Sergeant Mike was accustomed to indue himself in this identical suit on Sundays, and strut about with the air of a commander-in-chief.

Mike's skill in horseshoes rendered him very serviceable in the campaigns. On a damp morning, or over sandy roads, he could trail Tarleton like a hound. It was only for Mike to examine the prints upon the ground, and he could tell, with astonishing precision, whether the horses that had passed were of his own shoeing, how many were in company, how long they had gone by, and whether at a gallop, a trot, or a walk; whether they had halted, or had been driving cattle, and, in fact, almost as many particulars as might be read in a bulletin. Upon such occasions, when appearances were favourable, he had only to get a few of his dare-devils together, and Tarleton was sure to have some of Sergeant Brown's sauce in his pottage, before he had time to say grace over it.

Mike used always to commence these adventures by drinking the devil's health, as he called it; which was done, very devoutly, in a cup of rum seasoned with a cartridge of gun-powder, which, he said, was a charm against sword cuts and pistol shot. When his expedition was ended, he generally called his roll, marked down the names of the killed, wounded and missing by a scratch of his black thumb-nail,

and then returned the dingy scroll into his pocket, with a knowing leer at the survivors, and the pithy apothegm, which he repeated with a sincere faith, "that the devil was good to his own." This familiarity with the "old gentleman," as Mike himself termed him, added to his trooper-like accomplishment of swearing till he made people's hair stand on end, begat a common belief in the corps that he was on very significant terms with his patron; and it was currently said, "that Mike Brown and the devil would one day be wearing each other's shirts."

When the war was over, the sergeant found himself a disbanded hero, in possession of more liberty than he knew what to do with; a sledge and shoeing hammer; an old pair of bellows; a cabinet of worn-out horseshoes; a leather apron; his Sunday regimentals in tolerable repair; and a raw-boned steed, somewhat spavined by service:—to say nothing of a light heart, and an arm as full of sinew as an ox's leg. Considering all which things, he concluded himself to be a well furnished and thriving person, and began to cast about in what way he should best enjoy his laurels, and the ease the gods had made for him.

In his frequent ruminations over this momentous subject, he fell into some shrewd calculations upon the emolument and comfort which were likely to accrue from a judicious matrimonial partnership. There was at that time a thrifty, driving spinster, bearing the name of Mistress Ruth Saunders, who lived at the landing near Swallow Barn. This dame was now somewhat in the wane, and, together with her mother,

occupied a little patch of ground on the river, upon which was erected a small one-storied frame house, the very tenement now in possession of Sandy Walker. Here her sire had, in his lifetime, kept a drinking tavern for the accommodation of the watermen that frequented the landing. The widow did not choose to relinquish a lucrative trade, and therefore kept up the house; whilst the principal cares of the hostelry fell upon the indefatigable and energetic Mistress Ruth, who, from all accounts, was signally endowed with the necessary qualifications which gave lustre to her calling.

Mike, being a free and easy, swaggering, sociable chap, and endowed with a remarkable instinct in finding out where the best liquors were to be had on the cheapest terms, had fallen insensibly into the habit of consorting with a certain set of idle, muddy-brained loiterers, that made the widow Saunders' house their head-quarters on Sunday afternoons, and as often on week days as they could find an excuse for getting together. And such had been Mike's habits of free entertainment in the army, that he acquired some celebrity for serving his comrades in the the same manner that he had been used to treat the old Continental Congress; that is, he left them pretty generally to pay his scot.

By degrees, he began to be sensible to the slow invasion of the tender passion, which stole across his ferruginous bosom like a volume of dun smoke through a smithy. He hung about the bar-room with the languishing interest of a lover, and took upon himself sundry minute cares of the household, that excused some increase of familiarity. He laughed very

loud whenever Mistress Ruth affected to be witty; and pounced, with his huge ponderous paws, upon the glasses, pitchers, or other implements that the lady fixed her eye upon, as needful in the occasions of her calling: not a little to the peril of the said articles of furniture:—for Mike's clutch was none of the gentlest, in his softest moods. In short, his assiduities soon made him master of the worshipful Mistress Ruth, her purse and person. She had seen the devil, according to the common computation, three times, and had been so much alarmed at his last visit that—the story goes—she swore an oath that she would marry his cousin-german, rather than be importuned by his further attentions. There is no knowing what a woman will do under such circumstances! I believe myself, that Mistress Ruth chose sergeant Mike principally on account of his well known dare-devil qualities.

The dame whose worldly accomplishments and personal charms had dissolved the case-hardened heart of the redoubted blacksmith of the legion, was altogether worthy of her lord. A succession of agues had spun her out into a thread some six feet long. A tide-water atmosphere had given her an ashen, dough face, sprinkled over with constellations of freckles, and exhibiting features somewhat tart from daily crosses. Her thin, bluish lips had something of the bitterness of the crab, with the astringency of the persimmon. Her hair, which was jet-black, was plastered across her brow with the aid of a little tallow, in such a manner as to give it a rigid smoothness, that pretty accurately typified her temper on

holiday occasions, and also aided, by its sleekness, in heightening the impression of a figure attenuated to the greatest length consistent with the preservation of the bodily functions. A pair of glassy dark eyes, of which one looked rather obliquely out of its line, glared upon the world with a habitual dissatisfaction ; and in short, take her for all and all, Mistress Ruth Saunders was a woman of a commanding temper, severe devotion to business, acute circumspection, and paramount attraction for Mike Brown.

After the solemnization of the nuptials, Mike took a lease of Mr. Tracy of the small tract of land bordering on the Goblin Swamp, which, even at that day, was a very suspicious region, and the scene of many marvellous adventures. Of all places in the country, it seemed to have the greatest charm for Mike. He accordingly set up his habitation by the side of the old county road, that crossed the marsh by the causeway ; and here he also opened his shop. Mistress Mike Brown resumed her former occupation, and sold spirits ; whilst her husband devoted his time to the pursuits of agriculture, the working of iron, and the uproarious delights of the bottle : whereto the managing Ruth also attached herself, and was sometimes as uproarious as the sergeant.

In process of time they were surrounded by four or five imps, of either sex, whose red hair, squinting eyes, and gaunt and squat figures, showed their legitimate descent. As these grew apace, they were to be seen hanging about the smithy bare-footed, half covered with rags, and with smutty faces looking

wildly out of mops of hair, that radiated like the beams of the sun in the image of that luminary on a country sign.

The eldest boy was bred up to his father's trade ; that is, he flirted a horse-tail tied to a stick, all day long in summer, to keep the flies from the animals that were brought to be shod ; at which sleepy employment Mike was wont to keep the youngster's attention alive by an occasional rap across the head, or an unpremeditated application of his foot amongst the rags that graced the person of the heir-apparent. Upon this system of training, it is reported, there were many family differences betwixt Mike and his spouse, and some grievously disputed fields. But Mike's muscle was enough to settle any question. So that it is not wonderful that the suffering Ruth should sometimes have taken to flight, and had recourse to her tongue.

In this way, the spoiler Discord stealthily crept into the little Eden of the Browns ; and from one flower-bed advanced to another, until he made himself master of the whole garden. Quarrels then became a domestic diversion ; and travellers along the road could tell when the patriarch Mike was putting his household in order, by the sound of certain lusty thwacks that proceeded from the interior, and the frequent apparition of a young elf darting towards the shop, with one hand scratching his head, and the other holding up what seemed a pair of trowsers, but which, in reality, were Mike's old leather breeches. The customers at the shop, too, affirmed that it was a usual thing to hear Mistress Brown

talking to herself, for two or three hours, in an amazingly shrill key, after Mike had gone to his anvil. And some persons went so far as to say, that in the dead hour of night, in the worst weather, voices could be heard upon the wind, in the direction of Mike Brown's dwelling, more than a mile off; one very high, and the other very gruff; and sometimes there was a third voice that shook the air like an earthquake, and made the blood run cold at the sound of it.

From this it may be seen that Mike's house was not very comfortable to him; for he was, at bottom, a good-natured fellow, that loved peace and quiet; or, at any rate, who did not like the clack of a woman, which, he said, "wore a man out like water on a drip-stone." To be sure, he did not care about noise, if it was of a jolly sort; but that he never found at home, and therefore, "as he took no pride in Ruth," to use his own phrase, upon Hafen's report, "he naturally took to roaming."

He was an open-hearted fellow too, that liked to spend his money when he had it; but the provident Mistress Mike began to get the upper hand; and in nothing are the first encroachments of female despotism more decisively indicated than in the regulation of what is called the family economy. Ruth purloined Mike's breeches, robbed the pockets, and secured the treasure. She forestalled his debtors, and settled his accounts, paralyzed his credit, and, in short, did every thing but publish her determination to pay no debts of his contracting. The stout dragoon quailed before these vexatious tactics. He could never have

been taken by storm; but to turn the siege into a blockade, and to fret his soul with mouse-nibblings, it was enough to break the spirit of any man! Mike, however, covered himself with glory; for after being reduced to the last stage of vassalage, as happens sometimes with an oppressed nation, he resolved to be his own master again, (thanks to the lusty potatoes, or he would never have made so successful a rebellion!) and gave Mrs. Brown, on a memorable occasion, a tremendous beating, by which he regained the purse-strings, and spent where and when and as freely as suited his own entertainment.

There was one thing in which Mike showed the regularity and discipline of an old soldier. He was steady to it in the worst of times. No matter where his vagrant humours might lead him, to what distance, or at what hours, or how topsy-turvy he might have grown, he was always sure to make his way home before morning. From this cause he became a frequent traveller over the country in all weathers, and at all times of night. Time or tide did not weigh a feather. "He would snap his fingers," said Hafen, "at the foggiest midnight, and swear he could walk the whole county blindfold." The fact was, Mike was a brave man, and feared neither ghost nor devil,—and could hardly be said to be afraid even of his wife.

One winter night,—or rather one winter morning, for it was past midnight,—Mike was coming home from a carouse. The snow was lying about half-leg deep all over the fields; and there was a crust frozen upon it, that was barely strong enough to sup-

port his weight ; at every other step he took, it broke through with him, so that he floundered along sadly without a track ; and there was a great rustling and creaking of his shoes as he walked. A sharp north-westerly wind whistled with that shrillness that showed the clearness of the atmosphere ; and the moon was shining as bright as burnished silver, casting the black shadows of leafless trees, like bold etchings, upon the driven snow. The stars were all glittering with that fine frosty lustre that makes the vault of heaven seem of the deepest blue ; and except the rising and sinking notes of the wind, all was still, for it was cutting cold, and every living thing was mute in its midnight lair. Yet a lonely man might well fancy there were sentient beings abroad besides himself, for on such a night there are sounds in the breeze of human tones, like persons talking at a distance. At all events, Mike was at such a time on his way home ; and as he crossed the trackless field that showed him his own habitation at a distance, being in the best possible humour with himself, and whistling away as loud as he could—not from fear, but from inward satisfaction—he all at once heard somebody whistling an entirely different tune close behind him. He stopped and looked around, but there was nothing but the moon and trees and shadows ; so, nothing daunted, he stepped on again, whistling as before, when, to his great amazement, the other note was instantly resumed. He now halted a second time. Immediately all was still. Mike then whistled out a sort of flourish, by way of experiment. The other did the very same

thing. Mike repeated this several times, and it was always answered quite near him.

"Who the devil are you!" exclaimed Mike, holding his hand up to his ear to catch the sound.

"Look behind you, and you will see," replied a harsh, screaming voice.

Mike turned suddenly round, and there he saw on the snow the shadow of a thin, queer-looking man, in a very trig sort of a dress, mounted upon a horse, that, by the shadow, must have been a mere skeleton. These were moving at full speed, although there was no road for a horse to travel on either; but the shadow seemed to go over shrubs and trees and bushes, as smoothly as any shadow could travel; and Mike distinctly heard the striking of a horse's hoofs upon the snow at every bound; though he could see nothing of the real man or horse. Presently, as the sound of the feet died away, Mike heard a laugh from the voice in the direction of the swamp.

"Hollo!" cried Mike, "what's your hurry?" But there was no answer.

"Humph!" said Mike, as he stood stockstill, with his hands in his breeches' pockets, and began to laugh. "That's a genius for you!" said he, with a kind of perplexed, drunken, half-humorous face.

As he found he was not likely to make much out of it, he walked on, and began to talk to himself, and after a while to whistle louder than ever. Whilst he was struggling forward in this way, he heard something like a cat-call down towards the swamp; and immediately there rushed past him the shadows

of a pack of hounds, making every sort of yelping, deep-mouthed cry. He could even hear the little chips of ice that were flung from their feet, whizzing along the crust of the snow; but still he could see nothing but shadows; and the sounds grew fainter and fainter until they melted away in the bosom of the swamp.

Mike now stopped again, and folded his arms across his breast,—although he could not help tottering a little, from being rather top-heavy;—and, in this position, he fell gravely to considering. First, he looked all around him: then he took off his hat and ran his fingers through his hair, and after that he rubbed his eyes. “Tut,” said he, “it’s all a botheration! There’s no drag in the world will lie upon this snow. That’s some drunken vagabond that had better be in his bed.”

“What’s that you say, Mike Brown?” said the same harsh voice that he had heard before, “you had better look out how you take any freedom with a gentleman of quality.”

“Quality!” cried Mike, turning his head round as he spoke. “You and your quality had better be a bed, like a sober man, than to be playing off your cantrips at this time of night.”

Mike looked on the snow, and there was the shadow of the horse again, standing still, and the figure upon it had one arm set a-kinbo against his side. Mike could now observe, as the shadow turned, that he wore something like a hussar-jacket, for the shadow showed the short skirt strutting out behind, and under this was the shadow of a tail turned upwards,

and thrown across his shoulder. His cap appeared to be a fantastical thing perched on the very top of his head; and below the ribs of the skeleton horse he could perceive the legs dangling with hoofs, one of which was cloven.

"Aha!" exclaimed Mike, "I begin to understand you, sir. You are no better than you should be; and I will not keep company with such a blackguard."

"Then, good night, Mike Brown!" said the voice, "you are an uncivil fellow, but I'll teach you manners the next time I meet you;" and thereupon the shadow moved off at a hard trot, rising up and down in his saddle, like a first-rate jockey.

"Good night!" replied Mike; and he made a low bow, taking off his hat, and scraping his foot, in a very polite fashion, through the snow.

After this, Mike pushed home pretty fast, for he was growing more sober, and his teeth began to chatter with cold. He had a way of thrusting aside a back-door bolt, and getting into the house without making a disturbance; and then, before he went to bed, he usually took a sleeping-draught from a stone jug that he kept in the cupboard. Mike went through this manual on the night in question, and was very soon afterwards stretched out upon his couch, where he set to snoring like a trumpeter.

He never could tell how long it was after he had got to bed that night, but it was before day, when he opened his eyes and saw, by the broad moonlight that was shining upon the floor through the window, a comical figure vapouring about the room. It had a thin, long face, of a dirty white hue, and a mouth

that was drawn up at the corners with a smile. A pair of ram's horns seemed to be twisted above his brows, like ladies' curls; and his head was covered with hair that looked more like a bunch of thorns, with a stiff cue sticking straight out behind, and tied up with a large knot of red ribbons. His coat was black, herring-boned across the breast with crimson, and bound round all the seams with the same colour. It fitted as close to his body as the tailor could make it; and it had a rigid standing collar that seemed to lift up a pair of immense ears, that were thus projected outwards from the head. The coat was very short, and terminated in a diminutive skirt that partly rested upon a long, pliant tail, which was whisked about in constant motion. He wore tight crimson small-clothes, bound with black; and silk stockings of black and red stripes, one of which terminated in a hoof instead of a human foot. As he walked about the room he made a great clatter, but particularly with the hoof, that clinked with the sound of loose iron. In his hand he carried a crimson cap with a large black tassel at the top of it.

Mike said that as soon as he saw this fellow in the room, he knew there was something coming. He therefore drew his blanket well up around his shoulders, leaving his head out, that he might have an eye to what was going forward. In a little time the figure began to make bows to Mike from across the room. First, he would bow on one side, almost down to the floor, so as to throw his body into an acute angle; then, in the same fashion, on the other side, keeping his eyes all the time on Mike. He

had, according to Mike's account, a strange swimming sort of motion, never still a moment in one place, and passing from spot to spot like something that floated. At one instant he would brandish his arms, and whisk his tail, and take one step forward, like a dancing master beginning to dance a gavot. In the next, he would make a sweep, and retreat to his first position; where he would erect his figure very stiffly, and strut with pompous strides all round the room. All this while he was twisting his features into every sort of grimace. Then he would shake himself like a merry-andrew, and spring from the floor upwards, flinging out his arms and legs like a supple-jack, which being done, he would laugh very loud, and wink his eye at Mike. Then he would skip on the top of a chest, and from that to a table, from the table to a chair, from the chair to the bed, and thence he would skip off, putting his foot upon Mike's breast as he passed, and pressing upon him so heavily, that for some moments Mike could hardly breathe. After this, he would dance a morrice close up to the bedside, and fetch a spring that would bring him astride upon Mike's stomach; where he would stoop down so as to bring his long nose almost to touch Mike's, and there he would twist his eyebrows and make faces at him for several minutes; and from that position he would fling a somerset backwards, as far as the room would permit.

All this time the foot with the loose iron clanked very loud. Mike was not in the least afraid; but

he tried several times to speak without being able to utter a word. He was completely tongue-tied, nor could he move a limb to help himself, being, as he affirmed, under a spell. But there he lay, looking at all these strange capers, which appeared so odd to him, that if he had had the power he would have laughed outright.

At last the figure danced up to him, and stood still.

"I have the honour to address myself to Sergeant Brown the blacksmith?" said he interrogatively, making a superlatively punctilious bow at the same time.

"The same," replied Mike, having in an instant recovered the power of speech.

"My name," said the figure, "is——," here he pronounced a terrible name of twenty syllables, that sounded something like water pouring out of a bottle, and which Mike never could repeat; "I am a full brother of Old Harry, and belong to the family of the Scratches. I have taken the liberty to call and make my respects this morning, because I want to be shod."

Thereupon he made another bow, and lifted up his right foot to let Mike see that the shoe was loose.

"No shoeing to be done at this time of night," said Mike.

"It does not want but two new nails," said the figure, "and the clinching of one old one."

"Blast the nail will you get till daylight!" replied Mike.

"I will thank you, Mr. Brown," said the figure, "if you will only take my hoof in your hand, and pull out the loose nail that makes such a rattling."

"I can't do that," answered Mike.

"Why not?"

"Because I am afraid of waking Ruthy."

"I'll answer for the consequences," said the other.

"Mistress Brown knows me very well, and will never complain at your doing a good turn to one of my family."

"I'm sleepy," said Mike, "so, be about your business."

"Then, Mike Brown, I will waken you," cried the other in a rage; "I told you I would teach you manners."

Saying these words he came close to Mike, and seized his nose between the knuckles of the two first fingers of his right hand, and wrung it so hard that Mike roared aloud. Then, letting go his hold, he strutted away with a ludicrous short step, throwing his legs upwards as high as his head, and bringing them back nearly to the same spot on the floor, and, in this fashion, whistling all the time a slow march, he passed directly out of the window.

When Mike had sufficiently come to his senses, he found his gentle consort standing by his bedside, with a blanket wrapt round her spare figure, calling him all sorts of hard names for disturbing her rest.

Her account of this matter, when she heard from the neighbours Mike's version of this marvellous visit from the devil, was, that she did not know when he came into the house that night; nor did she

see any thing of his strange visiter; although she was sure Old Nick must have been with him, and flung him into such an odd position as he was in; for he made a terrible, smothered sort of noise with his voice, which wakened her up, and there she found him stretched across the bed with his clothes on, and his head inclined backwards over the side, with both arms down towards the floor. She said, moreover, that he was a drunken brute, and she had a great mind to tweak his nose for him.

“And I will be bound she helped the old devil to do that very thing!” said Rip.

“I don’t know how that was,” replied Hafen, “but Mike’s nose got bluer and bluer after that, and always looked very much bruised, which he said was upon account of the devil’s fingers being hot, and scorching him very much.”

This adventure of Mike’s gave him great celebrity in the neighbourhood; and, by degrees, the people began to be almost as much afraid of Mike as they were of the goblin who was supposed to frequent the swamp. Mike added to this impression by certain mysteries that he used in his craft. He had the art of taming wild colts by whispering in their ears, which had such an effect that he could handle them at his shop as safely as the oldest horses. And he professed to cure the colt’s distemper, sweeny, and other maladies, by writing some signs on a piece of paper, and causing the horse to swallow it in his oats.

These accomplishments, of course, were set down to the proper account; namely, to Mike’s intimacy with his old companion, which was known now to

be very great, as will appear by the following incidents.

Some years after the last adventure, in the summer, about the month of June, when the moon was in her third quarter, Mike was crossing the common late at night, just as the moon was rising. He was in his usual condition; for latterly Mike was scarcely ever sober. There had been rain that night, but the clouds had broken away, and he was talking to himself, and making the road twice as long as it was, by crossing and recrossing his path, like a ship tacking in the wind, and every now and then bringing himself up against a tree or sapling, and sometimes stepping, with a vast stride, across a streak of shadow, thinking it a gully; and at others, walking plump into a real gully without seeing it, until he came upon his back in the mud. On such accidents, he would swear out a good-natured oath, get up, and go on his way rejoicing, as usual.

It happened, as he was steering along in this plight, there suddenly stood before him his old friend in the herring-boned jacket.

"How do you do, Mike?" was his usual salutation.

"Pretty well, I thank you, sir." Mike was noted for being scrupulously polite when he was in his cups. So, he made a bow, and took off his hat, although he could hardly keep his ground.

"Sloppy walking to night, Mr. Mike."

"Sloppy enough, sir," replied Mike, rather short, as if he didn't wish to keep company with the devil.

"How is Mistress Brown this evening?" said the other, following Mike up.

"Pretty well, I thank you, sir," returned the blacksmith, walking as fast as he could.

"Trade brisk, Mr. Brown?"

"Quite the contrary," replied Mike; "there's nothing to do worth speaking of."

"How are you off for cash?" asked the other, coming up close along side.

"I have none to lend," answered the blacksmith.

"I did not suppose you had, sergeant; you and I have been acquainted a long while. I hope there is no grudge betwixt us."

"I never knew any good of you," said Mike.

"Let us drink to our better friendship," said the gentleman, taking a flat bottle from his pocket.

"With all my heart!" cried Mike, as he stretched out his hand and took the flask. "Here's to you, Mr. Devil!"

Hereupon they both took a drink.

"Now," said Mike, "let us take another to old Virginia."

"Agreed," answered the gentleman; so they took another.

"You're a very clever fellow!" said Mike, beginning to brighten up.

"I know that," replied the gentleman.

"You are a man after my own heart," continued Mike, "here's your health again. Give us your paw, old fellow." Then they shook hands.

"Let us drink to Mistress Brown," said the gentleman politely.

"Damn Mistress Brown! I'll make you a present of her."

"I accept your offer," replied the other; "here's her health."

"Well," said Mike, "here's the health of your wife."

"I am much obliged to you," replied the gentleman. "Mistress (here he pronounced his own unspellable name,) will thank you herself some of these days, when you may honour her with your company. But Mike, as I have taken a liking to you, I'll make your fortune."

"Will you?" cried the blacksmith; "then I'm your man!"

"Come with me," said the other, "and I will show you where you may find as much gold as you can carry home in a bag. But you must not mind trouble."

"Trouble!" exclaimed Mike. "Any trouble for money!"

"Follow me," said the gentleman.

Upon this they both turned their steps towards the swamp, the broadest part of which they reached not very far from the scene of their colloquy. The morass here was covered with sheets of water, some of them ten or twelve yards in diameter. The gentleman in black and crimson easily traversed these, without soiling his habiliments more than if he had been in a drawing-room; but Mike made his way

with great difficulty, miring himself first in one hole, and then in another, and sometimes plunging up to his middle in water. But his companion exhorted him to persevere, and kept up his resolution by presenting him now and then with the flask, which, Mike said, was of great use to him.

At last they arrived at the inmost part of the swamp, upon the margin of one of the ponds, in the middle of which the water was about two feet deep, but shallow towards the edges.

“Now,” said the gentleman, “Mike, my brave fellow! do you take a drink.”

“Certainly,” replied Mike.

“The bottom of this pond,” continued the other, “is full of gold; and all that you have to do is to rake it out. I’ll get you a light rake.”

With this he withdrew for a few moments, and returned with a rake made of a white-oak sapling, with twelve iron teeth to it, each about a foot long, and put the implement in Mike’s hand, who, having taken a good deal from his host’s flask, had much ado to stand up. But still he was full of resolution, and very much determined to make money.

The image of the moon was reflected upon the water, whose surface being slightly agitated by the breeze and the frequent movement of small insects, broke the reflection into numberless fragments, that glittered upon Mike’s vision like pieces of bright gold at the bottom.

“All that you have to do,” said Mike’s conductor, “is to rake out these scraps of metal, and put them

in your pocket. Work hard, don't give up; and wet your feet as little as possible. So make yourself at home, for I must bid you good night."

"Good night," uttered Mike, "and joy go with you, my old boy!"

Finding himself alone in the bosom of the swamp at this hour, and on the high road to fortune, the blacksmith addressed himself to his task as vigorously as the inordinate depth of his potations would allow. He took up the rake, that was lying on the ground, and raised it perpendicularly, which was as much as he could do and keep his balance, considering the state of his head, and the slippery ground he had for a footing. Besides, the rake was very heavy, being made of green wood, and at least twenty feet long. When he had it well poised, and ready to make a stroke in the water, he took two steps forward to bring him immediately to the edge of the pond.

"Here goes!" he cried aloud, at the same time flinging the rake downwards, which motion disturbed his centre of gravity, and plunged him headlong into the pool. At the same moment with the plash were heard a dozen voices, laughing from the midst of the bushes, with a prolonged and loud ho, ho, ho! that echoed frightfully through the stillness of the night. Mike crawled out of the water, keeping hold of the rake, and once more stood upright on his former foothold.

"Well!" ejaculated Mike, with a thick utterance, and a kind of peevish gravity, "what do you see to laugh at in that? Never see a man in the water before?"

He now very seriously raised the rake a second time, and made a more successful pitch, driving it into the bottom, and breaking the water into a thousand ripples. Then, taking hold of the long shaft, which he straddled, as children when they ride a stick, he began to pull with might and main. He strained until the perspiration poured down his cheeks in large drops ; but the teeth had sunk so deep in the mud, that the rake was immovable.

“ Pretty tough work !” said Mike, stopping to run his finger along his brow.

But all his efforts proved unavailing ; and he was therefore forced to wade into the pond again to release the iron teeth from their bed ; and, resting them lightly on the bottom, he again began to pull, and succeeded in bringing the rake to the shore. Upon examination, the fruit of all this labour was nothing more than some decayed brushwood and grass.

“ No great haul that !” muttered Mike to himself ; and instantly the swamp was alive again with the same reverberations of the choir of laughers. Mike considering this as a taunt that he would bear from neither devil nor imp, returned it scornfully and in defiance, by an equally loud and affected ho, ho, ho ! delivered in bass tones. “ I can laugh as well as the best of you,” he said, nodding his head towards the quarter from which the noises came.

Mike’s temper now began to give way ; and as he grew angry, he toiled with proportionate energy, but with the same disappointment, which was always mocked by the same coarse laugh. The violence of his exertions, the weight of the imple-

ment with which he worked, and his frequent drenchings, gradually overcoming his strength, he grew disheartened, and began to wake up to the real nature of his employment. The chill of the night slowly dispelled the fever of his brain, and at last the full conviction of the truth broke upon him.

"If I was not a born fool," said he, "I should think I was drunk. I see how it is: that fellow that left the marks of his hot fingers upon my nose, has been playing his tricks upon me again. It is unaccountable; but if I don't have my revenge, he may bridle and saddle me both, and ride me over the swamp as much as he pleases."

So saying, Mike threw down his rake, and resolutely retraced his steps through the marsh. As soon as he set his foot upon the firm land, he heard the voice of his late companion calling out, "Good night, Sergeant Brown!" which was instantly followed with the accustomed laugh.

"Good night, you blackguard!" cried Mike, as loud as he could bawl. "Your liquor is as bad as your lodgings!" and posted off homeward as fast as his legs could carry him.

All the next day Mike ruminated sullenly over this adventure, and the more he thought upon it the more wroth he became. There is nothing more to be dreaded than a pleasant-tempered, sociable, frolicsome fellow, of good bone and muscle, when he is once roused. Quarrel not being one of his habits, he manages it roughly and with great energy, —or as Mike would say,— "like a new hand at the bellows." The affront put upon him the night be-

fore went very hard with Mike, and he therefore resolved to call his false friend to an account. It was singular that after this thought took possession of his mind, there seemed to be a relish in it that almost brought him into a good humour. The idea of standing upon his prowess with the devil, and giving him a fair beating, was one of those luxurious imaginings that no man ever dreamt of but Mike Brown. There was a whimsicalness in it that vibrated upon the strongest cord in his character. Mike had never met his match in daylight, and he had a droll conviction that he could master any thing in darkness, if he could only come to it, arm to arm. His first and most natural suggestion was, to put himself in order for the projected interview, by making a merry evening of it, and then to depend upon his genius for his success in the subsequent stages of the adventure.

Mike followed one half of the old Scythian custom in all affairs of perplexity: he first considered the subject when he was drunk, but he did not revolve it again in a sober mood. On the present occasion his reflections had the advantage of being matured under circumstances of peculiar animation, induced by the disturbed state of his feelings; for he has often said that when any thing fretted him it made him awfully thirsty. There was one determination that was uppermost in all the variety of lights in which he contemplated his present purpose;—and that was, as it was a delicate affair, to treat it like a gentleman, and to give his adversary fair play. Accordingly, as soon as Mike had cast off work for the day,

he put on his regimentals, took his broadsword, and set out for his usual haunt to prepare himself for the business in hand. Never did he enter upon a campaign with a more wary, circumspect or soldier-like providence.

He remained at the tavern in the neighbourhood until he had fairly put all his complotors asleep; and then, in the dead hour of the night, when the moon was but a little way above the horizon, and divided her quiet empire with Mike's own nose, he crept forth silently upon his destined exploit. It was a goodly sight to see such a valiant blacksmith, so martially bedight, with his trusty sword tucked under his arm, stealing out at such an hour, and wending his silent way to the Goblin Swamp, there to have a pass at arms with the fiend! the night breeze blowing upon his swarthy cheek, and his heavy, sullen tramp falling without an echo upon his own ear, and not a thought of dread flickering about his heart.

With his head spinning like a top, and his courage considerably above striking heat, Mike, after many circumgyrations, arrived in about half an hour on the frontier of the field of action. Here he halted, according to a military fashion; and, like a cautious officer entering upon an enemy's territory, he began to explore the ground. Then, drawing his sword and straightening his person, he commenced an exhortation to himself in the manner of a general addressing his troops.

"Now, my brave boy, keep a stiff upper lip!

mind your eye! look out for squalls! don't fire until you see the whites of their eyes; carry swords; advance!"

All this he uttered with a solemn, drunken wisdom, and with the flourish of an old soldier. At the words he stepped forward, and continued to approach the swamp, muttering half articulated sounds, and occasionally falling one step backward, from carrying himself rather too erect. As soon as he reached the edge of the morass, he gave the word "halt" in a loud and defying tone of voice, as if to inform his adversary of his presence. He did not wait long before he heard a crackling noise as of one breaking through the thick shrubbery; and full before him stood, on an old log within the swamp, his adversary, in his customary dress, with the addition of a Spanish cloak of scarlet that was muffled about his neck.

Mike, immediately upon seeing this apparition, brought his sword with an alert motion up to his breast, with the blade reaching perpendicularly upward in the line of his face; then, with a graceful sweep of his arm, he swung it down diagonally, with the point to the ground, in the usual manner of a salute.

"Your honour!" said Mike, as he performed this ceremony.

"Walk in, Sergeant Brown!" said the devil, with a husky voice, that was scarcely above a whisper. "I did not expect to see you to night; I have caught a bad cold, and am not able to stir abroad."

"I am come to night," said Mike very stiffly,

and with an affectation of cold politeness, "to see you on a piece of business. I require satisfaction for the affront you put upon me last night."

"You shall have it. What's your weapon?"

"It is in my hand," answered the sergeant.

"Then follow me," said the devil with great composure.

They both stepped forward into the swamp; and, after traversing some defiles, and passing around ponds, and making many tiresome circuits through the most intricate parts of the marsh, Mike at length stopped to inquire which way the devil meant to lead him.

"As I am the challenged party, I have the right to choose my own ground," said the other.

"Certainly!" rejoined Mike. "It is all one to me."

At length they reached a spot that was covered with tall trees, at the foot of which the earth seemed to be of a more firm texture than in the rest of the fen. There was a fire smoking through a heap of rubbish near the middle of the ground, and a little, peaked old woman, almost black with the smoke, sat upon her haunches so near the fire that by the flash of the small flame Mike could perceive that she was smoking a pipe. Her elbows were placed upon her knees, and her chin rested in the palms of her hands in such a manner that her long fingers were extended, like the bars of a gridiron, over her cheeks. Her eyes looked like burning coals, and could be seen through the dark at a great distance.

"Wife," said the devil, "Mike Brown. Mike Brown, my wife."

"Your servant," said Mike, with one of his best flourishes, and a bow.

"Pish!" cried the old woman with a sort of scream, "sit down!"

"Much obliged to you, Ma'am," replied Mike, "I'd rather stand."

"What brings you with Mike Brown into my bedroom at this time of night?" said the old woman to her husband.

"Mind your own business," was the reply, "and give me my sword. I have an affair of honour to settle with this gentleman."

"Get it yourself," said the wife.

So the devil stepped inside of a hollow tree, and brought out a huge old-fashioned, two-handed straight sword, that was covered with rust, and immediately began to feel the edge with his thumb.

"It is very dull; but it will do. Now, sergeant, we will go a little way further, and settle this matter in a twinkling."

"Agreed! and remember, as you set up for a gentleman, I expect fair play."

"Honour bright!" said the devil, putting his hand to his breast.

"No striking till each says he is ready."

"By no means," said the devil.

"Nor no hit below the knee."

"Of course not," said the devil.

"Time to breathe, if it is asked."

"Assuredly!"

"Points down at the first blood."

"Just as you say," replied the devil.

"Then," said Mike, "move on."

"We ought to drink together, sergeant, before we get to blows. I am for doing the thing civilly," said the devil.

"So am I," replied Mike. "I am entirely of your opinion."

So the devil put into Mike's hands a large gourd, that had a stopper in the top of it, which the sergeant pulled out, and applying the orifice to his mouth, took a hearty drink, first turning to the old woman, who sat all this time in silence by the fire, and saying, "My service to you, Ma'am!" The devil having likewise performed his part in this ceremony, they once more resumed their walk.

In their progress towards the ground which the devil had chosen for the theatre of this mortal encounter, they came to two small islands, the soil of which was a yielding black mud covered with moss. These little parcels of ground arose out of the marsh, with well defined banks, perhaps twelve inches high, and were separated from each other by a channel of deep water, not more than five feet in width, so that to pass from one to the other required a leap that was somewhat perilous, because the foothold on the opposite bank was not only very soft, but the ground itself scarcely one pace in breadth. The chances were, therefore, that in leaping to it, the momentum employed would precipitate the leaper into another pond of water beyond it. The devil skipped over this strait with great ease, and called on Mike to fol-

low. The sergeant, however, hesitated, and looked for some moments upon the spot with anxious concern. He traversed the ground in the neighbourhood, to observe if there was any other passage round this hazardous channel; meditated upon the consequences of a failure in the attempt to cross it; looked at his legs, as if to compare their capabilities with the obstacle before him; and, at last, wisely determined that the risk was more than he ought, in prudence, to run. So, taking the next expedient,—which was to make a long step, in such wise as to plant one foot on the opposite bank, and rely upon the assistance of his adversary to drag him over,—he forthwith essayed the effort. By one prodigious stride, he succeeded in fixing his left foot on the desired spot, his legs being extended in the endeavour to their greatest possible compass; and there he remained in this ludicrous position, like the colossus of Rhodes, his feet sliding imperceptibly outward in the slimy material of the banks, thus more effectually splitting him asunder, whilst the great weight of his body denied him all power to extricate himself, even if he had stood upon a firmer base, and with a less relaxed frame. He was, of course, wholly at the mercy of his antagonist, upon whose generosity he relied with the confidence of a true soldier; if this failed him, he had nothing better left than to fall sideways, in the manner of a pair of distended compasses, into the water, and abide the consequences of going headlong to the bottom of a stagnant pool, where, for aught he knew, he should not only be compelled to swallow a portion of the noxious liquid,

but come into familiar contact with toads, snakes, snapping-turtles, and other abominable inhabitants of such a place. For the present, therefore, he began to entreat the aid of his old companion in the most supplicating terms. To his utter dismay, the gentleman in the scarlet mantle not only refused him a hand, but answered his request with a malignant laugh, so loud as to make the swamp ring with its reverberations.

"Blood and fury! why don't you give me your hand?" cried Mike at last, in an extremity of torture; "where are your manners?"

"What ails you?" said the devil, "that you roar so loud?"

"I'm in a quandary!" bellowed the sergeant. "Is this the way you treat a gentleman in distress? Don't you see I'm splitting up to my chin?"

"When I fight," replied the other calmly, "I choose my own ground, and if you can't reach it, it is no fault of mine."

"Don't you mean to give me satisfaction?" asked Mike.

"All the satisfaction in the world, Sergeant Brown. Rare satisfaction," said the devil, laughing and holding his sides.

"You are a coward," cried Mike, drawing his sword, and flourishing it over his head.

"Step out, sergeant, and make your words good."

"You are no gentleman."

"Granted," said the devil; "I never set up for one. But I don't think you are much better, or you would never stand vapouring there with your sword,

and straddling as if you thought yourself a man of consequence."

"What's the use," said Mike, in a gentle persuasive tone, "of keeping a' map here all night, tearing the life out of him by inches? Just give us a hand, like a genteel christian; and as to the quarrel, I'll not be particular about it."

"Good night, Sergeant Brown," said the devil; "I see you have no mind to fight; and as I did not come here to trifle, I will wait no longer for you."

So the devil turned round and disappeared from Mike's view, with a bitter, scoffing laugh.

The sergeant being thus left alone without relief, found his torment becoming every moment more insupportable; and therefore, without further effort to reach the ground on either side, he plunged headforemost into the pond, from which he rose in a moment covered with black mud, and with a multitude of ropes of green slime clinging to his shoulders, and platted about his throat.

This shock had the effect to bring the blacksmith partially to his senses. He awoke from his intoxication, like one from a dream, wondering at the chances that brought him into such a predicament, and with a confused recollection of the strange adventure he had just been engaged in. His conclusion was, "that the old chap had taken him in again," and he therefore set off homeward, very much ashamed of the failure of his expedition, and not less vexed to hear, as he once more arrived on dry land, the usual valedictory, "Good night!" with its hoarse, wild and fiendish accompaniment.

I will not pretend to give any further avouch for these facts than the authority of Hafen, who affirmed that he had them from Mike himself; and as Mike was a little prone to exaggerate when his personal prowess was in question, the judicious reader will make some grains of allowance on that score.

There were various incidents in Mike's life similar to those above narrated; but it is only material to know, that not long after this last adventure, Mike began to grow jealous of his old crony's attentions to Mistress Brown. There was a spirited intercourse kept up between this worthy and the family, which resulted at last in the sudden disappearance of the matron from the neighbourhood. The folks in these parts have their own notions of the matter; but they don't like to speak freely on the subject. Mike, however, bore his misfortune like a philosopher. He very sedately increased his allowance of comfort by doubling the strength of his cups, and, in consequence, was more frequently than ever beside himself,—a very refreshing expedient for a man who has been left alone in the world. The heir apparent and the rest of the progeny abdicated their birth-right, and wandered off, it is supposed, in search of food. The shop was deserted, the anvil was sold, and the bellows fell a victim to a pulmonary attack. The roof of the dwelling had decayed so as to give the wind and rain free admission. The relics of the smithy were, one windy night, blown down. The frame of the house first became twisted out of its perpendicular line, and gradually sunk to earth, at the base of the brick chimney that stands, at this day, a

monument to show that another of the host of Revolutionary heroes has departed. The well grew to be choked up with weeds; the balance-pole waxed stiff, and creaked in its swivel; and, finally, Mike ceased to be seen in the country side.

It is now many years gone by, since these mysterious events employed the gossip of the neighbourhood; and many credible witnesses,—amongst the rest Hafen Blok,—affirm that Mike and his wife are yet seen to hold occasional conventicles with their old associate, in that part of the swamp known as the devil's bed-chamber.

“Well, Hafen,” said I, when this story of Mike Brown was concluded, “do you believe it all?”

“Why, I don't know,” replied Hafen, “it does seem to me as if it might be partly true. But Mike was a monstrous liar, and an uncommon hard drinker.”

“It is reasonable,” said Hazard, “to suppose that the devil should be fond of such a fellow as Mike Brown.”

Said Rip, “For my share, I don't believe it. Hafen's making fun: how could the devil walk over the swamp in silk stockings, and not get them muddy?”

CHAPTER II.**AN INTERLUDE.**

ABOUT the same hour of the night when **Hafen Blok** was regaling his circle of auditors in the porch at **Swallow Barn**, it fell out that two sympathetic souls, who have frequently been brought to view in this narrative, were weaving closer the network of sentimental affinities in a quiet conference in one of the chambers at the **Brakes**. As this contemporary incident may serve to give my readers some insight into the family history, I will relate it as it was told to me by **Harvey Riggs**; only premising that **Harvey** is somewhat dramatic in his nature, and therefore apt to put words into the mouths of his actors, which, if the matter were investigated, it might be discovered that they never spoke. Be that as it may, if the story be not a positive fact, (**Harvey** makes a distinction between a positive and a simple fact,) it is at least founded on a real event.

The bustle attending the negotiation of the treaty that had just been concluded by our plenipotentiaries at the **Brakes**, had subsided, upon the departure of the **Swallow Barn** cavalcade, into an unusual calm. The family retired from the tea table with a sedateness that might be ascribed to exhausted spirits; and, what was most worthy of observation, **Swans-**

down, neglectful of his customary assiduities, relinquished the company of the ladies, and sauntered with Mr. Tracy towards the backdoor, where, in a chair inclined against a column of the portico, he fixed himself, with one foot resting against the front bar, and with his right leg thrown across his left knee in such fashion as to point upwards at an angle of forty-five; and in this posture he incontinently launched into a long, prosing discourse with Mr. Tracy, who sat opposite to him, that lasted, for aught I know, three hours or more. He was tuned to too high a key for light company. The achievement of the award had wrought him into that state of self-complacency that generally attends upon ambition when saturated with a great exploit. He had done a deed of mould, and was pleased to float upon the billow of his vanity, high borne above all frivolous things.

This humour did not pass unobserved, nor, perhaps, unresented: for as soon as affairs had fallen into the posture I have described, Prudence Meriwether and Catharine Tracy, in an apparently careless spirit, set to walking up and down the hall, and afterwards sallied forth, amidst the lingerings of the twilight, upon the open hill side, and, with no better protection against the damps of the evening than their handkerchiefs thrown across their shoulders, strolled at a snail's pace towards the river; and talked—heaven knows what!—or, at least, they only know, who know what ruminative virgins, on river banks at dewy eve, are wont to say.

It was nine by the clock,—or even later,—when

they returned to the front door and sat down upon the steps, still intent upon the exchange of secret thoughts. After a brief space, they rose again, and with locked arms stepped stately through the hall, to and fro. Still the interminable Swansdown pursued his incessant discourse. Another interval, and the two ladies slowly wended their way up stairs, and in the eastern chamber, looking towards the river, lighted by a solitary taper that threw a murky ray across the room, they planted their chairs at the window; beneath which, until late at night, was heard a low, murmuring, busy note of ceaseless voices, like the flutter of the humming-bird in a wilderness of honeysuckles.

Harvey pretends that the subject of this long communing between our thoughtful dames had a special regard to that worthy personage whom but now my reader has seen seated at the porch, with his foot as high as his head. I have said somewhere that Prudence was oratorical; and, indeed, I have heard it remarked that the ladies of the Old Dominion, in general, are not sparing of their tropes. Upon that subject I have no opinion to give, but leave the world to draw its own conclusions from the following authentic conversation; authentic as far as Harvey Riggs is a credible witness.

It is characteristic of Prudence Meriwether,—as it is of sundry other ladies of my acquaintance,—to throw the whole fervour of her imagination into the advocacy of any favourite opinion. The glow of her feelings is, of course, reflected upon her subject, and the glow of her subject is again reflected back

upon her feelings ; and thence, backward and forward successively, until the greatest possible degree of heat is obtained by the process ; exactly as we see the same result produced between two concave mirrors. It seems to me that an attentive observation of this phenomenon may go a great way to explain the mystery of a love affair.

The present theme was one of those upon which Prudence was wont to expatiate with a forcible emphasis. Her rhetoric might be said to be even hyperbolic, and her figures of speech were certainly of the most original stamp. First, she gave an inventory of Swansdown's gentle qualities. "He was amiable, mild, soft and polished." Then again, "his voice was silvery, his motion graceful, his manners delicate." In this enumeration of dainty properties she sometimes paused to ask Catharine if she did not think so.

Catharine thought exactly so.

"There was a gravity in his demeanor," said Prudence, "which gave authority to his presence, and seemed to rebuke familiarity ; and yet it was so mixed up with the sallies of a playful imagination, that it won the good opinion of the world almost by stealth."

"He is very generally respected," said Catharine.

Prudence continued the catalogue with increasing warmth ; and although Catharine was not so figurative, she was not less energetic in her panegyric. She not only echoed Pru's sentiments, but even magnified their proportions. Where two persons agree, the debate must be short. Such congeniality of

thinking occludes discussion, and the two ladies, therefore, travelled rapidly through the inventory.

Prudence rose to the height of the stature of his mind, and descanted upon his abilities.

"He had the art," she said, "to impart a charm to the dullest subjects. His discrimination was intuitive, and facilitated his journey through the mazes of research, like one that wandered over a shorn meadow. Who but a man of genius could unravel the occult darkness of the boundary line, and shed certainty, in one day, upon an important question, in opposition to all the courts and all the lawyers of a state that boasted of both? with that forensic jurist Mr. Wart (manifestly prejudiced against his opinion,) on the other side! There was a moral romanticity in it. It was like casting a spell of "grammaire" over his opponents. The world would talk of this thing hereafter!"

"It is very surprising," muttered Catharine.

"Think of it, my dear!" cried Prudence. "The country, before long, will discover his dormant talents, and he will be compelled to forego his reluctance to guide the destinies of his native state."

"It can be nothing but his modesty," rejoined Kate, "that keeps him in the back ground now. He never would have been beaten three times for congress, if he had not been so diffident."

"He is what I denominate emphatically," said Prudence, "a man of lofty sentiments: nothing sordid, nothing paltry, nothing tawdry, nothing—"

"Nothing," replied Kate, "nothing of the sort."

"Such sound opinions!"

“ And spoken in such chaste language !”

“ Such a strain of charity ! such a beautiful commingling of the virtues that mollify, with the principles that fortify, the heart !”

“ Such a rare union !” echoed Kate.

Never has the world seen more perfect harmony than that which ruled in the counsels of our two damsels.

At length they fell into a speculation upon the question, why he did not marry. Women consider, very naturally, life to be a sort of comedy, and constantly look to see the hero pairing off by way of preparation for the catastrophe. They agreed that there were not many of the sex who would not think themselves blessed by an overture from Mr. Swansdown. But it was allowed that he was fastidious. It resulted from the peculiar nature of his organization.

“ I confess,” said Prudence, “ it puzzles me. It is one of the inexplicable arcana of human action that I cannot dissolve.”

“ Nor I, neither,” replied Kate.

“ There are men,” said Miss Meriwether, “ of such attenuated fibre, that they shrink at the rude touch of reality. They have the sensitiveness of the mimosa, and find their affections withering up where the blast of scrutiny blows too roughly upon them. Such a man is Singleton.”

“ I believe that is very true,” rejoined Miss Tracy ; “ and besides, I think Mr. Swansdown is a little dashed by being refused so often.”

To this succeeded a shrewd inquiry as to what was his present purpose.

"For," said Prudence, "it is quite clear to me that he meditates an important revolution in his fate."

"On my word, Prudence, I have lately taken up the same idea."

"There is something," continued Prudence, "in his thoughts that disturbs him. He is variable, vacillating and visionary: sometimes, you would suppose, all mirthful exuberance,—if you were governed by the beaming expression of his face,—but, when he speaks, it is only to say some common-place thing, with an air of earnestness, that shows his thoughts to be looking upon some invisible idea. He is, at other times, so pensive, that one would think 'melancholy had marked him for her own.' What can it signify?"

"Can he have taken a religious turn?" asked Kate, with an air of wonder.

"No," replied the other, thoughtfully. "It has the fitfulness of genius distracted by its own emotions. It is not religion: we should wish it were so. But it is not that. It is the aspen agitation of sensibility. An imaginative temperament recreating amidst the attractive creations of its own handiwork."

"Oh, Prudence! how much that is like Swansdown himself?"

"I think," returned Miss Meriwether, "I have studied his character well. There is a kindred congeniality in our natures, which attaches me to his eccentricities. My life has been a tissue of similar emotions. And, to tell you the truth, my dear Catharine, I fancy he recognizes some affinity between us. 1

perceive that when he is anxious to share his thoughts with a friend, he flies to me; and it strangely happens, that some secret instinct brings us into that holy confidence, where friendship puts on its garb of naked simplicity, and ideas flow together on the same high road, without reserve."

"Indeed! I did not know you were so intimate with Mr. Swansdown. It is strange it should have escaped me."

"Why, it was a sudden thing. It is wonderful to think how long two spirits may associate in the same sphere without striking upon that chord which undulates in unison in the hearts of both. But for an accidental walk we took three or four mornings ago, before breakfast, I doubt if I should ever have been brought to that effulgent conviction which I entertain of his high qualities. And, take him altogether, Kate, I think him a timid man. He is even timid in his intercourse with me; although he passes almost every unoccupied moment in my company."

"I did not think him timid," said Kate.

"Oh, I am sure that he is so, my dear! To tell you the truth, with that frankness which should preside over the breathings of inviolable friendship, I have no question, from his manner, that he has something of a very delicate nature to communicate to me."

"No! Prudence! You don't think so! My dear, you deceive yourself. You are entirely mistaken in his views. Indeed, I know you are," cried Catharine with energy.

"Indeed, I am sure I am not, Kate. I have it in every thing but words."

"Then," said Kate with emphasis, "there's no faith in man!"

"Why not, my dear Catharine?"

"It is of no consequence," replied the other, in a tremulous, murmuring voice. "The thing is not worth investigating. From any other lips than yours, Pru, I never would have believed that Swansdown harboured a deceitful thought. Well, I wish you joy of your conquest. I renounce—"

"Heavens, Catharine! Do I understand you right? What a dreadful truth do you divulge to my mind! I comprehend your silence, my dearest Catharine, and do not ask an explanation, because I see it all. This is one of the cruelest bolts that Fate has treasured up in her quiver in order that she might launch it at a heart consecrated by its sensibility, and torn by misfortune."

"What shall we do, my dear Prudence? I am all amazement!"

"Do! What ought we to do, but banish him from our favour as a false-hearted minion; banish him to the antarctic circle of our regard, and fix upon him the indelible stain of our contempt? From this moment I discard him from my heart."

"And I from mine," said Catharine.

"Now we are free," cried Prudence. "Is it not lucky that we have had this interview?"

"Most fortunate. But are you sure, my dear Prudence, that you have not made some mistake? Do you think he seriously aimed at entrapping your affections?"

"Sure, my love! He did every thing that man could do, and said every thing that man could say,

short of falling on his knee and offering me his hand."

"What unparalleled perfidy! When I contrast what you tell me with what I know, and for seven long months have so frequently experienced—"

"For seven months?"

"For seven months, believe me, my dear Prudence, for seven months."

"Why he told me, Catharine, only this morning, that he never could grow intimate with you. That you had a reserve in your manners that repelled all advances; that—"

"Good heavens! does Swansdown say so? There is a hypocrisy in that, my dear Prudence, that shocks me. He has had some sinister design in this falsehood."

"Oh! forbear, Catharine. Do not mention it. I always thought him somewhat worldly-minded; a little hollow-hearted. He shows it in the expression of his countenance."

"Particularly," replied Catharine, "about the eyes, when he smiles. Do you know, I always suspected him. I have a perfect horror of a man of extravagant professions, and have often doubted the sincerity of Swansdown."

"Sincerity! Let not the word be profaned by wedding it with his name. It is plain, that all those deep and solemn emotions by which he vainly endeavoured to wrench from me—yes, to wrench from me, my affections, were nothing more than the false glitter that plays about the sunny summit of unsubstantial deceit."

"But when you tell me," said Catharine, interrupt-

ing her friend, "that he has made an assault upon your affections, I am lost in amazement. He has twenty times insinuated to me, that although he thought you a woman of some pretensions, yet you were the last woman in the world that could interest his regard. He said he thought your manners unnatural, and your tone of feeling superficial. I recollect his very words."

"What reason have I to be thankful," exclaimed Prudence, clasping her hands, "that I have escaped the snare he has infused into my cup! He has been lavish of expedients to entrap me. Would you believe it, Catharine, he has actually written a long, and, I must do him the justice to say, talented letter, depicting the misery of the Greek matrons, and their devotion to the cause of their country, with a view to gratify me, and inspire me with a loftier sentiment of admiration for him. He was aware of my zeal in that cause."

"The Greeks!" said Catharine. "Does he pretend to be an advocate for the cause of the Greeks? His precise words to me were, that he thought the Greeks the most barbarous, the most uninteresting, and the vilest wretches in the world."

"The infidel! the preposterous man! What a fatal mildew must have struck its fangs into the understanding and the heart of the wretch that uttered such a sentiment! And then, what immeasurable hypocrisy must have varnished his face, whilst his pen traced his appeal to the sensibilities of Virginia in behalf of the suffering patriots!

"It could not have been his own," replied Catharine.

“Indeed, I should doubt it myself,” said Prudence, “if it were not remarkable for those meretricious ornaments of style that disfigure even the best of his effusions. It has, however, the marks of the beast upon it. You may very easily see that it abounds in those vicious decorations that betray a false taste, those turgid, inflated, bombastic, superfluous redundancies that sparkle out in his compositions, like the smothered embers of an extinguished furnace.”

“I think,” added Catharine, “that it will invariably be found that a bad heart —”

“Yes, my dear, that is perfectly true: a bad heart never puts pen to paper, but its guardian imp stands at its elbow, and infuses into the composition his corrupt effluvia. And had he the assurance to say that he thought my manners unnatural?”

“Yes; he said you were stiff and formal, and almost inaccessible.”

“That shows his poverty of thought, Catharine; for he made use of the same terms in reference to you.”

“He said he thought it strange, too,” continued Catharine, “that you should fancy you were doing good by circulating tracts. He observed this was another of your follies; that these tracts —”

“And so he had the effrontery to attack the Tract Society!”

“He had, and went further; he remarked that the society was a mere invention to give employment to busy-bodies and country-gossips.”

“Heavens and earth! had he the rashness to question my motives?”

"To be sure he had; and called you one of the immaculates."

"Then, I am done with man. Depend upon it, Catharine, the sex is not to be trusted. There is a natural propinquity—proclivity I mean—in this baser part of creation, to undervalue all that is glorious. I never saw one man whose impulses were not essentially wicked."

"Nor I, neither, except my father," replied Catharine.

"Of course, I except my brother Frank," said Prudence. "Henceforward I abjure the sex."

"I think I will too," said Catharine in a lower tone.

"Well now, Catharine," continued Miss Meriwether, "it becomes us to take a decided part in reference to this Mister Swansdown."

"What do you propose, Pru?"

"To treat him with that cutting coldness that we both so well know how to assume."

"I don't think we ought to make him of so much importance."

"My dear," said Prudence, after a moment's hesitation, "perhaps you are right. There is nothing puffs up these lords of creation so much as to find our sex guilty of the weakness of even the homage of contempt. Suppose we indicate to him by our manner that we have unveiled his treachery, and show him, that although it has been the labour of his life to insinuate himself into our good opinion, we regard him as an object of perfect indifference."

"As one," added Catharine, "whose ways were known to us."

"Whose fate," said Prudence, in continuation, "is a subject that has never occupied our thoughts."

"Whose duplicity has failed of its aim," said Catharine.

"Whose tergiversation and ambidexterity have alike excited our ridicule," replied Prudence.

"Agreed! let us do so," continued Catharine; "how shall we manage it?"

"By our looks, my dear Catharine! I will look into the deepest recesses of his heart with a glance, and wither him into a spectacle of scorn."

"Looks may do a great deal," replied Catharine, "and I will regulate my demeanor by yours."

"The heathen! the Turk! the pretender! the cormorant!" said Miss Meriwether.

"I am glad we have found him out!" cried Miss Tracy.

"Let us retire to rest my dear," said the other. "Let us to our prayers, and be thankful that we have escaped these impending dangers."

For a while, all was silent. But at midnight again, and long afterwards, a buzzing sound of suppressed voices was heard from the chamber.

CHAPTER III.**SUMMER MORNINGS.**

IN the country every thing wears a Sunday look. The skies have a deeper blue than common, the clouds rest upon them like paintings. The soft flutter of the groves hushes one into silence. The chirp of the grasshopper, as he leaps in his short semi-circles along your path, has the feebleness of a whisper; and the great vagabond butterfly, that gads amongst the thistles, moves noiseless as a straggling leaf borne upon a zephyr. Then, there is a lowing of cows upon a distant meadow, and a scream of jay-birds, heard at intervals; the sullen hammer of a lonely woodpecker resounds from some withered trunk; and, high above, a soaring troop of crows, hoarse with bawling, send forth a far-off note. Sometimes a huge and miry mother of the sty, with her litter of querulous pigs, steps leisurely across the foreground; and a choir of locusts in the neighbouring woods spin out a long stave of music, like the pupils of a singing-school practising the elements of psalmody. Still, this varied concert falls faintly upon the ear, and only seems to measure silence.

Our morning pursuits at Swallow Barn partake somewhat of the quiet character of the scenery. Frank Meriwether is an early riser at this season,

and generally breakfasts before the rest of the family. This gives him time to make a circuit on horseback, to inspect the progress of his farm concerns. He returns before the heat of the day, and, about noon, may be found stretched upon a broad settee in the hall, with a pile of books on the floor beneath him, and a dozen newspapers thrown around in great confusion: not unfrequently, too, he is overtaken with a deep sleep, with a volume straddling his nose; and he will continue in this position, gradually snoring from a lower to a higher key, until he awakens himself by a sudden and alarming burst that resembles the bark of a mastiff. He says the old clock puts him asleep, and, in truth, it has a very narcotic vibration; but Frank is manifestly growing corpulent. And, what is a little amusing, he protests in the face of the whole family that he does not snore.

The girls get at the piano immediately after breakfast; and Ned and myself usually commence the morning with a stroll. If there happen to be visitors at Swallow Barn, this after-breakfast hour is famous for debates. We then all assemble in the porch, and fall into grave discussions upon agriculture, hunting or horsemanship, in neither of which do I profess any great proficiency, though I take care not to let that appear. Some of the party amuse themselves with throwing pebbles picked from the gravel walk, or draw figures upon the earth with a rod, as if to assist their cogitations; and when our topics grow scarce, we saunter towards the bridge, and string ourselves out upon the rail, to watch the bubbles that float down the stream; and are

sometimes a good deal perplexed to know what we shall do until dinner time.

There is a numerous herd of little negroes about the estate ; and these sometimes afford us a new diversion. A few mornings since, we encountered a horde of them, who were darting about the bushes like untamed monkeys. They are afraid of me, because I am a stranger, and take to their heels as soon as they see me. If I ever chance to get near enough to speak to one of them, he stares at me with a suspicious gaze ; and, after a moment, makes off at full speed, very much frightened, towards the cabins at some distance from the house. I believe they think I am a Georgia man, which they all consider a kind of hobgoblin. They are almost all clad in a long coarse shirt that reaches below the knee, without any other garment : but one of the group, that we met on the morning I speak of, was oddly decked out in a pair of ragged trowsers, conspicuous for their ample dimensions in the seat. These had evidently belonged to some grown-up person, but were cut short in the legs to make them fit the wearer. A piece of twine across the shoulder of this grotesque imp, served for suspenders, and kept his habiliments from falling about his feet. Ned ordered this crew to prepare for a foot-race, and proposed a reward of a piece of money to the winner. They were to run from a given point, about a hundred paces distant, to the margin of the brook. Our whole suite of dogs were in attendance, and seemed to understand our pastime. At the word, away went the bevy, accompanied by every dog of the

pack, the negroes shouting and the dogs yelling in unison. The *shirts* ran with prodigious vehemence, their speed exposing their bare, black and meager shanks, to the scandal of all beholders; and the strange baboon in trowsers struggled close in their rear, with ludicrous earnestness, holding up his redundant and troublesome apparel with his hand. In a moment they reached the brook with unchecked speed; and, as the banks were muddy, and the dogs had become tangled with the racers in their path, the entire herd were precipitated, one over the other, into the water. This only increased their merriment, and they continued the contest in this new element, by floundering, kicking and splashing about, like a brood of ducks in their first descent upon a pool. These young negroes have wonderfully flat noses, and the most oddly disproportioned mouths, which were now opened to their full dimensions, so as to display their white teeth in striking contrast with their complexions. They are a strange pack of antic and careless animals, and furnish the liveliest picture that is to be found in nature, of that race of swart fairies which, in the old time, were supposed to play their pranks in the forest at moonlight. Ned stood by, enjoying this scene like an amateur; encouraging the negroes in their gambols, and hallooing to the dogs, that by a kindred instinct entered tumultuously into the sport, and kept up the confusion. It was difficult to decide the contest in favour of any of the actors. So the money was thrown into the air, and as it fell to the ground, there was another rush, in which the hero of the trowsers suc-

ceeded in getting the small coin from the ground in his teeth, but to the great prejudice of his finery.

Rip asserts a special pre-eminence over these young serfs, and has drilled them into a kind of local militia. He sometimes has them all marshalled in the yard, and entertains us with a review. They have an old watering-pot for a drum, and a dingy pocket-handkerchief for a standard, under which they are arrayed in military order. As they have no hats amongst them, Rip makes each stick a cock's feather in his wool; and in this guise they parade over the grounds with a riotous clamour, in which Rip's shrill voice, and the clink of the old watering-pot, may be heard at a great distance.

Besides these occupations, Hazard and myself frequently ride out during the morning; and we are apt to let our horses take their own way. This brings us into all the by-places of the neighbourhood, and makes me many acquaintances. Lucy and Victoline often accompany us, and I have occasion to admire their expert horsemanship. They have a brisk little pony that is a wonderful favourite with them; and, to hear them talk, you would suppose them versed in all the affairs of the stable.

With such amusements, we contrive to pass our mornings, not listlessly, but idly. This course of life has a winning quality that already begins to exercise its influence upon my habits. There is a fascination in the quiet, irresponsible and reckless nature of these country pursuits, that is apt to seize upon the imagination of a man who has felt the perplexities of business. Ever since I have been at Swallow Barn, I

have entertained a very philosophical longing for the calm and dignified retirement of the woods. I begin to grow moderate in my desires ; that is, I only want a thousand acres of good land, an old manor-house, on a pleasant site, a hundred negroes, a large library, a host of friends, and a reserve of a few thousands a year in the stocks,—in case of bad crops,—and, finally, a house full of pretty, intelligent and docile children, with some few *et ceteras* not worth mentioning.

I doubt not, after this, I shall be considered a man of few wants, and great resources, within myself.

CHAPTER IV.

A COUNTRY GATHERING.

THE day that followed our adventure in the Goblin Swamp, was one of more bustling pursuits than those described in the last chapter. It was distinguished by its active preparations for the dinner party at Swallow Barn.

Sometime before breakfast a servant waited at the front door for Hazard's orders: this was a negro boy, not quite full grown, who, without jacket or shoes, but tricked out in a hat with a yellow ribbon for a band, and set a little to one side on his head, was mounted, bare-backed, upon a tall, full-blooded horse, just ready to start, when Hazard came to instruct him in the purpose of his errand.

"Ganymede," said Ned, "you will go to the Court House, and give my compliments—"

"Yes, sir," said the messenger, with a joyful countenance.

—"To Mister Toll Hedges and the doctor, and tell them that we expect some friends here at dinner to-day."

"Yes, sir," shouted the negro, and striking his heels into his horse's sides at the same instant, plunged forward some paces.

"Come back," cried Ned; "you hair-brained fool, what are you going after?"

"To ax Mas Toll Hedges and the doctor to come here to dinner to-day," returned the impatient boy.

"Wait until you hear what I have to tell you," continued Ned. "Say to them that your Master Frank will be glad to see them; and that I wish them to bring any body along with them they choose."

"That's all!" exclaimed the negro again, and once more bounded off towards the high road.

"You black rascal!" cried Ned at the top of his voice, and laughing, "come back again. You are in a monstrous hurry. I wish you would show something of this activity when it is more wanting. Now, hear me out. Tell them, if they see the 'squire, to bring him along."

"Yes, sir."

"And as you pass by Mr. Braxton Beverly's, stop there, and ask him if he will favour us with his company. And if he cannot come himself, tell him to send us some of the family. Tell him to send them, at any rate. Let me see; is there any body else? If you meet any of the gentlemen about, give them my compliments, and tell them to come over."

"Yes, sir."

"Now can you remember it all?"

"Never fear me, Mas Ned," said the negro, with his low-country, broad pronunciation, that entirely discards the letter R.

"Then be off," cried Hazard, "and let me hear of no loitering on the road."

"That's me!" shouted Ganymede, in the same tone of excessive spirits that he evinced on his first ap-

pearance. "I'll be bound I make tracks!" and, saying this, the negro flourished his hand above his head, struck his heels again on the horse's ribs, hallooed with a wild scream, and shot forward like an arrow from a bow.

Soon after breakfast the visitors from the Brakes began to appear. First came Prudence Meriwether with Catharine, in Mr. Tracy's carriage. About an hour afterwards, Swansdown's glittering curricle arrived, bringing Bel Tracy under the convoy of the gentleman himself. After another interval, Harvey Riggs and Ralph followed on horseback. Mr. Tracy had not accompanied either of these parties; but Harvey brought an assurance from him that he would be punctual to the engagement.

A dinner party in the country is not that premeditated, anxious affair that it is in town. It has nothing of that long, awful interval between the arrival of the guests and the serving up of the dishes, when men look in each other's faces with empty stomachs, and utter inane common-places with an obvious air of insincerity, if not of actual suffering. On the contrary, it is understood to be a regular spending of the day, in which the guests assume all the privileges of inmates, sleep on the sofas, lounge through the halls, read the newspapers, stroll over the grounds, and, if pinched by appetite, stay their stomachs with bread and butter, and toddy made of choice old spirits.

There were several hours yet to be passed before dinner time. Our company, therefore, began to betake themselves to such occupations as best sorted with their idle humours. Harvey Riggs had already

communicated to me the incidents I have recorded of the interview between Prudence and Catharine, and our curiosity had been accordingly aroused to see in what way the two damsels intended to pursue the measures which both had voted necessary in their emergency. An occasion now occurred to put them in practice. Prudence was seated at the piano strumming a tune; Swansdown was in the courtyard, looking through the open window, with a flower in his hand regaling his nose, and listening to the strains, the syren strains, that fell from his fair enemy. Presently the piano ceased, the maiden turned carelessly towards the window. Swansdown put on a winning smile, said some unheard, gallant thing, and presented the nosegay to the lady. She smelt it, and sat down at that very window. This position brought her ear right opposite the gentleman's lips. It is pretty obvious what must follow, when a cavalier has such an advantage over even an angry dame. Soon Prudence was observed to smile; and, straightway, the conference became soft and low, accompanied with earnest, sentimental looks, and ever and anon relieved by a fluttering, short, ambiguous, and somewhat breathless laugh. It was plain, Prudence was enforcing her tactics. She was heaping coals of fire upon the head of the luckless swain. In truth, if she yet nursed her wrath, it seemed to have grown monstrous charitable. Perhaps she relented in her stern purpose, and gave way to the gentler emotions of pity, in the hope of converting the sinner. Perhaps she had tempered her censure of man's obliquities, by the spontaneous and irresistible overflow of

her own tenderness ; or, perhaps she had been altogether in a mistake. Whatever was the truth, her present purpose, motive and action certainly seemed to me marvellously inexplicable.

Whilst this private interview was going on, the members of the household passed freely along the hall. A drawing would show my reader how one might have looked thence into the parlour, and seen the position of the speakers ; and how from the little porch where Harvey and I were seated, we could discern Swansdown through a screen of rose bushes, as he stood with his head rather inside of the casement. But, for want of a good map or sketch of the premises, these things must be conceived. At length Catharine, who till now had been engaged with other cares, and who had, I presume, supposed that the war against the perfidious poet, philosopher, and future pillar of the state was to be one of extermination, came flaunting along the hall, carolling a gay tune, and wearing an outside of unaccustomed levity. When she arrived opposite the parlour door, the same phenomenon that had put us at fault seemed all at once to strike her. An emotion of surprise was visible upon her countenance. She passed, went back, looked into the parlour, hesitated, returned towards the front door, stood still a moment in a fit of abstraction, wheeled round, and finally entered the room with a face all smoothness and pleasure. Her plans were concerted during these motions. Her accost was playful, loud, and even unusually gracious ; and from that moment the trio fell into an easy, voluble and pleasant discourse, in which the

two ladies talked without intermission, and without listening to each other, for a good half hour.

"That's strange!" said Harvey, looking at me with a face full of wonder.

"You have misrepresented them, Harvey," said I.

"Not a jot; for Bel has had the whole detailed to her, not exactly in the words I have given you, but in substance, from each of them separately this morning. They have both, in turn, confided to her the conversation of last night; and, like a good secret-keeper, she has told it all to me,—knowing my anxiety in the matter,—but with a strict injunction that it was to go no further. And so I, in order that I may have a witness to my fidelity, have told it all to you, who of course will understand it as confidential, and not permit a word of it to escape your lips. There you have the whole pedigree of the secret, and you see that I am as close as a woman. In the detail, I have not in any degree impaired the excellence of the story, I assure you."

"Then the wind blows from another quarter to-day," said I.

"The thing is perfectly plain," said Harvey; "that solemn ass, Swansdown, has a greater hold on these women than they are willing to allow to each other. Prudence is not quite agreed to trust Kate; and Kate is half inclined to disbelieve every word that Prudence has told her. And both of them think it at least very probable that there is some mistake in the matter. So, for fear there might be a mistake, Pru has set about making a demonstration for herself; and Kate has taken the alarm from what

she has discovered, and is afraid that Pru, if let alone, will get the whip-hand of her. In this state of things, they have dissolved the alliance, and each one is coquetting on her own account. It is something like a panic against a bank, when the creditors are all dashing in to get the preference in the payment of their notes."

Swansdown was at last relieved from the spirited run that had been made upon his courtesy. The two ladies drew off to other engagements, and the disencumbered gentleman came round to the door where we were sitting. It happened that Rip, a few moments before, had been released from school, and had walked into the parlour where Prudence and Catharine were entertaining the poet; but, finding them earnestly occupied, had made a circuit round the room and out again without stopping, and then came and seated himself on the sill of the front door, where he remained when Swansdown joined our party. What had previously been occupying Rip's brain I know not, for he sat silent and abstracted; but at last, drawing up his naked heels on the floor, so as to bring his knees almost in contact with his chin, and embracing his legs with his arms, in such manner as to form a hoop round them with his fingers interlaced, he looked up at us with a face of some perplexity, as he broke out with the exclamation,—

"Dog them women! If they ar'nt too much!"

"Whom do you mean, Rip?" inquired Harvey.

"Aunt Pru and Catharine."

"What have they been doing? you seem to be in a bad humour."

“ Oh, dog 'em, I say ! they won't let Mr. Swansdown do any thing he wants : always tagging after him. (Swansdown was a great favourite of Rip's, principally on account of his horses.) I don't wonder he don't like to stay with them.”

“ What fault have you to find with the ladies, Rip ?” asked Swansdown, amused with the boy's manner. “ You are not angry with them on my account, I hope ?”

“ Yes, I am. They're always a talking about you. For my share, I think they must be in love with you.”

Here Harvey laughed aloud. “ What do they say of Mr. Swansdown, Rip ?”

“ You needn't laugh, Mr. Riggs,” said Rip. “ Hav'nt I heard them both talking about Mr. Swansdown ? Oh, oh ! I wouldn't like any body to talk about me so !”

“ I hope they said nothing ill of me, Rip ?” said Swansdown, a little confused.

“ I guess they didn't,” replied Rip. “ But you had better look out, else every body will say that you are going to get married to both of them. That would be queer, wouldn't it ?”

“ But you hav'nt told us what they said,” interrupted Harvey.

“ No matter, Rip, about that,” said Swansdown. “ We must not tell tales out of school, you know.”

“ Catch me !” replied Rip, “ I'm not going to tell.”

Saying these words, he jumped up and ran off to his sports, with his natural careless and irresponsible

manner, not dreaming that the slightest consequence could be attached to any thing he had uttered.

This simple incident had a sensible influence upon the conduct of Swansdown during the rest of the day. He had of late been haunted by an apprehension that he was almost ashamed to acknowledge, namely, that it was possible his civilities both to Prudence and Catharine might be overrated and misconstrued. They had both flattered his vanity, and allured him by that means into a somewhat intimate intercourse, although it was very far from kindling up a serious interest in his feelings. Still, this attention was agreeable to him; and once or twice the suspicion might have crossed his mind, that he was permitting matters to go too far; an indiscretion which he foresaw might produce some unpleasant consequences. It was in this state of doubt that he had left the ladies but a few moments since; and it was, therefore, with something of trepidation and alarm that he heard Rip's abrupt disclosure, made with the boyish recklessness I have described. Harvey Riggs saw this, and was inclined to make advantage of it; but Rip took the caution inculcated by Swansdown, and frustrated the object. The most amusing feature in the whole transaction was, that it brought about the very state of things, by the voluntary choice of Swansdown, that Prudence and Catharine, on their part, had resolved the night before to compel; but which their uncertain and distrustful policy to-day had countervailed. Swansdown came to the sudden determination to allay the false hopes he had raised, by assuming, for

the future, a more circumspect and reserved behaviour, and, as soon as the opportunity favoured, to decamp from the field of action, and make his way back to his native oaks, where, he hoped, his absence would in a short time—at least in as short a time as so sore a disease allowed—heal up the wounds his innocent and unwary perfections had inflicted upon the peace of two unquiet and unhappy virgins. Full of this sentiment, he suddenly became pensive, formal, punctilious, prosy and cold. Never did the thermometer fall more rapidly to zero.

Whilst these things were going on, our company continued to assemble. Two odd-looking figures arrived on horseback at the gate, followed by our trusty boy Ganymede, who had staid behind to accompany the guests he had been sent to invite. The older of the two was the doctor, a fat, short-winded gentleman, dressed, notwithstanding the heat of the season, all in woollen cloth. Behind his saddle he carried a small valise, such as gentlemen of his profession use in the country for the conveyance of drugs and medicines. The other was our old friend Taliaferro Hedges, considerably improved in attire, but with his pantaloons—some white cotton fabric—rubbed up, by the action of his horse, almost to his knees. He wore his broad, shapeless and tattered straw hat, that flapped over his eyes with a supreme air of waggishness; and as he dismounted at the gate, he deliberately disburdened his mouth of a quid of tobacco, and walked up to the door. It was now past one o'clock; and as it is usual in this part

of Virginia to follow up the introduction of a guest at this hour of the day with an invitation to take some of the toddy, our new comers were ushered into a back room, where an immense bowl had been prepared by Ned Hazard, who was there present with Meriwether and Mr. Wart to administer it.

In the midst of the jest, clamour and laughter of the convocation that were now assembled, admiring and doing homage to the icy and well flavoured bowl, other visitors were introduced, amongst the rest Mr. Braxton Beverly, an extensive breeder of sheep and blooded horses. He was a tall, thin, talkative gentleman, who had an authoritative way of besieging the person he addressed, and laying down the heads of his discourse by striking the fingers of his right hand upon the palm of his left, and shaking his head somewhat as I have seen a bullying school-boy when he was going to fight. Mr. Chub formed a part of this group, but stood rather in the background, with his hands tucked under the skirts of his coat, so as to throw them out like the tail of a bantam cock, whilst he erected his figure even beyond the perpendicular line. For a time, this was a busy and a gay scene, characterized by the exhibition of that good-humoured and natural freedom from the constraint of forms, that constitutes, in my view of it, one of the most unequivocal features of a genuine hospitality. The tumult gradually subsided, as the several personages in the room retreated towards the hall; and it was not long before the whole party seemed to be entirely domesticated, and had separated into as many fragments as whim or

chance produced. Some sauntered towards the bridge, and thence to the stable; some sat in the shade of the porch, and discussed the topics that interested the country; and others wandered as far as the schoolhouse, whence might be heard an occasional obstreperous laugh, the sudden consequence of some well told story.

As the dinner hour drew nigh, our scattered forces were fast concentrating upon one point. The ladies had assembled in the drawing room; and there were many signs that could not be mistaken, that the hour dedicated to the imperious calls of appetite was near at hand. Still, Mr. Tracy had not yet appeared. Divers speculations were set on foot as to the cause of his absence. Perhaps he had forgotten his engagement; but that was not probable, considering how careful he was known to be in all such matters; and especially after the interest he had expressed to relieve Meriwether from the sense of mortification which he supposed his friend felt in his defeat. He could not have lost his way; nor could he have mistaken the hour. A general anxiety, at length, began to prevail on the subject. Meriwether was particularly desirous to meet his neighbour at this moment of pacification; and the rest of the party were curious to note the old gentleman's behaviour at so critical a juncture.

The dinner hour had now come, and every one was still on the lookout for our ancient guest. Most of the gentlemen were congregated about the door, watching every object that came in sight upon the road leading to the gateway. At last, slowly emerg-

ing from behind a clump of trees, at some distance off, where the road first occurred to view, was seen the venerable veteran himself. He had dismounted from his horse, and, unattended by any servant, was walking, at a leisure pace, with his arms behind his back, the bridle dangling from one hand, and his horse dodging along after him, as slow as foot could fall. Both the steed and the rider looked patiently and pensively upon the ground. A long interval elapsed before they reached the gate. The worthy gentleman, all unconscious of the lateness of the hour, or of his proximity to his point of destination, and the impatient crowd that were gazing at him, advanced in deep thought. The exterminated lawsuit disturbed him. He thought sorrowfully over the extinguished controversy. A favourite fancy had been annihilated, untimely cropped, as a flower of the field. He could not realize the idea. The privation had left him no substitute. All this was plainly read in his movements: he would travel forward a few paces; then stop; raise his head; by a careful, circuitous motion of his hand, he would take his handkerchief out of his pocket, pause and adjust it in his grasp, then, stooping forward, apply it to his nose, and return it, with the same deliberation, to its place of deposit. This operation was several times repeated, and accompanied with looks of bewildered abstraction. Poor gentleman! He had parted with a friend when he gave up his suit. He arrived, at length, at the gate, where he was met by Meriwether, and almost by the whole company. It was a surprise to him to find himself so near; and, imme-

diately dismissing the meditative air that had rendered his march so tardy and perplexed, he put on his accustomed demeanor of studied and sprightly civility, and replied to the numerous greetings with an alacrity that astonished every one.

"I fear I have kept you waiting, my friend," said he to Meriwether; "that, you know, is not my way; but, body-o'-me! I had like to have made a slip; my timepiece is to blame. We old fellows," he continued, looking at his watch, "hav'nt so much of this commodity to lose either, Mr. Meriwether, ha, ha! Time does not spare such an old curmudgeon as I: he has handled me pretty well already."

"Papa, what made you stay so long?" asked Bel. "We have been waiting for you until I began to be alarmed lest something had happened to you."

"My dear," replied the father, "I thought I would just ride round by the Apple-pie to take a look at the grounds; and I believe I staid there rather too long."

"And what had you to look at there, all by yourself, I should like to know?"

"Nothing, my dear; but we must not talk of the Apple-pie,—not a word! That subject is to be buried for ever. It is done, I assure you, my dear, it is done."

With these words, the old gentleman entered the hall and mingled with the crowd.

CHAPTER V.

THE DINNER TABLE.

ABOUT half after three, Carey, with a solemn official air that was well set off by a singularly stiff costume,—assuming for the nonce the rank and station of head-waiter,—announced that dinner was on the table. The greater part of the company was collected in the drawing-room ; some two or three loitered through the hall. At the summons, Mr. Tracy, with that alacrious motion that sometimes belongs to old men, sprang upon his feet and hastened to the opposite side of the room, where my cousin Lucretia was seated, took her hand, and, with a repetition of formal bows after a fashion in vogue in the last century, led her to the dining-room. Meriwether stood at the door beckoning to one after another of his guests, with that kind smile and unstudied grace that are natural to a benevolent temper ; his tall figure somewhat constrained in its motion by an infusion of modesty, which is always discernible in him when placed in any conspicuous position. As soon as Mr. Tracy led the way, Swansdown, with some particularity, offered his arm to Bel : the other ladies found an escort among the more gallant of the gentlemen ; and after them the rest of the party pressed forward pell-mell towards the dining-room, leaving Meriwether to bring up the rear, who, upon arriving

at the table, with that considerateness that never forsakes him in the smallest matters, placed Mr. Wart, Mr. Chub, and one or two of his elder guests near his own seat.

I must not forget to mention, that before we had taken our chairs, Mistress Winkle, decked out in all the pomp of silk and muslin, sailed, as it were, with muffled oars into the room from a side door; and, with a prim and stealthy motion, deposited her time-worn person near to my cousin Lucretia. It is a custom of affectionate courtesy in the family, to accord to this venerable relic of the past generation the civility of a place at table. Mr. Tracy was aware of Meriwether's feelings towards the aged dame; and, prompted by his overflowing zeal on the present occasion to manifest his deference to his host, he no sooner observed her than he broke out into a jocose and gallant recognition:—

“Mistress Winkle! what, my old friend! It rejoices me to see you looking so well—and so youthful! The world goes merrily with you. Gad's-my life! if Colonel Tarleton were only alive again to make another visit to the James River, it would be hard to persuade him that time had gained so small a victory over the romping girl that he had the impertinence to chuckle under the chin so boldly. A saucy and stark trooper he was in those days, Mistress Winkle! But the gout, the gout, I warrant, did his business for him long ago! Ha, ha! You hav'nt forgot old times, Mistress Winkle, although they have well nigh forgotten you.”

The housekeeper, during this outbreak, courtesied,

hemmed and smiled ; and, with much confusion, rustled her silken folds in her chair, with somewhat of the motion of a motherly hen in the process of incubation. Mr. Tracy had touched upon an incident that, for nearly half a century, had been a theme that warmed up all her self-complacency, and which owed its origin to one of the English partisan's forays upon the river side, during the Revolution, in which he was said to have made himself very much at home at Swallow Barn, and to have bestowed some complimentary notice upon the then buxom and blooming dependant of the family.

The table was furnished with a profusion of the delicacies afforded by the country ; and, notwithstanding it was much more ample than the accommodation of the guests required, it seemed to be stored rather with a reference to its own dimensions than to the number or wants of those who were collected around it. At the head, immediately under the eye of our hostess, in the customary pride of place, was deposited a goodly ham of bacon, rich in its own perfections, as well as in the endemic honours that belong to it in the Old Dominion. According to a usage worthy of imitation, it was clothed in its own dark skin, which the imaginative mistress of the kitchen had embellished by carving into some fanciful figures. The opposite end of the table smoked with a huge roasted saddle of mutton, that seemed, from its trim and spruce air, ready to gallop off the dish. Between these two extremes was scattered an enticing diversity of poultry, prepared with many savoury adjuncts, and especially that topical luxury, which yet

so slowly finds its way northward,—fried chickens,—sworn brother to the ham, and old Virginia's standard dish. The intervening spaces displayed a profusion of the products of the garden ; nor were oysters and crabs wanting where room allowed ; and, where nothing else could be deposited, as if scrupulous of showing a bare spot of the table-cloth, the bountiful forethought of Mistress Winkle had provided a choice selection of pickles of every colour and kind. From the whole array of the board it was obvious, that abundance and variety were deemed no less essential to the entertainment, than the excellence of the viands.

A bevy of domestics, in every stage of training, attended upon the table, presenting a lively type of the progress of civilization, or the march of intellect ; the veteran waitingman being well contrasted with the rude half-monkey, half-boy that seemed to have been for the first time admitted to the parlour ; whilst, between these two, were exhibited the successive degrees that mark the advance from the young savage to the sedate and sophisticated image of the old-fashioned negro nobility. It was equal to a gallery of caricatures, a sort of scenic satire upon man in his various stages, with his odd imitativeness illustrated in the broadest lines. Each had added some article of coxcombry to his dress ; a pewter buckle fastened to the shirt for a breast-pin ; a dingy parti-coloured riband, ostentatiously displayed across the breast, with one end lodged in the waistcoat pocket ; or a preposterous cravat girding up an exorbitantly starched shirt collar, that rivalled the driven

snow, as it traversed cheeks as black as midnight, and fretted the lower cartilage of a pair of refractory, raven-hued ears. One, more conceited than the rest, had platted his wool (after a fashion common amongst the negroes,) into five or six short cues both before and behind; whilst the visages of the whole group wore that grave, momentous elongation that is peculiar to the African face, and which is eminently adapted to express the official care and personal importance of the wearer.

As the more immediate, and what is universally conceded to be the more important, business of the dinner was discussed, to wit, the process of dulling the edge of appetite, the merriment of the company rose in proportion to the leisure afforded to its exercise; and the elder portion of the guests gently slid into the vivacity of the younger. Mr. Tracy did not lose for an instant that antiquated cavalier air which he had assumed on entering the room. As Harvey Riggs expressed it, "he was painfully polite and very precisely gay." The ladies, for a time, gave their tone to the table; and, under this influence, we found ourselves falling into detached circles, where each pursued its separate theme, sometimes in loud and rapid converse, mingled with frequent bursts of laughter that spread an undistinguishable din through the room; and sometimes in low and confidential murmurings, of which it was impossible to say whether they were grave or gay. Swansdown's voice was poured into Bel's ear in gentle and unremitting whispers, of which Ned Hazard alone, of all the guests—to judge by his intense and abstracted

gaze—was able to unriddle the import. Prudence, equally abstracted, was unnaturally merry, and laughed much more than was necessary at Harvey's jokes. Catharine talked with singular sagacity, and listened, with still more singular earnestness, to Mr. Beverley, who was instructing her, with equal interest and eloquence, upon the wholesome effects he had found in the abundant use of flannel—which he described with unnecessary amplitude of details—in repelling the assaults of an ancient enemy, the rheumatism. Now and then a loud and rather obstreperous laugh, not altogether suited to the region he inhabited, and which some such consciousness seemed abruptly to arrest, was set up by Taliaferro Hedges. This worthy had already begun to occupy that questionable ground which a gentleman of loose habits and decaying reputation is pretty sure to arrive at in his descending career. Dissipation had lowered him somewhat in the world, and had already introduced him to a class of associates who had made a visible impression on his manners, a circumstance that very few men have so little shrewdness as not to perceive, nor so much hardihood as not to be ashamed of. In truth, Toll had imbibed some of the slang, and much of the boisterousness of the bar-room; but he had not yet given such unequivocal indications of the incurableness of his infirmity, as to induce his acquaintances (who for the most part upheld him on some family consideration) to exclude him from their houses; on the contrary, a certain strain of disorderly but generous companionship, breaking out and shining above

the vices to which it was akin, still recommended him to the favour of those who were unwilling to desert him as long as his case was not absolutely hopeless. The course of intemperance, however, gravitates by a fatal law downwards: it is unfortunately of the most rare occurrence, that the mind which has once been debauched by a habit of intoxication, ever regains that poise of self-respect which alone preserves the purity of the individual. It was easy to perceive that Hedges laboured under a perpetual struggle to constrain his deportment within even the broader boundaries that limit the indulgence of the class of gentlemen.

Amidst these diversified exhibitions, Mr. Wart ate like a man with a good appetite, and gave himself no trouble to talk, except in the intervals of serving his plate; for he remarked, "that he was not accustomed to these late hours, and thought them apt to make one surcharge his stomach;" whilst the parson, who sate opposite to him, wore a perpetual smile during the repast; sometimes looking as if he intended to say something, but more generally watching every word that fell from Mr. Wart's lips.

The courses disappeared; a rich dessert came and went: the spirits of the company rose still higher. The wine, iced almost to the freezing point, moved in a busy sphere; for the intense heat of the weather gave it an additional zest. We had made the usual libations to the ladies, and exchanged the frequent healths, according to the hackneyed and unmeaning custom that prevails unquestioned, I suppose, over Christendom, when the epoch arrived at

which, by the arbitrary law of the feast, the woman-kind are expected to withdraw ; that time which, if I were a sovereign in this dinner-party realm, should be blotted from the festive calendar. I should shame me to acknowledge that there was any moment in the social day when it was unseemly for the temperate sex to look upon or listen to the lord of creation in his pastimes ; but I was neither monarch nor magician, and so we were left alone to pursue unproved the frolic current upon which we had been lifted. Before us glittered the dark sea of the table, studded over with "carracks," "argosies," and "barks" freighted with the wealth of the Azores, Spain, Portugal and France ; and with the lighters by which these precious bulks were unladen, and deposited in their proper receptacles. In sooth, the wine was very good.

Almost the first words that were spoken, after we had readjusted ourselves from the stir occasioned by the retreat of the ladies, came from Mr. Tracy. He had been waiting for a suitable opportunity to acquit himself of a grave and formal duty. The occasion of the dinner, he conceived, demanded of him a peculiar compliment to the host. His strict and refined sensitiveness to the requirements of gentle breeding would have forbidden him to sleep quietly in his bed with this task unperformed ; and therefore, with a tremulous and fluttered motion, like that of a young orator awe-struck at the thought of making a speech, he rose to command the attention of the table. A faint-hearted smile sat rigidly upon his visage, "like moonlight on a marble statue,"—his eye glassy, his

cheek pale, and his gesture contrived to a faint and feeble counterfeit of mirth. It was evident the old gentleman was not accustomed to public speaking : and so he remarked, as he turned towards Meriwether, and continued an address somewhat in the following terms:—

“ Since we have, my dear sir, so fortunately succeeded in putting an end to a vexatious question,—which, although it has resulted in throwing upon my hands a few barren and unprofitable acres, has given all the glory of the settlement to you ;—(here his voice quavered considerably,) for it was indubitably, my very worthy and excellent friend, at your instance and suggestion, that we struck out the happy thought of leaving it to the arbitrement of our kind friends :—and to tell the truth, (at this point the old gentleman brightened up a little and looked jocular, although he still had the quaver,) I don't know but I would as lief have the lawsuit as the land,—seeing that it has been the occasion of many merry meetings:—I will take upon myself to propose to this good company of neighbours and friends, that we shall drink,—ha ha ! (continued the veteran, waving his hand above his head, and inclining towards the table with a gay gesticulation,) that we shall drink, gentlemen, a bumper ; (here he took the decanter in his hand, and filled his glass.) “ Fill your glasses all around,—no finching !”

“ Fill up ! fill up !” cried every one, anxious to help the old gentleman out of his difficulties, “ Mr. Tracy's toast in a bumper !”

“ Here,” continued Mr. Tracy, holding his glass

on high with a trembling hand, "here is to our admirable host, Mister Francis Meriwether of Swallow Barn!—a sensible and enlightened gentleman,—a considerate landlord,—a kind neighbour, an independent, upright, sensible,—enlightened—(here he became sadly puzzled for a word, and paused for a full half minute,) reasonable defender of right and justice; a man that is not headstrong (his perplexity still increasing) on the score of landmarks, or indeed on any score!—I say, gentlemen, here's wishing him success in all his aims, and long life to enjoy a great many such joyous meetings as the present; besides —"

"Health of our host, and many such meetings!" exclaimed Mr. Wart, interrupting the speaker, and thus cutting short a toast of which it was evident Mr. Tracy could not find the end.

"Health to our host,—joyous meetings!" cried out half a dozen voices.

And thus relieved from his floundering progress, the old gentleman took his seat in great glee, remarking to the person next to him, "that he was not much practised in making dinner speeches, but that he could get through very well when he was once pushed to it."

Meriwether sat out this adulatory and unexpected assault with painful emotions, sinking under the weight of his natural diffidence. The rest of the company awaited in silence the slow, drawling and distinct elocution of the speaker, with an amused and ludicrous suspense, until Mr. Wart's interruption, which was the signal for a shout of approbation;

and in the uproar that ensued, the wine was quaffed ; while Mr. Tracy chuckled at the eminent success of his essay, and Meriwether stood bowing and blushing with the bashfulness of a girl.

When the clamour subsided, Philly Wart remarked in a quiet tone,—

“ I think our friend Meriwether will scarcely escape a speech in reply to this compliment. The fashion is to return the broadside whenever it is given.”

“ I pray you,” said Meriwether, with an emotion amounting almost to alarm, “ do not ask me to say any thing. I have an insuperable aversion to such efforts: my nerves will not stand it. Mr. Tracy knows how kindly I take the expression of his regard.”

Harvey Riggs, who observed Meriwether's real embarrassment, rose to divert the attention of the company to another quarter ; and putting on an air of great solemnity, observed that he was unwilling to lose so favourable an opportunity of paying a tribute to two very worthy, and on the present occasion he might say, conspicuous persons ; “ I mean, gentlemen,” said he, “ Mr. Philpot Wart and Mr. Singleton Oglethorpe Swansdown. Replenish, gentlemen ! Here's to the health of the pacificators ! the men whose judgments could not be led astray by the decisions of courts, and whose energies could not be subdued by the formidable difficulties of the Applepie !”

“ Bravo !” rang from every mouth.

“ A speech from Mr. Swansdown !” exclaimed Ned Hazard.

“ A speech from Mr. Swansdown !” echoed from all quarters.

The gentleman called on rose from his chair. Harvey Riggs rapped upon the table to command silence ; there followed a pause.

“ I do not rise to make a speech,” said Swansdown with great formality of manner.

“ Hear him !” shouted Harvey.

“ I do not rise, gentlemen,” said the other, “ to make a speech ; but custom, in these innovating times, almost imperatively exacts that the festive, spontaneous and unmerited encomiums of the table,— that, I remark, the festive, spontaneous and unmerited encomiums of the table, generated in the heat of convivial zeal, should meet their response in the same hilarious spirit in which they find their origin. Gentlemen will understand me ; it is not my purpose to rebuke a custom which may, and doubtless does, contribute to the embellishment of the social relations. It is merely my purpose, on the present occasion, as an humble, and, if I know myself, an unpretending individual, to respond to the free and unbidden expressions of the good-will of this company to myself, and my distinguished colleague, with whom my name has been associated. In his name therefore, and in my own, I desire to acknowledge the deep sense we entertain of the compliment conveyed in the toast of our worthy fellow-guest. (Philly Wart bowed and smiled.) It will be amongst the proudest topics of remembrance left to me, gentlemen, amidst the vicissitudes of a changeful life, that the personal sacrifices I have made and the

toil I have bestowed, in the successful endeavour to define and establish the complex relations and rights of two estimable friends, have found a favourable and flattering approval in the good sense of this enlightened company. If it should further result, that the great principles developed, and, to a certain extent, promulgated in this endeavour, should hereafter redound to the advantage of the generation amongst which I have the honour to live, I need not say how sincerely I shall rejoice that neither my friend nor myself have lived in vain. I propose, gentlemen, in return,—“The freeholders of the Old Dominion; the prosperity of the Commonwealth reposes securely upon their intelligence!”

“Amen!” said Hazard in an under tone, intended only for my ear, “and may they never fail to do honour to *unpretending* merit!”

“I suppose,” said Mr. Wart, speaking in an unusually placid tone, as he rose with a face reefed into half its ordinary length with smiles, and, at the same time, expressing arch waggery, “I suppose it is necessary that I also should speak to this point. There are, if your honour pleases—Mr. President—ordinarily two different motives for proposing the health of an individual at table. The one is a *bonâ fide* purpose to exalt and honour the person proposed, by a public manifestation of the common feeling toward him, by reason of some certain act or deed by him performed, entitling him, in the estimation of the persons proposing, to applause. In this point of view, my worthy friend who has just spoken, seems to have considered the case in hand. The second

motive for the act, may it please you,—Mr. Meriwether,—may be, and such I take it, a certain intent, *inter alia*, to promote and encourage cheerful companionship. With whatever gravity the *res gesta* may be conducted, I hold that it is to be looked upon *diverso intuitu*, according to the temper and condition of the company for the time being.

Now, sir, I will not venture to say that my learned friend has not wisely considered the toast in the present instance, as intended and made in all gravity of purpose; but, seeing that this company did certainly manifest some levity on the occasion, I choose, sir, to stand on the sunny side of the question, as the safest, in the present emergency. *Vere sapit*, sir, *qui alieno periculo sapit*: I, therefore, sir, go for the joke. I have sometimes seen an old hound tongue upon a false scent; but then there is music made, and, I believe, that is pretty much all that is wanting on the present occasion.

“When a man is praised to his face, gentlemen of the jury,” he continued, rising into an energetic key, and mistaking the tribunal he was addressing,—“I beg pardon, gentlemen, you see the ermine and the woolsack will stick to my tongue: *Omnibus hoc vitium cantoribus*, as an ancient author (I forget his name) very appropriately remarks. What is bred in the bone,—you know the proverb. But when a man is praised to his face,”—here the speaker stretched out his arm, and stood silent for a moment, as if endeavouring to recollect what he intended to say,—for he had lost the thread of his speech,—and during this pause his countenance grew so irresisti-

bly comic that the whole company, who had from the first been collecting a storm of laughter, now broke out with concentrated violence.

“ Poh, Ned Hazard! you put every thing I had to say out of my head with that horse-laugh,” continued the orator, looking at Ned, who had thrown himself back in his chair, giving full vent to his merriment.

Philly patiently awaited the blowing over of this whirlwind, with an increased drollery of look; and then, as it subsided, he made a bow with his glass in his hand, saying, in an emphatic way, “ your healths, gentlemen!” swallowed his wine, and took his seat, amidst renewed peals of mirth. At the same moment, from the depths of this tumult, was distinctly heard the voice of Mr. Chub, who cried out, with his eyes brimful of tears, and a half suffocated voice,—“ A prodigious queer man, that Mister Philly Wart !”

Segars were now introduced, the decanters were filled for the second time, and the flush of social enjoyment reddened into a deeper hue. Some one or two additional guests had just arrived, and taken their seats at the table, a full octave lower in tone than their excited comrades of the board: it was like the mingling of a few flats too many in a lively overture; but the custom of the soil sanctions and invites these irregularities, and it was not long before this rear-guard hastened on to the van. The scene presented a fine picture of careless, unmethodized and unenthralled hospitality, where the guests enjoyed themselves according to their varying impulses, whether in grave argumentation or toppling merriment. Now and then, a song,—none of the best in execution,—

was sung, and after that a boisterous catch was trolled, with some decisive thumpings on the table, by way of marking time, in which it might be perceived that even old Mr. Tracy was infected with the prevailing glee, for his eyes sparkled, and his head shook to the music, and his fist was brandished with a downward swing, almost in the style of a professed royster. In the intervals of the singing a story was told. Sometimes the conversation almost sank into a murmur; sometimes it mounted to a gale, its billow rolling in with a deep-toned, heavy, swelling roar, until it was spent in a general explosion. Not unfrequently, a collapse of the din would surprise some single speaker in the high road of his narrative, and thus detect him recounting, in an upper key, some incident which he had perhaps addressed to one auditor, and which, not a little to his disconcertment, he would find himself compelled to communicate to the whole circle. It was in such an interval as this, that Hedges was left struggling through the following colloquy with Ralph Tracy:—

“ I made a narrow escape.”

“ How was that?” asked Ralph.

“ Oh, a very serious accident, I assure you! I came within an ace of getting yoked that trip; married, sir, by all that’s lovely!”

“ No!” exclaimed Ralph, “ you did’nt, sure enough Toll?”

“ If I didn’t,” replied Toll, “ I wish I may be — (here he slipped out a round, full and expressive malediction.) I’ll tell you how it was. Up at the Sweet Springs I got acquainted with a preposterous-

ly rich old sugar planter from Louisiana. He had his wife and daughter with him, and a whole squad of servants. Forty thousand dollars a year! and the daughter as frenchified as a sunflower: not so particularly young neither, but looking as innocent as if she wa'nt worth one copper. I went for grace, and began to show out a few of my ineffable pulchritudes,—and what do you think?—she was most horribly struck. I put her into an ecstasy with one of my pigeon-wings. She wanted to find out my name."

"Well, and what came of it?"

"*Thar* were only three things," said Toll, "in the way. If it had not been for them, I should have been planting sugar this day. First, the old one didn't take to it very kindly; and then, the mother began to rear a little at me too; but I shouldn't have considered that of much account, only the daughter herself seemed as much as to insinuate that the thing wouldn't do."

"Did you carry it so far as to put the question to her?"

"Not exactly so far as that. No, no, I was not such a fool as to come to the *ore tenus*; I went on the non-committal principle. She as much as signified to a friend of mine, that she didn't wish to make my acquaintance: and so, I took the hint and was off:—wa'nt that close grazing, Ralph?"

This concluding interrogatory was followed up by one of Toll's loud cachinnations, that might have been heard a hundred paces from the house, and which was, as usual, chopped short by his perceiving that it did not take effect so decidedly as he expect-

ed upon the company. Upon this, Hedges became rather silent for the next half hour.

The dining-room had for some time past been gradually assuming that soft, mellow, foggy tint which is said by the painters to spread such a charm over an Indian-summer landscape. The volumes of smoke rolled majestically across the table, and then rose into the upper air, where they spread themselves out into a rich, dun mass that flung a certain hazy witchery over the scene. The busy riot of revelry seemed to echo through another Cimmerium, and the figures of the guests were clad in even a spectral obscurity. Motionless, exact and sombre as an Egyptian obelisk, old Carey's form was dimly seen relieved against the light of a window, near one end of the table; all the other domestics had fled, and the veteran body-guard alone remained on duty. The wine went round with the regularity of a city milk-cart, stopping at every door. A mine of wit was continually pouring out its recondite treasures: the guests were every moment growing less fastidious; and the banquet had already reached that stage when second-rate wit is as good as the best, if not better. The good humour of our friend Wart had attracted the waggery of Riggs and Hazard, and they were artfully soliciting and provoking him to a more conspicuous part in the farce of the evening. Like Munchausen's frozen horn, the counsellor was rapidly melting into a noisy temperature. He had volunteered some two or three stories, of which he seemed, some how or other, to have lost the pith. In short, it was supposed, from some droll expression

of the eye, and a slight faltering of the tongue, that Mr. Wart was growing gay.

Harvey Riggs, when matters were precisely in this condition, contrived, by signs and secret messages, to concentrate the attention of the company upon the old lawyer, just as he was setting out with the history of a famous campaign.

"You all remember the late war," said Philly, looking around, and finding the eyes of every one upon him.

This announcement was followed by a laugh of applause, indicating the interest that all took in the commencement of the narrative.

"There is certainly nothing particularly calculated to excite your risible faculties in that!" said he, as much amused as his auditory.—"I was honoured by his Excellency the Governor of Virginia with a commission as captain of a troop of horse, having been previously elected to that station by a unanimous vote at a meeting of the corps."

"Explain the name of the troop," said Ned Hazard.

"The Invincible Blues," replied the other; "the uniform being a blue bobtail, and the corps having resolved that they would never be vanquished."

"I am told," interrupted Harvey Riggs, "that you furnished yourself with a new pair of yellow buckskin small-clothes on the occasion; and that with them and your blue bobtail you produced a sensation through the whole country."

"Faith!" said Mr. Chub, speaking across the table, "Mr. Riggs, I can assure you I don't think a

horseman well mounted without leather small-clothes."

"I took prodigious pains," continued Philly, not heeding the interruption, "to infuse into my men the highest military discipline. There wasn't a man in the corps that couldn't carry his nag over any worm fence in the county,—throwing off the rider—"

"The rider of the fence, you mean," said Hazard, drily.

"To be sure I do!" replied Philly, with briskness, "you don't suppose I meant to say that my men were *ex equis dejecti*—exehipped, if I may be allowed to coin a word? No, sir, while the horse kept his legs, every man was like a horse-fly."

"What system of discipline did you introduce?" inquired Harvey.

"The system of foxhunting," answered Mr. Wart; "the very best that ever was used for cavalry."

"Go on," said Harvey.

"We received intelligence, somewhere in the summer of eighteen hundred and thirteen, that old Admiral Warren was beginning to squint somewhat awfully at Norfolk, and rather taking liberties in Hampton Roads. *Ratione cujus*, as we lawyers say, it was thought prudent to call into immediate service some of the most efficient of the military force of the country; and, accordingly, up came an order addressed to me, commanding me to repair with my men, as speedily as possible, to the neighbourhood of Craney Island. This summons operated like an electric shock. It was the first real flavour of gun-

powder that the troop had ever snuffed. I never saw men behave better. It became my duty to take instant measures to meet the emergency. In the first place, I ordered a meeting of the troop at the Court House;—for I was resolved to do things coolly.”

“You are mistaken, Mr. Wart,” said Harvey, “in the order of your movements; the first thing that you did was to put on your new buckskin breeches.”

“Nonsense!” said the counsellor; “I called the meeting at the Court House, directing every man to be there in full equipment.”

“And you sent forthwith to Richmond,” interrupted Hazard, “for a white plume three feet long.”

“Now, gentlemen!” said Philly, imploringly, “one at a time! if you wish to hear me out, let me go on. Well, sir, the men met in complete order. Harry Davenport, (you remember him, Mr. Meriwether, a devil-may-care sort of a fellow, a perfect walking nuisance in time of peace, an indictable offence going at large!) he was my orderly, and the very best, I suppose, in Virginia. I furnished Harry (it was entirely a thought of my own) with a halbert, the shaft twelve feet long, and pointed with a foot of polished iron. As soon as I put this into his hands, the fellow set up one of his horse-laughs, and galloped about the square like a wild Cossack.”

“I should think,” said Meriwether, “that one of our countrymen would scarcely know what to do with a pole twelve feet long, after he had got into his saddle: however, I take it for granted you had good reason for what you did.”

"The Polish lancers," replied Philly, "produced a terrible impression with a weapon somewhat similar."

"No matter," said Ned, "about the Polish lancers; let us get upon our campaign."

"Well," continued Mr. Wart, "I thought it would not be amiss, before we started, to animate and encourage my fellows with a speech. So, I drew them up in a hollow square, and gave them a flourish that set them half crazy."

"That was just the way with Tyrtæus before Ithome!" exclaimed Mr. Chub, with great exultation, from the opposite side of the table. "I should like to have heard Mr. Wart exhorting his men!"

"I will tell you exactly what he said, for I was there at the time," said Ned Hazard; "Follow me, my brave boys! the eyes of the world are upon you; keep yours upon my white plume, and let that be your rallying point!"

"Pish!" cried Philly, turning round and showing his black teeth with a good-natured, half-tipsy grin, "I said no such thing. I told them, what it was my duty to tell them, that we had joined issue with the British Government, and had come to the *ultima ratio*; and that we must now make up our minds to die on the field of our country's honour, rather than see her soil polluted with the footsteps of an invader; that an enemy was at our door, threatening our firesides."

"You told them," interrupted Hazard again, "that the next morning's sun might find them stark and stiff and gory, on the dew-besprinkled sod. I can

remember those expressions as well as if it were yesterday."

"I might have said something like that," replied Philly, "by way of encouragement to the men. However, this you recollect well enough, Ned, that there was not a man in the corps whose mind was not as perfectly made up to die as to eat his dinner."

"All, except old Shakebag the tavernkeeper," said Ned, "and he was short-winded and pousy, and might be excused for preferring his dinner."

"I except him," replied Mr. Wart, and then proceeded with his narrative. "As soon as I had finished my address, I dissolved the square, and instantly took up the line of march."

"You should say rather that you took up the charge," said Ned, "for you went out of the village in line, at full speed, with swords brandishing above your heads. You led the way, with Harry Davenport close at your heels, thrusting his long lance right at the seat of your yellow buckskins, and shouting like a savage."

"What was that for?" I asked with some astonishment.

"Ned puts a colouring on it," replied the counsellor; "I did go out from the court house at a charge, but there was no brandishing of swords; we carry our swords, Mr. Littleton, in the charge, at arm's length, the blade being extended horizontally exactly parallel with the line of the eyes. I did this to give the men courage."

"How near was the enemy at this time?" I inquired.

"They had not landed," answered Ned gravely, "but were expected to land at Craney Island, about one hundred miles off."

Here was a shout of applause from the table.

"I can tell you what," said Mr. Wart, for he was too much flustered to take any thing in joke that passed, "there is no time so important in a campaign as when an army first breaks ground. If you can keep your men in heart at the starting point, you may make them do what you please afterwards."

"That's true!" said Mr. Chub, who had evinced great interest in Philly's narrative from the beginning, and was even more impervious than the lawyer himself to the waggery of the table. "Cyrus would never have persuaded the Greeks to march with him to Babylon, if he had not made them believe that they were going only against the Pisidians. Such stratagems are considered lawful in war. It was a masterly thing in my opinion, this device of Mr. Wart's."

"Had you severe service?" asked Meriwether.

"Tolerably severe," replied Philly, "while it lasted. It rained upon us nearly the whole way from here to Norfolk, and there was a good deal of ague and fever in the country at that time, which we ran great risk of taking, because we were obliged to keep up a guard night and day."

"You had an engagement I think I have heard?" said I.

"Pretty nearly the same thing," answered Mr. Wart. "The enemy never landed whilst I remained, except, I believe, to get some pigs and fowls on Craney Island: but we had frequent alarms, and several times were drawn up in line of battle, which is more trying to men, Mr. Littleton, than actual fighting. It gave me a good opportunity to see what my fellows were made of. Harry Davenport was a perfect powder-magazine. The rascal wanted us one night to swim our horses over to the Island. Gad, I believe he would have gone by himself if I hadn't forbidden him!"

"Your campaign lasted some time?" said I.

"About a week," replied Philly. "No, I am mistaken, it was rather more, for it took us three days to return home: And such a set of madcaps as we had all the way back to the court house! Nothing but scrub races the whole distance!"

"Now," said Harvey Riggs, looking at Mr. Wart with a face of sly raillery, "now that you have got through this celebrated campaign, tell us how many men you had."

"Seven rank and file," said Ned, answering for him.

"Fiddle-de-dee!" exclaimed Mr. Wart. "I had twenty!"

"On your honour, as a trooper?" cried Ned.

"On my *voir dire*," said Philly, hesitating.—"I had nine in uniform, and I forget how many were not in uniform,—because I didn't allow these fellows to go with us; but they had very good

hearts for it. Nine men, bless your soul, sir, on horseback, strung out in Indian file, make a very formidable display!"

"Well, it was a very gallant thing, take it altogether," said Harvey. "So, gentlemen, fill your glasses. Here's to Captain Wart of the Invincible Blues, the genuine representative of the chivalry of the Old Dominion!"

As the feast drew to a close, the graver members of the party stole off to the drawing-room, leaving behind them that happy remnant which may be called the sifted wheat of the stack. There sat Harvey Riggs, with his broad, laughing face mellowed by wine and good cheer, and with an eye rendered kindly by long shining on merry meetings, lolling with the heel of his boot across the corner of the table, whilst he urged the potations like a seasoned man, and a thirsty. And there sat Meriwether, abstemious but mirthful, with a face and heart brimful of benevolence; beside him, the inimitable original Philly Wart. And there, too, was seen the jolly parson, priestlike even over his cups, filled with wonder and joy to see the tide of mirth run so in the flood; ever and anon turning, with bewildered eagerness, from one to another of his complotors, in doubt as to which pleased him most. And there, too, above all, was Ned Hazard, an imp of laughter, with his left arm dangling over the back of his chair, and his right lifting up his replenished glass on high, to catch its sparkling beams in the light; his head tossed negligently back upon his shoulder; and

from his mouth forth issuing, with an elongated puff, that richer essence than incense of Araby: His dog Wilful, too, privileged as himself, with his faithful face recumbent between his master's knees.

Such are the images that still gladden the old-fashioned wassail of Virginia.

CHAPTER VI.**A BREAKING UP.**

THEY who remained at the dinner table were at last summoned to tea and coffee in the adjoining apartment, where the ladies of the family were assembled. It was about sunset, and Mr. Tracy's carriage, with two or three saddle horses, was at the door. As soon as this short meal was despatched, Catharine and Bel made their preparations for departure. Ned, like a flustered lover, was officiously polite in his attentions to the lady of his affections: he had brought Bel her bonnet, and assisted in adjusting it to her head, with supererogatory care; and, as he led her to the carriage, he took occasion, with many figures of speech, to tell her how much he participated in the affliction she had experienced by the loss of Fairbourne; and, as he was sure the recreant did not meditate a total separation from his mistress, he vowed to bring him back to her if he was to be found alive in the county. Bel endeavoured to evade the service tendered; and, getting into the coach, she and Catharine were soon in full progress homeward.

Mr. Tracy's horse was led up to the steps, and the old gentleman, after some civil speeches to the company, a little bragging of his ability as a horse-

man, and a respectful valedictory to Meriwether, clambered up with a slow but unassisted effort into his saddle.

"I should make a brave fox-hunter yet, Mr. Wart," said he with some exultation, when he found himself in his seat, "and would puzzle you to throw me out on a fair field. You see I can drink, too, with the best of you. I am good pith yet, Mr. Meriwether!"

"Upon my word, sir," said Meriwether, smiling, "you do wonders! There is not to-day in Virginia, a better mounted horseman of the same age."

"Good eating and drinking, Mr. Meriwether, and good wine warm the blood of an old grasshopper like me, and set him to chirping, if he can do nothing else. Come Ralph, you and Harvey must get to your horses: I will have my aide-de-camps. Mount, you young dogs, and never lag! I allow no grass to grow to my horse's heels, I warrant ye! Mount and begone!"

The two attendants obeyed the order, and reined their steeds near to his.

"Now don't run away from us," said Harvey.

"Why, as I think upon it again, Harvey, more maturely," replied the old gentleman, "I think we will jog along slowly; we might alarm the horses of the carriage if we got to any of our harum-scarum pranks. So, good evening! good evening!"

With these words the cavalcade set forward at a brisk walk, Mr. Tracy gesticulating in a manner that showed him to be engaged in an animated conversation with his companions.

Soon after this, Mr. Swansdown's curriole was brought to the door. This gentleman, with a languid and delicate grace, apprized Meriwether that he was about "to wing his flight" to Meherrin, there to immerse himself in pursuits which his present visit had suspended; and, consequently, he could not promise himself the pleasure of soon again meeting his worthy friend at Swallow Barn. He reminded his host, however, that he would carry into his retirement the agreeable consciousness that his visit had not been a fruitless one, since it had contributed so happily to the termination of an ancient dispute. He particularly insisted on the honour of a return visit from Meriwether and his friends.

His parting with the ladies might be said to have been even touching. It presented an elegant compound of sensibility and deference. Prudence could not possibly mistake the impression he designed to convey to her. He gently shook her gloved finger, as he said, with a gentle and embarrassed smile, "I particularly regret that the nature of the occupation to which I am about to return is such as to engross me for some months, and most probably may compel me again to cross the Atlantic. It is likely, therefore, that I shall have added some years to my account before we meet again. Your fate will be doubtless changed before that happens: as for mine, I need scarcely allude to it; I am already written down a predestined cumberer of the soil. I still may hope, I trust, to be sometimes remembered as a passing shadow."

"He means to write a book, and die a bachelor,

poor devil! That is the English of this flourish," said Ned to Prudence, as soon as Swansdown walked towards the front door.

Pru was silent, and inwardly vexed. At length she said to Ned, "He attaches more consequence to his movements than any body else."

Shortly after this, the glittering vehicle, with its fainty burden, was seen darting into the distant forest.

One after another our guests followed, until none were left but Mr. Wart and Hedges, who having determined to ride together as far as the Court House, were waiting, as they said, until the night should fairly set in, in order that they might have the coolness of the "little hours" for their journey.

"Well, Mr. Chub," said Philly, "what do you think of our friend Swansdown?"

"I am glad he is gone," replied the parson; "in my opinion he is very fatiguing."

In a few minutes after this, the counsellor dropped asleep in his chair, leaving Meriwether in an unusually argumentative mood, but unfortunately without a listener. Frank had drawn up to the window, and thrown his feet carelessly against the sill, so as to give himself that half recumbent posture which is supposed to be most favourable to all calm and philosophic discussions. He had launched upon one of those speculative voyages in which it was his wont to circumnavigate the world of thought; and as there were no lights in the room, he continued to pour into the unconscious ears of his friend Wart his startling random-shots of wisdom, for half an

hour before he became aware of his unedifying labour. Finding, however, that no answer came from the quarter to which he addressed himself, he suddenly stopped short with the exclamation, "God bless me! Mr. Wart, have you been asleep all this time? truly, I have been sowing my seed upon a rock. But sleep on, don't let me disturb you."

"Asleep!" replied Philly, waking up at hearing himself addressed by name, as a man who dozes in company is apt to do; "not I, I assure you: I have heard every word you have said. It was altogether just; indeed I couldn't gainsay a word, but I think, Mr. Hedges, it is time for us to be moving."

Meriwether laughed, and remarked that Mr. Hedges had left the room some time since with Mr. Chub.

"At all events," said Philly, "we will have our horses. It is time we were upon our journey."

Every effort was made to detain him and his companion until the next morning; but the counsellor was obstinate in his resolve to be off that night, observing that he had already taken a longer holiday at Swallow Barn than he had allowed himself in the last fifteen years; "and as to the hour," said he, "I am an old stager on the road, and have long since lost all discrimination between night and day."

"But it is very dark," said Hazard, "and threatens rain. You will assuredly be caught in a thunder storm before you get three miles."

"Wet or dry," replied the other, "it makes but a small matter in the account. I don't think a shower would take much of the gloss from my old coat,"

he added, looking round at his skirts, "and as for Hedges here, I know he is neither sugar nor salt."

"With a julep before we go," said Hedges, "and another when we stop, you may put as much wet and darkness between the two as you please, for me. So let us pad our saddles according to the old recipe, 'A spur in the head is worth two on the heel.'" "

Saying this, he went to the sideboard and helped himself rather beyond the approved allowance. "I have a laudable contempt for thin potations, Mr. Wart," he added as he took off his glass.

The horses were at the door; it was now about ten o'clock; when the two travellers were mounted, Philly whistled up his hounds, and they set forward on their dark journey.

CHAPTER VII.**KNIGHT ERRANTRY.**

THE next morning Hazard appeared a little perplexed. Notwithstanding the apparent recklessness of his character, it belongs to him, as it does to the greater number of those persons who put on an irresponsible face in the world, to feel acutely any supposed diminution of the esteem of his friends induced by his own indiscretion. In the present instance he was particularly obnoxious to this sentiment. Bel's good opinion of him was the very breath of his nostrils, and her rigid estimate of the proprieties of life the greatest of his terrors. His perplexity arose from this, that he had given way the day before at the dinner table to the natural impulses of his character, and in spite of the admonitory presence of the lady of his soul, nay, perhaps elevated into a more dangerous gaiety by that very circumstance, he had possibly (for such a temper as his is least of all others able to know the true state of things), in her very sight and hearing, committed a thousand trespasses upon her notions of decorum. Whether he had or not, he was in doubt, and afraid to inquire. All that he knew of the matter was, that, like a man in a dream, he had passed through a succession of agreeable changes; had begun the day with a certain

calm pleasure, rose from that into a copious flow of spirits, thence to an exuberant merriment, and thence into—what he could not precisely tell: heaven knows if it were riot or moderate revelry, outrageous foolery or lawful mirth!—the prospect from that point was a misty, dreamy, undefined mass of pleasant images. Of this he was conscious, that after drinking much wine, and while reeking with the fumes of tobacco, (a thing utterly abhorrent to Bel,) he had certainly ventured into her presence, and had said a great many things to her in very hyperbolical language, and, if he was not mistaken, in somewhat of a loud voice. Perhaps, too, he might have been rather thick of speech! The recurrence of the scene to his thoughts this morning rather disturbed him.

There was one consolation in the matter. Bel's father, the very personation, in her view, of all that was decorous and proper—the Nestor of the day—the paragon of precision—had, it was admitted on all hands, left Swallow Barn very decidedly exhilarated with wine. If Bel believed this, (and how could she fail to see it?) the fact would go a great way towards Ned's extenuation. And then the occasion too!—a special compliment to Mr. Tracy. Tut! It was as pardonable a case as could be made out!

Amidst the retrospects of the morning Hazard had not forgotten the promise he had made Bel the night before, to attempt the recovery of her hawk. Harvey Riggs before dinner had informed him of Bel's loss, and of his, Harvey's, engagement that Ned should bring back her bird. Hazard was not

aware that I had heard him pledge himself to this task as he assisted Bel to the carriage; nor did he mention it to me to-day, when he announced after breakfast that he had ordered our horses to the door for a ride. Without questioning his purpose, I readily agreed to accompany him; and, therefore, at an early hour we were both mounted, and, followed by Wilful, we took the road leading from Swallow Barn immediately up the river.

"Now," said I, after we had ridden some distance, "pray tell me what is the object of this early and secret enterprise, and what makes you so abstracted this morning?"

"I wish to heaven, Mark," replied Ned, half peevishly, "that this business were settled one way or another!"—Ned always spoke to me of his courtship as "this business;" he had a boyish repugnance to call it by its right name. "Here am I," he continued, "a man grown, in a girl's leading-strings, 'turned forehorse to a smock,' as Shakspeare calls it. Saint Devil speed us, and put me out of misery! Now, what do you think, Mark, of all the adventures in the world, I am bound upon at this moment?"

"Why, sir," I answered, "upon the most reasonable wild goose chase that ever a man in love pursued. I never knew you before to do so wise a thing; for I take it that you and I are already in search of Bel's hawk. There are not more than a million birds about; and I'll be bound Fairbourne is one of them! He is certainly within a hundred miles, and I have no doubt anxiously expecting us."

“Conjurer that thou art!” said Ned, “how did thy foolish brain find that out?”

“Didn’t I hear you last night, when you were so tipsy that you could hardly stand, bleat into Bel’s ear that you would neither take rest nor food until you restored her renegade favourite to her fist?”

“Did I say that?” exclaimed Ned. “Was I not supremely ridiculous?”

“I can’t pretend to do justice to your language on the occasion. It would require higher poetical powers than I boast of to imitate, even in a small degree, the euphuism of your speech. The common superlatives of the dictionary would make but poor positives for my use, if I attempted it.”

“Look you, now!” said Hazard, “Is not this deplorable, that a man should have a mistress who hates a fool above all worldly plagues, and yet be so bestridden by his evil genius that he may never appear any thing else to her! I am not such a miserable merry-andrew by nature, and yet, by circumstances, wherever Bel is concerned I am ever the very crown-piece of folly!”

“And do you think,” said I, “that this little girl, so instinct, as she is, with the liveliest animal impulses,—a laughing nymph,—is such a Cato in petticoats as to be noting down your nonsense in her tablets for rebuke? Why, sir, that is the very point upon which you must hope to win her!”

“I am afraid I wasn’t respectful,” said Ned.

“I assure you,” I replied, “that, so far from not being respectful, you were the most ridiculously ob-

servant, reverential, and obsequious ass,—considering that you were in your cups,—I ever saw.”

“Was I so?” exclaimed Ned. “Then I am content; for, on that score, Bel is as great a fool as I am on any other. Now, if I can only bring her back her bird,” he said exultingly,—“and I have some presentiment that I shall get tidings of him,—I shall rise to the very top of her favour.”

Saying this, Ned spurred forward to a gallop, and flourished his whip in the air as he called to me to follow at the same speed.

“Mark, watch every thing that flies,” he cried out; “you may see the harness about his legs; and listen for the bells, for the truant can’t move without jangling,—‘I live in my lady’s grace,’—remember the motto!”

“Now, by our lady!—I mean our lady Bel,” said I, “for henceforth I will swear by none but her,—I am as keen upon this quest as yourself. I vow not to sleep until I hear something of this ungrateful bird.”

My reader would perhaps deem it a hopeless venture to attempt the recovery of a bird under the circumstances of this case; but it will occur to him, if he be read in romance, that it was not so unusual an exploit to regain a stray hawk as he might at first imagine. A domesticated bird will seldom wander far from his accustomed haunt; and, being alien to the wild habits of his species, will, almost invariably, resort to the dwellings of man. Fairbourne having been known to direct his flight up the river, we

had good reason to hope that the inhabitants of this quarter might put our search upon a successful track.

For a good half mile, therefore, we rode at speed along the highway leading to the ferry. The velocity of our motion, combining with the extravagant nature of the enterprise, and the agreeable temperature of the morning, cloudless and cool, had raised our spirits to a high pitch. In this mood we soon arrived at Sandy Walker's little inn upon the river. All that we could learn here was, that the hawk had been seen in the neighbourhood the day before, and had probably continued his flight further up the river.

With this intimation we proceeded rapidly upon our pursuit. It was near noon when, through many devious paths, visiting every habitation that fell in our way, we had gained a point about five miles distant from Swallow Barn. Some doubtful tidings of Fairbourne were obtained at one or two houses on the road; but for the last hour our journey had been without encouragement, and we began to feel oppressed with the mid-day fervours of the season. It was, therefore, somewhat despairingly that we halted to hold a consultation whether or not we should push our expedition farther.

Not far distant from the road we could perceive the ridge-pole of a log cabin showing itself above a patch of luxuriant Indian corn. This little dwelling stood upon the bank of the river; and, as a last essay, we resolved to visit it, and interest its inmates in the object of our enterprise. It was with some dif-

faculty that we made our way through a breach in the high worm-fence that bounded the road ; and, after struggling along a path beset with blackberries and briars, we at length found ourselves encompassed by the corn immediately around the hut. At this moment Wilful sprang from the path, and ran eagerly towards the yard in the rear of the dwelling. He did not halt until he arrived at an apple-tree, where hung a rude cage ; under this he continued to bark with quick and redoubled earnestness, until Ned called him back with a peremptory threat, that brough him crouching beneath the feet of our horses, where he remained, restless and whining, every now and then making a short bound in the direction of the tree, and looking up wistfully in Hazard's face.

In the mean time an old negro woman had come to the door ; and, as Ned engaged her in conversation, Wilful stole off unobserved a second time to the tree, where he fell to jumping up against the trunk, uttering, at the same time, a short, half-subdued howl.

"There is something in the branches above the cage," I exclaimed, as I followed the movements of the dog with my eye. "It is Fairbourne himself ! I see the silver rings upon his legs glittering through the leaves !"

"For heaven's sake, Mark, keep quiet!" cried Ned, springing from his horse. "If it be Fairbourne in truth, we may get him by persuasion, but never by alarming him. Dismount quickly. Wilful—back, sir."

I got down from my saddle, and the horses were delivered into the charge of the old woman. Wilful crept back to the door of the hut. Ned and myself cautiously advanced to reconnoitre.

As soon as all was still, to our infinite joy, Fairbourne in proper identity descended from his leafy bower and perched upon the top of the cage. Some association of this abode of the mocking-bird with his own prison in the mulberry-tree at the Brakes, had, possibly, attracted and bound him to this spot; and there he sat, seemingly quiet and melancholy, and struck with contrition for the folly that had tempted him to desert his mistress and his mew. I thought he recognized an acquaintance in Wilful; for as the dog moved about, Fairbourne's quick eye followed him from place to place; and, so far from showing perturbation at Wilful's presence, he composedly mantled his wing and stretched his neck, as if pleased with the discovery.

Assured by these manifestations, Ned addressed the bird in the words of endearment to which he had been accustomed, and slowly stepped forward towards the tree. Fairbourne, however, was distrustful, and retreated to the boughs. After much solicitation on the part of Hazard, and a great deal of prudery on that of the hawk, we had recourse to some morsels of meat obtained from the hut. These Ned threw upon the earth, and Fairbourne, pinched by hunger and unable to resist, pounced upon them with an unguarded voracity. Still, as Ned advanced upon him he retreated along the ground, without flying. A piece of the cord which Bel had

used as her creance, some three or four feet in length, was attached to his jesses, and served in some degree to embarrass his progress, as it was dragged through the grass. Hazard endeavoured to place his foot upon the end of this line, but as yet had been baffled in every effort. Wilful seemed to comprehend the purpose, and with admirable sagacity stole a circuit round the bird, drawing nearer to him at every step, and then, with a sudden and skilful leap, sprang upon him, in such a manner as effectually to secure his captive, scarcely ruffling a feather. Hazard rushed forward at the same instant, and made good his prize, by seizing his wing and bearing him off to the hut.

The good fortune of this discovery and the singular success that attended it, threw us into transports. Ned shouted and huzzaed, and tossed up his hat in the air, until the old negro woman began to look in his face to see if he were in his senses. The hawk, the unconscious cause of all this extravagance, looked like a discomfited prisoner of war, bedraggled, travel-worn and soiled,—a tawdry image of a coxcomb. His straps and bells hanging about his legs had the appearance of shabby finery; and his whole aspect was that of a forlorn, silly and wayward minion, wearing the badge of slavery instead of that of the wild and gallant freebooter of the air so conspicuously expressed in the character of his tribe.

Congratulating ourselves on our good luck, we began to prepare for our homeward journey. The negro received an ample bounty for the assistance

afforded in the capture; the jesses were repaired and secured to Fairbourne's legs, and the bird himself made fast to Hazard's hand. In a few moments we were remounted and cantering in the direction of Swallow Barn, with a lightness of spirits in Hazard that contrasted amusingly with his absolute despondence half an hour before.

CHAPTER VIII.**A JOUST AT UTTERANCE.**

WE had not travelled far on our return to Swallow Barn, before we arrived at a hamlet that stands at the intersection of a cross road. This consists of a little store, a wheelwright's shop, and one or two cottages, with their outhouses. The store was of that miscellaneous character which is adapted to the multifarious wants of a country neighbourhood, and displayed a tempting assortment of queensware, rat-traps, tin kettles, hats, fiddles, shoes, calicoes, cheese, sugar, allspice, jackknives and jewsharps,—the greater part of which was announced in staring capitals on the window-shutter, with the persuasive addition, that they were all of the best quality and to be had on the most accommodating terms. The rival establishment of the wheelwright was an old shed sadly bedaubed with the remainder colours of the paint brush, and with some preposterous exaggerations in charcoal of distinguished military men mounted on preternaturally prancing steeds ; and, near the door, a bran-new, blue wagon, and a crimson plough showed the activity of the trade.

As may readily be conjectured, this mart of custom was not without its due proportion of that industrious, thriving and reputable class of comers

who laudably devote their energies to disputation, loud swearing, bets and whiskey,—a class which, to the glory of our land, is surprisingly rife in every country side. Some six or seven of these worthies were congregated on the rail of the piazza, which extended across the front of the store, like so many strange fowls roosting along a pole. The length of our previous ride and the heat of the day made it necessary that we should stop here for a short time to get water for our horses. We accordingly dismounted.

Fairbourne excited the curiosity of the inhabitants of the porch; and Ned, who seemed to be well acquainted with the persons about him, answered their many questions with his customary good-humour. During this brief intercourse, one of the party approached with a swaggering step, and began to pry, with rather an obtrusive familiarity, into the odd equipment of the hawk. His air was that of a shabby gentleman: He had an immense pair of whiskers, a dirty shirt, and a coat that might be said to be on its last legs; but this, however, was buttoned at the waist with a certain spruce and conceited effect. As Ned held the bird upon his hand, this complacent gentleman brought himself, first, into a rather troublesome contact, and finally threw his arm across Hazard's shoulder. Ned, at first, gently repelled him, but as the other still intruded upon him, and placed himself again in the same situation—

“Softly, Mr. Rutherford!” he said, slipping away from beneath the extended arm; “you will excuse me, but I am averse to bearing such a burden.”

“You are more nice than neighbourly, Ned Hazard,” replied the other, stiffly erecting his person. “I think I can remember a time when even you, sir, would not have found me burdensome: that time may come again.”

“I am not in the habit,” rejoined Ned, “of arguing the right to shake off whatever annoys me.”

“Aye, aye!” said the other, walking to the opposite end of the porch. “There are dogs enough to bark at the wounded lion, that dare not look him in the face when he is in health. It is easy enough to learn, as the world goes, what is likely to annoy a fair-weather friend. Honesty is of the tailor’s making—”

These and many other expressions of the like import were muttered sullenly by the speaker, with such glances towards Hazard as indicated the deep offence he had taken at the rebuke just given.

This man had been originally educated in liberal studies, and had commenced his career not without some character in the country, but had fallen into disgrace through vicious habits. An unfortunate reputation for brilliant talents, in early life, had misled him into the belief that the care by which a good name is won and preserved is a useless virtue, and that self-control is a tax which only men of inferior parts pay for success. This delusion brought about the usual penalties; first, disappointment, then debauch, and after that, in a natural sequence, the total wreck of worldly hopes:—a brief history which is often told of men, and varied only in the subordinate incidents which colour the common outline.

Rutherford still retained, (as it generally happens to a vain man,) unimpaired by the severe judgment of the world, his original exaggerated opinion of the extent of his abilities ; but, having lost the occasions for their display, he became noted only by a domineering temper, a boastful spirit, a supreme hatred of those in better circumstances than himself, and, sometimes, by excessive and ferocious intemperance.

His conduct on the present occasion passed unheeded. Hazard had no disposition to embroil himself with a man of this description, and therefore made no reply to these muttered overflowings of his spleen.

"I have seen your bird before, Mr. Ned Hazard," said a plain countryman, who sat without a coat on the bench of the piazza. "If I am not mistaken, that hawk belonged to one of Mr. Tracy's daughters, over here at the Brakes."

"It did," replied Ned ; "she has nursed it with her own hand."

"Well, I have been studying," said another, "ever since you came here, to find out what all these things are stuck about its legs for. It is the most unaccountablest thing to me ! I don't consider one of these here hawks no more than vermin. What is it good for, Mr. Hazard, any how ?"

"Indeed, I declare I can't exactly tell," answered Ned. "In the old time they kept hawks pretty much as we keep hounds,—to hunt game with."

"Oh, they are amazing swift, and desperate wicked,—that's a fact !" said the first speaker. "Did you never see how spiteful these little king-birds take

after and worry a crow? They are a sort of hawks too—”

“Many’s the time,” said another of the company “that I have known how to follow a fox from looking at the crows tracking him across a field; and I have seen hawks take after vermin just in the same way.”

“But what is the use,” asked the second speaker again, “of these here silver rings? and here are words on one of them, too. Let me see,—‘I live—in my lady’s—grace,’—” he continued, straining his sight to make out the legend.

Rutherford had now approached to the skirts of the group, and stood leaning against the balustrade of the porch, with an unsocial and vexed air, as if disposed to take advantage of whatever might occur to vent his feelings.

“My lady’s grace!” said he, tartly, “My lady’s grace! I suppose we shall hear of my lord’s grace, too, before long! There are some among us who, if they durst do it, would carry their heads high enough for such a title. If that stark, old, English tory, Isaac Tracy, of the Brakes,—as he calls himself—”

“Miles Rutherford,” interrupted Hazard, angrily, “look to yourself, sir! I am not disposed to put up with your moody humour. Do not give me cause to repent my forbearance in not punishing your insolence at its first-outbreak.”

“A better man than you, Ned Hazard,” said the other, “proudly as you choose to bear yourself, might have cause to repent his rashness in making such a

threat. Insolence do you call it, sir! Take care that I do not teach you better to know who I am!"

"I know you already," replied Ned, "for a brawling bully—a disturber of the common peace—a noisy churl—a nuisance, sir, to the whole country round."

"I know you," said Rutherford.—

"Silence!" cried Ned; "Not another word from your lips, or, by my life! unworthy as you are of the notice of a gentleman, I will take the pains to chastise you here upon this spot."

"Good gentlemen! Good gentlemen! Mercy on us! Stop them!" exclaimed our old acquaintance, Hafen Blok, who, until this moment, had been seated in the store, and now came limping to the porch, on having recognized Hazard's voice—"For God's sake, Mr. Ned Hazard, don't put yourself in the way of Miles Rutherford! Take a fool's advice, Mister Edward," he continued, coming up to Ned, and holding him by the coat: "It isn't fit for such as you to concern yourself with Miles Rutherford; the man's half in liquor, and of no account if he wasn't."

Several others of the company crowded round Hazard to beg him not to be disturbed by his antagonist. In the mean time Rutherford had worked himself up to a pitch of fury, and, springing over the balustrade upon the ground, he took a station in front of the house, where, vociferating in his wrath a hundred opprobrious epithets, he challenged Hazard to come out of the crowd if he dared to face him.

I interposed to remind Hazard that he should restrain his anger, nor think of matching himself with

such an enemy. He listened calmly to my remonstrance, and then laughing, as if nothing had occurred to ruffle his temper, though it was manifest that he was much flurried, he remarked in a tone of assumed good humour,—

“You mistake if you imagine this ruffian moves me; but still I think it would be doing a public service if I were to give him a sound threshing here on his own terms.”

“Don’t think of such a thing, Mister Edward!” said Hafen; “you are not used to such as Miles. He is close built, and above fourteen stone. You are hardly a feather to him.”

“You underrate me, Hafen,” replied Ned, smiling, “and I have a mind to show you that weight is not so great a matter as a good hand.”

“You are bold to speak amongst your cronies,” said Rutherford. “You can make a party if you can’t fight. But I shall take the first opportunity, when I meet you alone, to let you know that when I choose to speak my mind of such hoary-headed traitors as old Isaac Tracy, I will not be schooled into silence by you.”

At these words Hazard turned quickly round to me, and whispered in my ear, with more agitation of manner than was usual to him, “I will indulge this braggart; so, pray don’t interrupt me. You need not be anxious as to the result;” then, speaking to the assemblage of persons who surrounded him, he said, “Now, my good friends, I want you to see fair play, and on no account to interfere with me as long as I have it.”

With this he left the porch, and stepping out upon the ground where Rutherford stood, he told him that he would save him the trouble of any future meeting, by giving him now what he stood especially in need of,—a hearty flogging.

Rutherford in a moment threw off his coat. Ned coolly buttoned his frock up to the chin.

“Good Lord, preserve us!” exclaimed Hafen Blok again—“Mr. Hazard’s gone crazy! Why, Miles Rutherford ought to manage two of him.”

“I can tell you what,” said one of the lookers-on, after surveying Ned for a moment, “Ned Hazard’s a pretty hard horse to ride, too; only look at his eye,—how natural it is!”

By this time the two combatants had taken their respective positions. Ned stood upon a practised guard, closely eyeing his antagonist, and waiting the first favourable moment to deal a blow with effect. It was easy to perceive that, amongst his various accomplishments, he had not neglected to acquire the principles of pugilism. Rutherford’s figure was muscular and active; and, to all appearance, the odds were certainly very much in his favour. Not a word was spoken, and an intense interest was manifested by the whole assembly as to the issue of this singular encounter.

During the first onset Ned acted entirely on the defensive, and parried his opponent’s blows with complete success. In the next moment he changed the character of the war, and pressed upon Rutherford with such science and effect, as very soon to demonstrate that he had the entire command of the

game. From this period the contest assumed, on the part of Hazard, a cheerful aspect. He struck his blows with a countenance of so much gaiety, that a spectator would have imagined he buffeted his adversary in mere sport, were it not for the blood that streamed down Rutherford's face, and the dogged earnestness that sat upon the brow of the beleboured man. Wilful seemed to take a great interest in the affray, and curveted around the parties, barking, sometimes violently, and springing towards his master's opponent. On such occasions Ned would call out to him, with the utmost composure, and order him away, but without the least interruption to his employment; and Wilful, as if assured by his master's cool tone of voice, would yield instant obedience to the mandate, and take his place amongst the by-standers.

For the space of two or three minutes nothing was heard but the sullen sound of lusty blows, planted with admirable adroitness on the breast and face of Miles Rutherford, whose blows in return were blindly and awkwardly spent upon the air. At last, the furious bully, worn down by abortive displays of strength, and perplexed by the vigorous assaults of his enemy, began to give ground and show signs of discomfiture. Ned, as fresh almost as at first, now pressed more severely upon him, and, with one decisive stroke, prostrated him upon the earth.

At this incident a shout arose from the crowd, and every one eagerly interceded to exhort Ned to spare his adversary farther pain. Ned stepped a pace back, as he looked upon his recumbent foe, and composedly said—

“ I will not strike him whilst he is down. But if he wishes to renew the battle, I will allow him to get upon his legs,—and he shall even have time to breathe.”

Rutherford slowly got up; and, without again placing himself in an attitude of offence, began to vent his displeasure in wild and profane execrations. Several of the persons nearest took hold of him, as if with a purpose to expostulate against his further prosecution of the fight; but this restraint only made him the more frantic. In the midst of this uproar, Ned again approached him, saying, “ Miles Rutherford, it little becomes you as a man to be unburthening your malice in words. We have come to blows, and if you are not yet satisfied with the issue of this meeting, I pledge you a fair field, and as much of this game as you have a relish for. Let the crowd stand back !”

After looking a moment at Hazard in profound silence, Rutherford’s discretion seemed suddenly to sway his courage; and, dropping his arms by his side in token of defeat, he muttered, in a smothered and confused voice, “ It’s no use, Ned Hazard, for me to strike at you. You have had the advantage of training.”

“ You should have counted the cost of your insolence,” replied Ned, “ before you indulged it. The tongue of a braggart is always more apt than his hand,” he continued, taking a white handkerchief from his pocket, and wiping his brow, and, at the same time unbuttoning his coat and adjusting his dress. “ You have disturbed the country with your

quarrelsome humours long enough ; so take the lesson you have got to-day, and profit by it. *Hafen*, get me some water ; my hands are bloody."

At this instant the group of amused and gratified spectators mingled promiscuously together, and made the welkin ring with cheers of triumph and exultation.

"That I should have lived to see such a thing as this!" vociferated *Hafen*, as he went to get the water. "Didn't I always say *Mister Ned Hazard* was the very best bottom in the country!"

"I fight fair," murmured *Miles Rutherford*, as if struggling under the rebuke of the company, and endeavouring to make the best of his situation, "but I am not conquered. Another time—by *Hell!*—another time! and *Ned Hazard* shall rue this day. That proud coxcomb has practised the art and strikes backhanded. The devil could not parry such blows."

"What does he say?" asked *Ned*.

"*Miles*, you are beaten!" exclaimed half a dozen voices, "and you can't make any thing else out of it. So be off!" saying this, several individuals gathered round him to persuade him to leave the ground.

"It is immaterial," said *Miles* ; and taking up his coat from the ground, he walked towards the neighbouring dwellings in a sad and confused plight.

"I am a fool," said *Hazard* in my ear, "to permit myself to be ruffled by this scoundrel ; but I am not sorry that I have taken advantage of my anger to give him what he has long deserved."

Ned now began gradually to recover his gaiety, and, after a short space, having washed his hands

and recruited himself from the severe toil in which he had been engaged, he took Fairbourne from one of the crowd, to whom the charge of the bird had been committed, and we mounted our horses amidst the congratulations of the whole hamlet for the salutary discipline which Ned had inflicted upon his splenetic antagonist.

In less than an hour we regained Swallow Barn: returning like knights to a bannered castle from a successful inroad,—flushed with heat and victory,—covered with dust and glory; our enemies subdued and our lady's pledge redeemed.

CHAPTER IX.

MOONSHINE.

WE were too much elated with having achieved the recapture of the hawk, to postpone the communication of our good fortune to the family at the Brakes longer than our necessary refreshment required; and accordingly, about five o'clock in the evening, having then finished a hearty dinner, and regained our wasted strength, we were on our way to the habitation of our neighbours.

Whether it was that the rapid succession of scenes, through which we had past during the forepart of the day, and the vivid excitements we had experienced, had now given place to a calmer and more satisfied state of feeling; or whether it arose only from some remaining sense of fatigue from previous toil, our present impulse was to be silent. For more than a quarter of an hour, we trotted along the road with nothing to interrupt our musings but the breeze as it rustled through the wood, the screams of the jay-bird, or the tramp of our horses. At length Ned, waking up as from a reverie, turned to me and said—

“Mark! not a word about that fight to-day.”

“Truly, you speak with a discreet gravity,” said I.

“What would you have?”

"Not the slightest hint that shall lead Bel Tracy to suspect I have had a quarrel with Miles Rutherford."

"I pity you, Ned," said I, laughing. "Out, hyperbolic fiend! why vexest thou this man?"

"Ah!" replied Ned, "that is the curse of the star I was born under. The most innocent actions of my life will bear a reading that may turn them, in Bel Tracy's judgment, into abiding topics of reproof. I dread the very thought that Bel should hear of this quarrel. She will say—as she always says—that I have descended from my proper elevation of character. I wish I had a hornbook of gentility to go by! It never once occurred to me when I was chastising that blackguard, that I was throwing aside the gentleman. My convictions always come too late."

"Why, what a crotchet is this!" said I. "To my thinking, you strangely misapprehend your mistress, Ned, when you fancy she could take offence at hearing that you had punished an insolent fellow for reviling her father."

"It is the manner of the thing, Mark," replied Ned. "The idea that I had gone into a vulgar ring of clowns, and soiled my hands in a rough-and-tumble struggle with a strolling bully. Now if I had encountered an unknown ruffian in the woods, with sword and lance, on horseback, and had had my weapon shivered in my hand, and then been trussed upon a pole ten feet long,—Gad, I believe she would be thrown into transports!—that would be romance for her; it would be a glorious feat of arms; and, I doubt not, she would attend me in my illness, like

the king's daughter in the ballad,—the most bewitching of leeches! But to be pommelled black and blue, with that plebeian instrument a fist—pugh!—she will turn up her nose at it with a magnificent disdain. Do you see any traces of the fight about me? have I any scar or scratch? do you think I may pass unquestioned?"

"You may thank your skill in this vulgar accomplishment," I answered, "that you do not carry a black eye to the Brakes. As it is, you have nothing to fear on that score; and, I promise you, although I doubt your apprehension of Bel, that I will say nothing that shall lead to your detection."

"This is only of a piece with my other miseries," said he. "It is another proof of the tyranny to which a man is exposed who is obliged to square his conduct to the caprices of a mistress. I declare to you I feel, at this moment, like a schoolboy who is compelled to rack his wits for some plausible lie to escape a whipping."

"Truly, Ned, you are a most ridiculous lover," said I. "Of all men I ever knew, I certainly never saw one who took so little trouble to square his conduct to any rule. This is the merest farce that ever was acted. Little does Bel suspect that she has in her train such a trembling slave. Why, sir, it is the perpetual burthen of her complaint that your recklessness of her rises to the most flagrant contumacy: and, to tell you the truth, I think she has reason on her side."

"Well, well!" said Ned, laughing, "be that as it may; say nothing about the feat of to-day, because,

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in sober earnest, I am not quite satisfied with the exploit myself. I certainly was under no obligation to drub that rascal Rutherford." *D. M. R.*

In the discussion of this topic we arrived at the Brakes, where both joy and surprise were manifested at finding Fairbourne brought back in fetters to his prison. Harvey Riggs clapped his hands and called out "Bravo! Well done Hazard! Did'nt I say, Bel, that Ned would perform as many wonders as the seven champions altogether? Is there such another true knight in the land?"

As for Bel, she was raised into the loftiest transports. She laughed,—asked a thousand questions,—darted from place to place, and taking Fairbourne in her hand, smoothed his feathers, and kissed him over and over again. The rest of the family joined in similar expressions of pleasure, and Ned gave a circumstantial detail of all the facts attending the recovery, carefully omitting the least allusion to the affair that followed it. When this was done, Harvey again heaped a torrent of applause upon the Knight of the Hawk, as he called Hazard, and with a lively sally sang out, in a cracked and discordant voice,—

"Oh, 'tis love, 'tis love, 'tis love, that rules us all completely,
Oh, 'tis love, 'tis love, 'tis love commands, and we obey—"

—which he concluded with sundry antics, and danced out of the room. Bel, upon hearing the part that Wilful acted in the recapture, declared that she would take him into high favour, and that thenceforth he should have the freedom of the parlour; saying this, she patted him upon the back, and made him lie down at her feet.

"Hey day! this is a fine rout and pother about a vagabond bird!" said Mr. Tracy. "Will you lose your senses, good folks! Mr. Edward, you see what it is to gather toys for these women. You have made Bel your slave for life."

Bel blushed scarlet red at this intimation; and Ned observing it, followed suit: their eyes met. A precious pair of fools, to make so much of so small a thing!

Fairbourne was carried to his perch, and regaled with a meal; and the composure of the family being restored, after the conclusion of this important affair, we sat down to talk upon other matters. Swansdown, we were told, had taken his departure after breakfast. Mr. Tracy, Harvey assured us, had been in his study nearly all day, conning over the papers of the arbitration. "The old gentleman," he said, "was not altogether satisfied with the award, inasmuch as there were certain particulars of fact which he conceived to be mistated, especially in regard to a survey, affirmed to be made of the mill-dam, which did not appear in his notes. I have no doubt," Harvey added, "that before a month my venerable kinsman will be in absolute grief for this untimely cutting short of the law-suit in the vigour of its days."

Ned sat beside Bel, occupied in a low, tremulous, and earnest conversation, until the stars were all shining bright, and even then, he unwillingly broke his colloquy at my summons. Our horses had been waiting at the door for the last hour.

We galloped nearly the whole way back to Swallow Barn; Ned rapidly leading the way, and strik-

ing his whip at the bushes on the road side, whistling, singing, and cutting many antics upon his saddle.

"What the deuce ails you?" I called out.

"I feel astonishingly active to night," said he. "I could do such deeds!" and thereupon he put his horse up to full speed.

"The man is possessed," said I, following, however, at the same gait.

That night we did not go to bed until the moon rose, which I think the almanac will show to have been near one o'clock.

CHAPTER X.**THE LAST MINSTREL.**

As I do not at all doubt that my reader has by this time become deeply interested in the progress of Ned Hazard's love affairs; and as I find, (what greatly surprises myself,) that Ned has grown to be a hero in my story; and that I, who originally began to write only a few desultory sketches of the Old Dominion, have unawares, and without any premeditated purpose, absolutely fallen into a regular jog-trot, novel-like narrative,—at least, for several consecutive chapters,—it is no more than what I owe to posterity to go on and supply such matters of fact as may tend to the elucidation and final clearing up of the present involved and uncertain posture into which I have brought my principal actors. Feeling the weight of this obligation, as soon as I had closed the last chapter I began to bethink me of the best means of compassing my end; for, like a true historiographer, I conceived it to be, in some sort, my bounden duty to resort to the best sources of information which my opportunities afforded. Now, it must have been perceived by my clear-sighted readers, that I am already largely indebted to Harvey Riggs for the faithful report of such matters as fell out at the Brakes when I was not there myself to note them down; and I therefore thought, that in the present emer-

gency I might, with great profit to my labour, have recourse to the same fountain of intelligence. In this I do but imitate and follow in the footsteps of all the illustrious chroniclers of the world, who have made it their business to speak primarily of what they themselves have seen and known, and secondarily, to take at second hand, (judiciously perpending the force of testimony,) such things as have come to them by hearsay: for, nothing is more common than for these grave wights to introduce into their books some of their weightiest and most important morsels of history by some such oblique insinuation as this;—"I have heard people say," or "the renowned Gregory of Tours, or William of Malmsbury, or John of Nokes affirms," or, "it was currently reported and believed at the time,"—or some such preface, by which they let in the necessary matter. Henceforth, then, let it be understood, that as I profess to speak in my own person of what happened at Swallow Barn, so I rely mainly on my contemporary Harvey, as authority for all such synchronous events as transpired at the Brakes. With this explanatory advertisement, I proceed with my story.

I have described, in the last chapter, the unnatural speed with which Hazard and myself had ridden to Swallow Barn. Bel too, it seems, was possessed in some such strange mood after we were gone, for she moved about the house singing, dancing, talking unconnectedly, and manifesting many unaccountable humours. I devoutly believe that both she and Hazard were bewitched. It might have been the hawk,—or some other little animal with wings on his

shoulders.—But I leave this to the consideration of the Pundits, and pass on to events of more importance.

We had not left the Brakes above half an hour when the scraping of a violin was heard in the yard, near the kitchen door. The tune was that of a popular country-dance, and was executed in a very brisk and inspiring cadence.

“That sounds like Hafen Blok’s fiddle,” said Ralph. “He has come here for his supper, and we shall be pestered with his nonsense all night.”

“If it be Hafen,” said Bel, “he shall be well treated, for the poor old man has a hard time in this world. He is almost the only minstrel, cousin Harvey, that is left.

‘The bigots of this iron time,
Have called his harmless art a crime.’

And truly, I wish we had more like him! for, Hafen has a great many ballads that, I assure you, will compare very well with the songs of the troubadours and minnesingers.”

“There you go,” cried Harvey, “with your age of chivalry. I don’t know much about your troubadours and minnesingers: but, if there was amongst them as great a scoundrel as Hafen, your age of chivalry was an arrant cheat. Why, this old fellow lives by petty larceny; he hasn’t the dignity of a large thief: he is a fisher of caps and napkins from a washerwoman’s basket; a robber of hen-roosts; a pocketeer of tea-spoons! Now, if there was any romance in him, he would, at least, steal cows and take purses on the highway.”

"Pray, cousin," exclaimed Bel, laughing, "do not utter such slanders against my old friend Hafen! Here, I have taken the greatest trouble in the world to get me a minstrel. I have encouraged Hafen to learn ditties, and he has even composed some himself at my bidding. Once I gave him a dress which you would have laughed to see. It was made after the most approved fashion of minstrelsy. First, there was a long gown of Kendal green, gathered at the neck with a narrow gorget; it had sleeves that hung as low as the knee, slit from the shoulder to the hand and lined with white cotton; a doublet with sleeves of black worsted; upon these a pair of points of tawny camlet, laced along the wrist with blue thread points, with a welt towards the hand, made of fustian; a pair of red stockings; a red girdle, with a knife stuck in it; and, around his neck, a red riband, suitable to the girdle. Now what do you think, cousin, of such a dress as that?"

"Where, in the name of all unutterable vagaries! did you get the idea of this trumpery?" cried Harvey.

"It is faithfully taken," said Bel, "from the exact description of the minstrel's dress, as detailed by Laneham, in his account of the entertainment of Queen Elizabeth at 'Killingworth Castle.'"

"And did Hafen put it on?"

"To be sure he did!" replied Bel, "and paraded about with it here a whole evening."

"Bel," said Harvey, after a loud laugh,— "I like your nonsense: It is so sublimated and refined, and double-distilled, that, upon my soul, I think it throws

a shabby air over all other folly I ever saw ! Minstrel Blok, Hawk Fairbourne, and Childe Ned, Dragon-killing Ned, are altogether without a parallel, or a copy in the whole world. A precious train for a lady ! And so, Hafen has been learning ballads, too ?”

“ Certainly,” returned Bel, “ I have taken the trouble to get him some very authentic collections. Now, what do you think of ‘ the Golden Garland of Princely Delights ? ’ that is an old book that I gave him to learn some songs from, and the wretch lost it, without learning one single sonnet.”

“ Good reason why,” said Ralph ;—“ he never could read.”

“ I didn’t know that, Ralph, when I gave it to him,” said Bel. “ But Hafen has an excellent memory. Hark ! he is beginning to sing now. Listen, cousin, and you will hear something to surprise you.”

At this moment, Hafen’s voice was heard commencing a stave, with a nasal tone, in a monotonous, quick, up-and-down tune, which accompanied words that were uttered with a very distinct articulation.

“ Let us have this in the porch,” said Harvey ; and he immediately led the way to the back-door ; where Hafen being called, took his seat and recommenced his song as follows :—

“ November the fourth, in the year of ninety-one,
 We had a sore engagement near to Fort Jefferson.
 St. Clair was our commander, which may remembered be,
 For there we left nine hundred men, in the Western Territory.
 Our militia was *attacked*, just as the day did break ;

And soon were overpowered and forced to retreat.
 They killed Major Ouldham, Levin and Briggs likewise,
 With horrid yells of savages resounded through the skies;
 Major Butler was wounded, the very second fire—”

“ Well, that will do, Hafen,” interrupted Harvey; “ we don’t like such a bloody song as this; it is the very essence of tragedy.”

“ It’s as true as preaching, Mister Riggs,” said Hafen. “ I was there myself, in Colonel Gibson’s regiment.”

“ No doubt!” replied Harvey. “ But Miss Tracy wants something more sentimental, Hafen; this butchering of militia men does not suit the ladies so well as a touching, sorrowful song.”

“ Ay, ay!” said Hafen, “ I understand you, Mister Harvey. I have just the sort of song to please Miss Isabel. It goes to the tune of ‘ William Reilly.’ ”

“ ‘ While I rehearse my story, Americans give ear,
 Of Britain’s fading glory, you presently shall hear;
 I’ll give a true relation, attend to what I say,
 Concerning the taxation of North America.

There is a wealthy people who sojourn in that land,
 Their churches all with steeples most delicately stand,
 Their houses, like the lily, are painted red and gay;
 They flourish like the lily in North America.’ ”

“ Poh! this is worse than the other!” exclaimed Harvey. “ Do you call this sentimental? Why don’t you give us something pitiful? Bel, your minstrel is as badly trained as your hawk.”

“ Hafen,” said Bel, “ I fear you have not thought of me lately, or you would have brought me something more to my liking than these songs.”

“ Bless your young heart, young mistress!” replied Hafen, “ I can sing fifty things that you’d like to hear, in the love line : There’s ‘ the Manhattan Tragedy,’ and ‘ the Royal Factor’s Garland,’ and ‘ the Golden Bull,’ and ‘ the Prodigal Daughter,’ and ‘ Jemmy and Nancy,’ commonly called the Yarmouth Tragedy, showing how, by the avariciousness and cruelty of parents, two faithful lovers were destroyed : and there’s ‘ the Gosport Tragedy,’ that shows how a young damsel was led astray by a ship’s carpenter, and carried into a lonesome wood ; and how her ghost haunted him at sea ;—

‘ When he *immediantly* fell on his knees
And the blood in his veins with horror did freeze.’ ”

“ Oh, very well,” said Harvey, “ stop there ; we don’t wish to hear the music. Go get your supper, Hafen ; the servants are waiting for you. These are entirely too sentimental ; you run into extremes.” Hafen obeyed the order ; and, as he limped towards the kitchen, Harvey remarked to Bel, “ This is a fine smack of war and love that Hafen has favoured us with ;—

‘ The last of all the bards was he
Who sang of Border Chivalry.’ ”

Truly, Cousin Bel, these shreds and patches of romance are wonderfully picturesque. Hafen does honour to your zeal in behalf of the days of knight-hood and minstrelsy.”

“ You may laugh, Harvey, as much as you please, but there is something pleasant in the idea

of moated castles, and gay knights, and border feuds, and roundelays under one's window, and lighted halls where ladies dance *corantos* and 'trod measures' as they called it!"

"And when hawks," added Harvey, "were not flown like kites, with a string, but came at a whistle, and did as they were told; and troubadours were not Dutch pedlers; and when bachelors could win mistresses by hard blows, and were not sent off because they were merry and like other people."

"Pshaw! cousin," interrupted Bel. "You havn't one spark of genuine romance in your whole composition. It is profane to listen to such a recreant as you are."

"Well, Bel, I will tell you," said Harvey. "It is not to be denied that Hafen shines as a fiddler, however questionable may be his merits as a ballad-monger. So if cousin Kate here and Ralph will dance, we will bring him into the parlour and have a four handed reel. We will call it a *coranto*, if you prefer the name; and, to give you a lighted hall, I will have two more candles put on the mantle piece."

"Agreed," said Bel, "so tell Hafen to bring in his instrument."

Hafen appeared at the summons, and an hour was merrily spent in dancing.

When the dance was over Bel gave Hafen a glass of wine, and slipped into his hand a piece of money.

"Many thanks to my young lady!" said the old man. "You deserve a good husband and soon."

"You have travelled, Hafen, to very little purpose," said Harvey, "if you are not able, at your time of life, to tell this lady's fortune."

"Oh, bless you!" replied Hafen, "I can do that very truly. You are not afraid, young mistress, to show me the palm of your hand?"

"Not she!" said Harvey. "Bel, open your hand; let the venerable Hafen disclose to you the decrees of fate."

"Take care, Hafen," said Bel, holding out her hand; "if you say one unlucky word I will for ever dismiss you from my service."

Hafen took from his pocket an old pair of spectacles, and proceeded, very minutely, to examine the open hand.

"Here is a line that has not more than six months to run: that is the line of marriage, young mistress. It is not so smooth a line, neither, as ought to be in such a palm, for it breaks off in two or three places, with some crossings."

"Defend me!" cried Bel. "What does that mean?"

"It means," replied Hafen, "that the lady is hard to please, and can scarcely find heart to make up her mind."

"True!" exclaimed Harvey. "Worshipful soothsayer, Hafen, go on!"

"The lady does not sleep well o' nights," continued Hafen; "and here are cloudy dreams; the hand is mottled, and yet her blood ought to flow smoothly too, for it has a healthy colour; the palm is moist and shows a warm heart: I fear the lady has fan-

cies. Well, well, it is all nothing, as there is a good ending to it. Here is a person who has done her great service lately. He will do her more : and,—let me see,—he is a gentleman of good blood, and more in love than I think it right to tell. He travels on a line that runs to marriage. Fie, my young mistress, you would not be obstinate with such a gentleman! But here is a stop and a cross line. ‘There is many a slip ‘twixt the cup and the lip.’ No, no, it is better than it looks.”

“Excellent well!” cried Harvey again.

“It is not excellent well, cousin,” said Bel, playfully withdrawing her hand. “Hafen, you have to learn the beginnings of your art. You know nothing about palmistry! Couldn’t you see, with but an eye, that the marriage line on my hand was a mile from the end? I wonder at you!”

“Not so fast, not so fast, Miss Isabel!” cried Hafén, with a sly laugh. “You can’t deceive me. I saw the very man to-day. And a proper gentleman he is—a brave one, as I said before. Why, gentle bred as he is, he can handle any man, in the way of boxing, ‘twixt this and Richmond. It is a real pleasure to see him strike a blow.”

“His name,” said Harvey.

“It would not be a strange name to these walls, if I was to tell it,” answered Hafén. “But I never thought such a pair of arms belonged to a gentleman, as he showed this morning.”

“Ned Hazard?” said Harvey. “Pray, what did you see of him this morning?”

“I will tell you and our pretty young lady here

what I saw," replied Hafen. "Up here at the cross roads, you must know,—about noon or a little later,—comes along Mister Edward Hazard and that strange gentleman his friend, on horseback, with that same hawk that's out here in the cage. Well, there was a parcel of neighbours drinking, and such like, about the store. Mister Edward never stands much upon ceremony; so, he got down, and then the other got down, and 'good morning,' and 'good morning,' went round. Mister Edward's not one of your proud men, for he got to showing them the bird, and told them, bless your heart! whose it was—Miss Isabel's here. I suspected something then," said Hafen, putting his finger against the side of his nose and looking at Harvey. "Well, one word brought on another, and somehow or 'nother, Miles Rutherford gives Mister Edward the lie. So, out jumps Mister Edward, and calls to the others to stand by him, and swears out pretty strong, (you know, Miss Isabel, Mister Ned's like any other man at swearing when he's angry,) and tells Miles to step out if he dares, and says, he will lick him to his heart's content,—or something to that effect. Well, Miles had whipped almost every fighting man in the county, and he wa'nt going to be baulked by Ned Hazard; and, accordingly, out he comes. Mercy on me! says I, now Mister Edward will give Miles such a mouthful to stay his stomach, as he never tasted in his life before. I knew Mr. Hazard of old, and told Miles what he'd get. And sure enough, it would have done your heart good, Miss Isabel, if you had seen how Mister Edward did drub Miles!

And the best of it was, he did it so genteel, as if he didn't want to bloody his clothes. And when he was done he wiped his face, as natural as if he had been at his dinner, and I brought him some water to wash his hands ; and then off he and the tother gentleman rode after bidding the company good day.—But didn't we give them three cheers !”

“ Are you telling us the truth, Hafen ?” asked Harvey, earnestly.

“ I would not tell you a lie, Mister Harvey,” replied Hafen, “ if it was to save my right hand from being chopped off this minute.”

“ This morning, do you say this happened ?”

“ As I am a Christian man,” said the pedler.

“ Ned fought with that bully, Miles Rutherford?—and with fists ?”

“ As fair a fight, Mister Riggs,” replied Hafen, “ and as pretty a one as you ever saw.”

“ What brought it about ? You have told us nothing about the cause of the quarrel.”

“ I'm not particular about that,” said the other ; “ but it was words. The truth is, I suspect Miles was impertinent, and Mister Edward wanted to beat him ; for he said he did it on account of the good of the public. Both on 'em might have been a little in the wrong, but Mister Hazard's hand was in ; and, you know, a man don't stand much persuasion when that's the case. But, you may depend, Mister Edward gained a great deal of glory.”

“ Edward didn't say a word about this to us,” said Bel.

“ I can't unriddle it,” replied Harvey, shaking his head.

Hafen was now dismissed from the parlour; and Bel and Harvey fell into a long conversation, in relation to the disclosure that was just made. Bel uttered a deep and sincere complaint in Harvey's ear, that the waywardness of Hazard's temper should be so continually driving him off his guard. It was so unbecoming his station in society to permit himself to appear in these lights to the world! When would he learn discretion? How could he hope to win the affections even of his intimate friends, when he was perpetually offending against the plainest duties he owed them? She admitted his goodness of heart, and the value she set upon the many excellent points in his character; but it seemed as if fate had unalterably decreed that every day he was to be farther removed from all hopes of making himself agreeable to her.

To these suggestions Harvey could frame no defence, except that Hafen had, perhaps, misrepresented the facts.

"I do not wish to inquire into the details," said Bel, "because no provocation, in my opinion, could excuse a gentleman in making such a figure before a set of low-bred rustics. I cannot express to you, cousin Harvey, how much this thing shocks me."

"There are provocations, Bel," replied Harvey, "that would render such an exploit as our muddy-brained pedler has celebrated meritorious—even in a gentleman."

"I cannot think it,—cousin:—I cannot think so," replied Bel, musing over the matter; "I wish I could."

"I'll tell you, Bel, what we will do," said Har-

vey, with a gay air; "we will get our old minnesinger Hafen to hitch it into verse and sing it to the tune of 'The Lay of the Last Minstrel.'"

"Incorrigible sinner!" exclaimed Bel, "how can you jest upon such an incident! as for your friend Edward, I pity him; you know why. But do not make me think as hardly of you. Good night!"

"Pleasant dreams to you!" cried Harvey. "Fancy that you have heard of a tilting match between a bull and a cavalier, and that the bull was beaten. Romance and chivalry are sovereign varnishes for cracked crowns and bloody noses. Good night!"

CHAPTER XI.

SIGNS OF A HERO.

WHILE Hazard was indulging the luxurious fancy that he had sailed, at last, into the harbour of Bel's good graces; and was casting about to see how he should best make good his moorings, Hafen, like a lame Vulcan, was forging a thunderbolt that was destined to descend upon Ned's slender pinnace, and either tear up one of the principal planks, or at least, give him such a lurch as should make him think he was going straight to the bottom.

Happy would it have been for Hazard if he had not forbidden me to say any thing to his mistress about his unfortunate quarrel with Miles Rutherford; for then I could have given the matter such a gloss as must have entirely satisfied any reasonable woman whatever. But to have this incident mangled by Hafen Blok, disgraced by his slang, and discoloured by his officious zeal to contribute to Ned's glorification, was one of those unlucky strokes of fortune to which the principal actors in romance have been subject from time immemorial. This, therefore, gives me strong hopes that he is really destined to be a hero of some note before I am done with him. It has thrown him, for the present, into a deep shade. And yet,—shortsighted mortal!—so

little suspicious was he that affairs had taken this turn, that all the next day (being Sunday) he was more like a man bordering upon insanity than a rational christian. His first impulse was to go over to the Brakes immediately after breakfast: then, he checked himself by the consideration that it was pushing matters too fiercely. After this, he thought of sending for Harvey Riggs to join us at dinner: then, he reflected that it wasn't Harvey he wished to see. He would sit down with a book in his hand, but would soon discover that he could not understand one sentence that he was reading. He would get up, and walk as far as the gate; look critically at the plum-tree, that had not the smallest appearance of fruit upon it and very few leaves, and then return to the house whistling, until Lucy or Vic would tell him, "it was Sunday and he must not whistle." At length, as a last resort, he went up to his chamber, and dressed himself out with extraordinary particularity in white drilling pantaloons, as stiff with starch as if they were made of foolscap paper, a white waistcoat, his green frock, a black stock, boots and his light, hair-cloth forage-cap. In this attire he appeared in the hall, with a riding whip in his hand, walking up and down in profound abstraction.

"Where are you going, Ned?" asked Meriwether.

"Going!" he replied, "I am going to stay at home."

"I beg your pardon! I thought you were about to ride." Meriwether passed on. Ned continued his walk.

"Where are you going, Edward?" asked my cousin Lucretia.

"Nowhere," said Ned. "I mean to stay at home." My cousin Lucretia disappeared.

"Edward, where are you going?" inquired Prudence.

"I am not going out," said Ned. Prudence decamped.

"Uncle Ned, may I go with you? shall I get Spitfire?" cried Rip, running into the hall.

"Where?" asked Ned, with some surprise.

"Wherever you are going to ride," answered Rip.

"Good people!" exclaimed Hazard. "What has got into the family! where would you have me go? what do you see? what do you want?"

"Arn't you going to ride?" asked Rip.

"By no means, my dear."—Away went Rip.

All this I saw from the porch. So, getting up from my seat, I also accosted him with the same question. "Where are you going?"

"The Lord knows, Mark! I have just dressed myself, and have been walking here, for want of something better to do. I wish it were to-morrow! for I don't like to go over yonder to-day. I think a man ought not to visit more than three times a week.—I feel very queerly this morning: I have been everywhere, gaping about like an apprentice-boy in his Sunday clothes. I have seen the horses in the stable, the fowls in the poultry-yard, the pigs, the negroes, and, in fact, I don't know what in the devil

to do with myself. Mark, we will go over to the Brakes to-morrow morning?"

"Oh, certainly. I think our affairs require some attention in that quarter. Why not go this evening?"

"I should like it very much," said Ned. "But it would alarm the family. I feel qualmish at being seen there too often. People are so fond of gossiping! No, no, we will wait until to-morrow."

These particulars will show the state of Hazard's mind, the day following the recovery of the hawk,—a day that passed heavily enough. Ned pretended to impute all this tediousness to Sunday, which, he remarked, was always the most difficult day in the week to get through.

On Monday morning we were at the Brakes by ten o'clock. Bel was busy with Fairbourne, and looked uncommonly fresh and gay. Her manner was affable, and too easy, I thought, considering the peculiar relation of her affairs, at this moment, towards Hazard. She addressed her conversation principally to me; and, once or twice, refused Ned's services in some little matters wherein it was natural he should offer them. I observed, moreover, that she did not second his attempts at wit as freely as she was used to do: they made me smile; but upon her they fell harmless and flat, like schoolboys' arrows headed with tar. All this seemed strange and boded ill. Hazard observed it; for it made him awkward; his cheek grew pale, and his words stuck in his throat.

In a short time some household matters called Bel away.

"The wind has changed," said Ned, in a half-whisper to me, as we walked to the parlour; "the thermometer is falling towards the freezing point. I wish this business was at the ——"

"Whist, Ned!" I exclaimed, "don't swear! There is some mistake in this matter: we'll talk to Harvey."

Harvey Riggs took a seat with us at the front door; and there, in a long, confidential and grave conference, he explained to us all that he knew of this perplexing affair. He said that he had been trying to bring Bel to reason, because he thought, to use his own phrase, "it was all flummery in her to be so hyperbolic with Ned;" but that she was struck, just between wind and water, with Hafen's rigmarole about Ned's boxing match; and that it would require some time to get this warp out of her fancy; that there was no question she was deeply wounded by all she had heard; but still he had hopes, that he would be able to set matters right again. "Ned," said he, "my dear fellow, let me warn you, at least until you are married, (if you are ever to have that luck,) to care how you make a fool of yourself; because it is sure immediately to turn Bel into a greater one. Mark, they are a miraculous pair of geese!" cried Harvey, breaking out into a loud laugh; and then singing out with a great flourish, to the tune of a popular song, the following doggerel—

And grant, oh Queen of fools! he said,
Thus ran the mooncalf's prayer—
That I may prove the drollest knight
And wed the queerest fair.

Ned absolutely raved. He thought he had the fairest occasion in the world to get into a passion ; and he, accordingly, fell to swearing against all womankind, in the most emphatic terms. As soon as he had "unpacked his heart" in this way, he dropped into another mood, and began to deplore his fate, pretty much as he had done on some of those former occasions that I have described ; and last of all,—which he ought to have done at first,—he became very reasonable ; and, in a calm, manly defence of himself, narrated circumstantially the whole affair ; showing, in the most conclusive manner, that he had been induced to accept Miles Rutherford's challenge, only because he did not choose to hear that graceless brawler pour out his vile abuse upon one so venerable in his eyes as Mr. Tracy.

"What could I do," said he, "but chastise such a scoundrel, for the irreverent mention, in such a circle, of the excellent old gentleman ? and, I humbly think, that, of all persons in the world, Bel Tracy is the last that has a right to complain of it."

"This sets the matter in a new light," said Harvey ; "I told Bel, I was certain Hasen had lied. Her worshipful minstrel, her rascally minnesinger makes a great figure in this business!"

Here Hazard's mood changed again. Nothing is so brave as a lover who has found good ground to rail against his mistress ; he may be as gentle as a pet squirrel, or a lamb that is fed by hand, as long as he has no confederate to encourage him in rebellion ; but no sooner does he receive a compassionate word from a by-stander, or enlist a party, than he

becomes the most peremptory and fearful of animals. Harvey's words stirred up Ned's soul into a sublime mutiny; and, for some minutes, he was more extravagant than ever. He would let Bel see that she had made a sad mistake, when she imagined that he was going to surrender his free agency, his judgment, his inclinations, his sense of duty to her! It became a man to take a stand in affairs of this nature! He scorned to put on a character to win a woman, that he did not mean to support afterwards, if he should be successful: it would be rank hypocrisy! What, in the devils' name, did she expect of him!—to stand by, and acknowledge himself a man, when she—yes, she herself—for an attack upon her father was an attack upon her—was reviled and made the subject of profane jest and vituperation on the lips of an outlaw! Let Bel consider it in this point of view, and how could she possibly find fault with him?"

"Yes. Let Bel consider it in this point of view!" said Harvey, chiming in with a droll and affected gravity; "I'll go and put the subject to her in this light, this very instant."

"No," said Ned, "you need not be in a hurry. But, in earnest, Harvey, at another time I would like you to do it: it is but justice."

"I'll harrow up," replied Harvey, with a deep tragic voice, "her inmost soul."

"In order that you may have free scope," said Hazard, "it will be better for Mark and me to set off home immediately."

"Sir Lucius, we won't run," said I, laughing.

"Do you think there is danger, Ned? shall we make a rapid retreat?"

"'Brush,'" exclaimed Harvey, "the sooner you are off, the better!" I will meet you anon, and report to you at Swallow Barn."

Without taking leave of the family we commenced our retreat; and during the ride Ned displayed the same alternations of feeling that were manifested in our interview with Harvey. These emotions resolved themselves, at last, into one abiding and permanent determination, and that, considering the character and temper of Hazard, was sufficiently comic, namely,—that in his future intercourse with Bel, he would invariably observe the most scrupulous regard to all the high-flown and overstrained elegancies and proprieties of conduct which she so pretended to idolize. His humour was that of dogged submission to her most capricious whims. Never did spaniel seem so humbled.

"I know I shall make a fool of myself," said he, "but that is her look-out, not mine. I'll give her enough of her super-subtle, unimaginable, diabolical dignity!—I will be the very essence of dulness, and the quintessence of decorum!—I will turn myself into an ass of the first water, until I make her so sick of pedantry and sentiment, that a good fellow shall go free with her all the rest of her life!"

CHAPTER XII.**A COUNCIL OF WAR.**

As soon as we had left the Brakes Harvey sought an opportunity to communicate to Bel all that he had learned from us in regard to the cause and circumstances of the quarrel between Ned and Rutherford; presenting to her, in the strongest point of view he was able, the signal injustice she had done to so faithful and devoted a lover. "I should not have regarded the matter a rush," said Harvey, "if it were not that Ned, as I have often told you, is one of the most sensitive creatures alive, and so much inclined to melancholy that there is no knowing what effect such an incident may have upon his temper." Bel smiled incredulously, and seemed as if she did not know whether to take Harvey in jest or earnest.

"You may treat this lightly," continued Harvey, "but I am sure you will feel some unpleasant misgivings when you come to reflect on it." She smiled again.

"It is not a just return for that admirable constancy," Harvey proceeded, "which Ned, notwithstanding his upper current of levity, has always shown towards you; and which, amidst all his waywardness, has always set steadily towards you. If

he has been volatile in his pursuits, you cannot deny that he has connected you with the pleasantest passages of his life; if he has been strange in his conduct, now and then, it is very obvious that he has never ceased to feel the desire to make himself agreeable to you; if he has occasionally erred from the straight line of decorum, every transgression may be traced to some ardent endeavour to support your cause, even at the expense of your good opinion. Now, this is what I call faith, honour and gallantry: It shows single heartedness, homage and modesty. It is in the very best strain of a cavalier devoted to his lady-love; and has more true chivalry in it than all the formal courtesies in the world--"

Bel began to look grave.

"It cuts Ned to the heart to think his mistress ungrateful; and, particularly, that she should listen to a vile strolling pedler, and take his account of a fray as if it were gospel, instead of suspending her opinion until she should have a more authentic relation from himself. This has sunk deeper into his feelings than any act of unkindness that ever befel him. And from you, Bel!--Conceive what anguish Ned must have experienced when your cold looks chided him for one of the most disinterested actions of his life."

"Why didn't he tell us all about this quarrel when he brought the hawk home?" said Bel. "Why was he silent then, I should like to know?"

"Was it for him," asked Harvey, "to vaunt his exploits in your ear? A brave man naturally forbears to speak of his achievements; and therein is

Ned's true modesty of character conspicuous. He would have concealed this from *you* until he had grown gray, lest you might have been tempted to think he played the braggart with you. I cannot sufficiently admire such forbearance."

"Ah me, cousin!" said Bel, "I do not know what to think: You perplex me. I would not willingly offend the meanest creature that lives. I am sure I have no reason to be unkind to Mr. Hazard. But still it is not my fault that I cannot set the same value upon his virtues that you and others do.—I almost wish I had not been so marked in my demeanour to him this morning. I am sure I am not ungrateful in my temper, cousin Harvey: Did he speak much of it?"

"Rather in sorrow than in anger," returned Harvey. "But the thought haunted him all the time he was here. He broke out once or twice and swore."

"Swore at *me*?" exclaimed Bel.

"No; I was mistaken in saying he swore. He gave vent to some piteous feelings,—as well he might:—but they were expressed chiefly in sighs."

"I wish I knew whether you were in earnest, Harvey," said Bel, beseechingly. "Mercy on me! I do not know what to think. I wish I were in heaven! And still, I won't believe Ned Hazard cares the thousandth part as much for me as you make out."

This was not true, for Bel was inwardly very much moved with the whole relation, and began to

feel, what she never before acknowledged, that Ned had a very fair claim to her consideration.

Harvey was making an experiment upon her heart; and, having set her to musing over the affair, left her to settle the case with her own conscience. He had now satisfied himself that Ned, if he used even ordinary discretion, might turn the accident to good account; and he therefore said nothing more to Bel, knowing that the more she thought of what had passed, the graver would be the impression on her mind.

The next morning he hastened over to Swallow Barn, where, like a trusty minister, he detailed the sum of his observations in a solemn council, convoked for that purpose.

Never was any topic more minutely or more ably discussed. We all agreed that Ned's prospects were brightening; that a crisis had arrived which it required great judgment to manage with effect; and that, above all things, he must be very guarded for the future. It was also resolved that he should henceforth be more special and direct in his attentions, and not scruple to assume the posture of an avowed lover: that he should put on as much propriety of manner as might be found requisite to gratify Bel's most visionary requisitions; and that, in particular, he must neither swear in her presence, nor talk lightly before her.

"Oh, as to that," said Ned, who had grown as pliant as a trained hound in our hands, "I have already resolved to show her that I can play the part of the most solemn fool in the world. But, what perplexes me most is to find out some sentimental

subject for conversation. I shall commit myself by some egregious blunder of a joke, if I get to talking at random. Faith, I have a great mind to write down a whole discourse and commit it to memory."

"Talk to her," said Harvey, "upon classical matters. Show her your learning. She thinks you don't read; rub up some of your college pedantry: any thing man;—give her a little of the heathen mythology!"

"Oh, I'll do it!" cried Ned with exultation. "I'll astonish her with the Encyclopedia!"

"Take care, though," interrupted Harvey, "to season it well with delicate and appropriate allusions to the affair in hand. Let it be congenial and lover-like; no matter how nonsensical. But don't be bombastic, Ned."

"Trust me!" he replied, "I'll suit her to the twentieth part of a scruple."

Here our conclave broke up with a flash of merriment; and we did nothing but jest all the rest of the day.

Harvey dined with us; and when, in the evening, he thought of returning, Carey came into the parlour to make a proposition which had the effect to detain our guest with us all that night. The incident that followed will require a chapter to itself.

CHAPTER XIII.

WOODCRAFT.

WHEN Carey came into the parlour he pulled off his hat and made a profound bow ; and then advanced to the back of Ned's chair, where, in a low and orderly tone of voice, he made the following grave and interesting disclosure : namely, that the boys—meaning some of the other negroes that belonged to the plantation,—had found out what had been disturbing the poultry-yard for some time past : that it was not a nink, as had been given out, but nothing less than a large old *'possum* that had been traced to a gum tree over by the river, about a mile distant : that the boys had *diskivered* him (to use Carey's own term) by some feathers near the tree ; and, when they looked into the hollow, they could see his eyes shining "like foxfire." He said they had been trying to screw him out, by thrusting up a long stick cut with a fork at the end, (an approved method of bringing out squirrels, foxes and rabbits from their holes, and much in practice in the country,) and tangling it in his hair, but that this design was abandoned under the supposition that, perhaps, Master Edward would like to hunt him in the regular way.

Ned professed a suitable concern in the intelligence ; but inquired of Carey, whether he, as an old

sportsman, thought it lawful to hunt an opossum at midsummer. This interrogatory set the old negro to chuckling, and afterwards, with a wise look, to putting the several cases in which he considered a hunt at the present season altogether consonant with prescriptive usage. He admitted that *'possums* in general were not to be followed till persimmon time, because they were always fattest when that fruit was ripe ; but, when they couldn't get persimmons they were "mighty apt" to attack the young fowls and cut their throats : That it was good law to hunt any sort of creature when he was known to be doing mischief to the plantation. But even then, Carey affirmed with a "howsomdever," and "nevertheless," that if they carried young, and especially a "*'possum*," (which has more young ones than most other beasts,) he thought they ought to be let alone until their appropriate time. This, however, was a large male opossum, that was known to be engaged in nefarious practices ; and, moreover, was "shocking fat ;" and therefore, upon the whole, Carey considered him as a lawful subject of chase.

To this sagacious perpending of the question, and to the conclusion which the veteran had arrived at, Ned could oppose no valid objection. He, therefore, replied that he was entirely convinced that he, Carey, had taken a correct view of the subject ; and that if Mr. Riggs and Mr. Littleton could be prevailed upon to lend a hand, nothing would be more agreeable than the proposed enterprise.

We were unanimous on the proposition. Harvey agreed to defer his return to the Brakes until the

next morning ; and it was arranged that we should be apprized by Carey when the proper hour came round to set out on the expedition. Carey then detailed the mode of proceeding : A watch was to be set near the hen-roost, the dogs were to be kept out of the way, lest they might steal upon the enemy unawares, and destroy him without a chase ; notice was to be given of his approach ; and one or two of those on the watch were to frighten him away ; and after allowing him time enough to get back to the woods, the dogs were to be put upon the trail and to pursue him until he was *treed*.

Having announced this, the old servant bowed again and left the room, saying, that it would be pretty late before we should be called out, because it was natural to these thieving animals to wait until people went to bed ; and that a '*possum*' was one of the cunningest things alive.

Midnight arrived without a summons from our leader : the family had long since retired to rest ; and we began to fear that our vigil was to end in disappointment. We had taken possession of the settees in the hall, and had almost dropped asleep, when, about half past twelve, Carey came tiptoeing through the back door and told us, in a mysterious whisper, that the depredator upon the poultry-yard had just been detected in his visit : that big Ben (for so one of the negroes was denominated, to distinguish him from little Ben,) had been out and saw the animal skulking close under the fence in the neighbourhood of the roost. Upon this intelligence, we rose and followed the old domestic to the designated spot.

Here were assembled six or seven of the negroes, men and boys, who were clustered into a group at a short distance from the poultry-yard. Within a hundred paces the tall figure of big Ben was discerned, in dim outline, proceeding cautiously across a field until he had receded beyond our view. A nocturnal adventure is always attended with a certain show of mystery: the presence of darkness conjures up in every mind an indefinite sense of fear, faint, but still sufficient to throw an interest around trivial things, to which we are strangers in the daytime. The little assembly of blacks that we had just joined were waiting in noiseless reserve for some report from Ben; and, upon our arrival, were expressing in low and wary whispers, their conjectures as to the course the game had taken, or recounting their separate experience as to the habits of the animal. It was a cloudless night; and the obscure and capacious vault above us showed its thousands of stars, with a brilliancy unusual at this season. A chilling breeze swept through the darkness and fluttered the neighbouring foliage with an alternately increasing and falling murmur. Some of the younger negroes stood bareheaded, with no clothing but coarse shirts and trowsers, shivering amongst the crowd; and, every now and then, breaking out into exclamations, in a pitch of voice that called down the reproof their elders. Ned commanded all to be silent and to seat themselves upon the ground; and while we remained in this position, Ben reappeared and came directly up to the circle. He reported that he had detected the object of our quest near at hand; and

had followed him through the weeds and stubble of the adjoining field, until he had seen him take a course which rendered it certain that he had been sufficiently alarmed by the rencounter to induce him to retire to the gum. It was, therefore, Ben's advice that Ned, Harvey, and myself, should take Carey as a guide, and get, as fast as we could, to the neighbourhood of the tree spoken of, in order that we might be sure to see the capture; and that he would remain behind, where, after a delay long enough to allow us to reach our destination, he would put the dogs, which were now locked up in the stable, upon the trail; and then come on as rapidly as they were able to follow the scent.

Ben had the reputation of being an oracle in matters of woodcraft; and his counsel was, therefore, implicitly adopted. Carey assured us that "there was no mistake in him," and that we might count upon arriving at the appointed place, with the utmost precision, under his piloting. We accordingly set forward. For nearly a mile we had to travel through weeds and bushes; and having safely accomplished this, we penetrated into a piece of swampy woodland that lay upon the bank of the river. Our way was sufficiently perplexed; and, notwithstanding Carey's exorbitant boasting of his thorough knowledge of the ground, we did not reach the term of our march without some awkward mistakes,—such as taking ditches for fallen trees, and blackberry bushes for smooth ground. Although the stars did their best to afford us light, the thickness of the wood into which we had advanced wrapt us, at times, in im-

penetrable gloom. During this progress we were once stopped by Harvey calling out, from some twenty paces in the rear, that it was quite indispensable to the success of the expedition, so far as he was concerned, that Carey should correct a topographical error, into which he, Mr. Riggs, found himself very unexpectedly plunged; "I have this moment," said he, "been seized by the throat by a most rascally grapevine; and in my sincere desire to get out of its way, I find that another of the same tribe has hooked me below the shoulders: Meantime, my hat has been snatched from my head; and, in these circumstances, gentlemen, perhaps it is not proper for me to budge a foot."

Notwithstanding these embarrassments, we at last reached the gum tree, and "halting in his shade," if the tree could be said to be proprietor of any part of this universal commodity, patiently awaited the events that were upon the wind. The heavy falling dew had shed a dampness through the air that had almost stiffened our limbs with cold. It was necessary that we should remain silent; and, indeed, the momentary expectation of hearing our followers advance upon our footsteps fixed us in a mute and earnest suspense. This feeling absorbed all other emotions for a time; when finding that they were not yet afoot, we began to look round upon the scene, and note the novel impressions it made upon our senses. The wood might be said to be vocal with a thousand unearthly sounds; for, the wakeful beings of midnight, that inhabit every spray and branch of the forest, are endued with voices of the harshest dis-

cord. The grove, that in daylight is resonant with melody, is now converted into a sombre theatre of gibbering reptiles, screeching insects and nightbirds of melancholy and grating cries: The concert is not loud, but incessant, and invades the ear with fiendish notes: it arouses thoughts that make it unpleasant to be alone. Through the trees the murky surface of the river was discernible, by the flickering reflections of the stars, with darkness brooding over the near perspective; in the bosom of this heavy shadow, a lonely taper shot its feeble ray from the cabin window of some craft at anchor; and this was reflected, in a long, sharp line, upon the water below it. The fretful beat of the waves was heard almost at our feet; and the sullen splash of a fish, springing after his prey, occasionally reached us with strange precision. Around us, the frequent crash of rotten boughs, breaking under the stealthy footstep of the marauder of the wood that now roamed for booty, arrested our attention and deceived us with the thought that the special object of our search was momentarily approaching.

Still, however, no actual sign was yet given us that our huntsmen were on their way. Harvey grew impatient and took our old guide to task for having mistaken his course; but Carey persisted that he was right, and that this delay arose only from Ben's wary caution to make sure of his game. At length, a deep-toned and distant howl reached us from the direction of the house.—

“Big Ben's awake now,” said Carey; “that's

Cæsar's voice, and he never speaks without telling truth."

We were all attention; and the *tonguing* of this dog was followed by the quick yelping of four or five others. Ned directed Carey to seat himself at the foot of the gum tree, in order that he might prevent the opossum from retreating into the hollow; and then suggested that we should conceal ourselves under the neighbouring bank.

By this time, the cries of the dogs were redoubled, and indicated the certainty of their having fallen upon the track of their prey. Carey took his seat, with his back against the opening of the hollow, and we retired to the bank, under the shelter of some large and crooked roots of a sycamore that spread its bulk above the water. Whilst in this retreat, the halloos of Ben and his assistants, encouraging the dogs, became distinctly audible, and gradually grew stronger upon our hearing. Every moment the animation of the scene increased; the clamour grew musical as it swelled upon the wind; and we listened with a pleasure that one would scarce imagine could be felt under such circumstances, instantly expecting the approach of our companions. It was impossible longer to remain inactive; and, with one impulse, we sprang from our hiding-place, and hurried to the spot where we had left old Carey stationed as a sentinel at the door of the devoted quadruped's home. At this moment, as if through the influence of a spell, every dog was suddenly hushed into profound silence.

"They have lost their way," said Ned, "or else

the animal has taken to the brook and confounded the dogs. Is it not possible, Carey, that he has been driven into a tree nearer home?"

"Never mind!" replied Carey, "that 'possum's down here in some of these bushes watching us. Bless you! if the dogs had treed him you would hear them almost crazy with howling. These 'possums never stay to take a chase, because they are the sorriest things in life to get along on level ground;—they sort of hobble; and that's the reason they always take off,—as soon as they see a body,—to their own homes. You trust big Ben; he knows what he's about."

The chase, in an instant, opened afresh; and it was manifest that the pursuers were making rapidly for the spot on which we stood. Carey begged us to get back to our former concealment; but the request was vain. The excitement kept us on foot, and it was with difficulty we could be restrained from rushing forward to meet the advancing pack. Instead, however, of coming down to the gum tree, the dogs suddenly took a turn and sped, with urgent rapidity, in a contrary direction, rending the air with a clamour that far exceeded any thing we had yet heard. "We have lost our chance!" cried Harvey. "Here have we been shivering in the cold for an hour to no purpose. What devil tempted us to leave Ben? Shall we follow?"

"Pshaw, master Harvey!" exclaimed the old negro,—“don't you know better than that? It's only some *varmint* the dogs have got up in the woods. When you hear such a desperate barking, and such hard running as that, you may depend the dogs have

hit upon a gray-fox, or something of that sort, that can give them a run. No 'possum there! Big Ben isn't a going to let Cæsar sarve him that fashion!"

Ben's voice was heard, at this period, calling back the dogs and reproving them for going astray; and, having succeeded in a few minutes, in bringing them upon their former scent, the whole troop were heard breaking through the undergrowth, in a direction leading immediately to the tree.

"Didn't I tell you so, young masters!" exclaimed Carey.

"There he is! there he is!" shouted Ned. "Look out Carey! Guard the hole! He has passed. Well done, old fellow! I think we have him now."

This quick outcry was occasioned by the actual apparition of the opossum, almost at the old man's feet. The little animal had been lying close at hand; and, alarmed at the din of the approaching war, had made an effort to secure his retreat. He came creeping slyly towards the tree; but, finding his passage intercepted, had glided noiselessly by, and, in a moment, the moving and misty object, that we had obscurely discerned speeding with an awkward motion through the grass, was lost to view. A few seconds only elapsed, and the dogs swept past us with the fleetness of the wind. They did not run many paces before they halted at the root of a large chestnut that threw its aged and ponderous branches over an extensive surface, and whose distant extremities almost drooped back to the earth. Here they assembled, an eager and obstreperous pack, bounding wildly from place to place, and looking up and

howling, with that expressive gesture that may be seen in this race of animals when they are said to be baying the moon.

This troop of dogs presented a motley assortment. There were two conspicuous for their size and apparently leaders of the company,—a mixture of hound and mastiff—that poured out their long, deep and bugle-like tones, with a fulness that was echoed back from the farther shore of the river, and which rang through the forest with a strength that must have awakened the sleepers at the mansion we had left. Several other dogs of inferior proportions, even down to the cross and peevish terrier of the kitchen, yelped, with every variety of note,—sharp, quick and piercing to the ear. This collection was gathered from the negro families of the plantation; and they were all familiar with the discipline of the wild and disorderly game in which they were engaged. A distinguished actor in this scene was our old friend Wilful, who, true to all his master's pranks, appeared in the crowd with officious self-importance, bounding violently above the rest, barking with an unnecessary zeal, and demeaning himself, in all respects, like a gentlemanly, conceited, pragmatical and good-natured spaniel. This canine rabble surrounded the tree, and, with vain efforts, attempted to scale the trunk, or started towards the outer circumference, and jumped upwards, with an earnestness that showed that their sharp sight had detected their fugitive aloft.

In this scene of clamour and spirited assault Ben and our old groom were the very masters of the storm. They were to be seen every where exhort-

ing, cheering and commanding their howling subordinates, and filling up the din with their no less persevering and unmeasured screams.

“Speak to him Cæsar!” shouted Carey in a prolonged and hoarse tone—“Speak to him, old fellow!—That’s a beauty!”

“Howl, Boson!” roared Ben, to another of the dogs. “Whoop! Whoop! let him have it!—sing out!—keep it up, Flower!”

“Wilful! you rascal,” cried Ned. “Mannerly, keep quiet; would you jump out of your skin, old dog?—quiet, until you can do some good.”

A rustling noise was heard in some of the higher branches of the tree, and we became advised that our besieged enemy was betaking himself to the most probable place of safety. The moon, in her last quarter, was seen at this moment, just peering above the screen of forest that skirted the eastern horizon; and a dim ray was beginning to relieve the darkness of the night. This aid came opportunely for our purpose, as it brought the top of the chestnut in distinct relief upon the faintly illuminated sky. The motion of the upper leaves betrayed to Ben the position of the prey; and, in an instant, he swung himself up to the first bough, and proceeded urgently upward. “I see the *varmint* here in the crotch of one of the tip-top branches!” he exclaimed to us, as he hurried onward. “Look out below!”

The terrified animal, on finding his pursuer about to invade his place of safety, speedily abandoned it; and we could distinctly hear him making his way to the remote extremity of the limb. As soon as he had

gained this point he became visible to us all, clinging like an excrescence that had grown to the slender twigs that sustained him. Ben followed as near as he durst venture with his heavy bulk, and began to whip the bough up and down, with a vehement motion that flung the animal about through the air, like a ball on the end of a supple rod. Still, however, the way-laid freebooter kept his hold with a desperate tenacity.

During this operation the dogs, as if engrossed with the contemplation of the success of the experiment, had ceased their din; and, at intervals only, whined with impatience.

"He can never stand that," said Harvey, as if involuntarily speaking his thoughts. "Look out! he is falling. No, he has saved himself again!"

Instead of coming to the ground, the dexterous animal, when forced at last to abandon the limb, only dropped to a lower elevation, where he caught himself again amongst the foliage, in a position apparently more secure than the first. The dogs sprang forward, as if expecting to receive him on the earth; and, with the motion, uttered one loud and simultaneous cry:—Their disappointment was evinced in an eager and impressive silence. The negroes set up a shout of laughter; and one of them ejaculated, with an uncontrolled merriment,—

"'Not going to get possum from top of tree at one jump, I know. He come down stairs presently. Terrible *varmint* for grabbing!—his tail as good as his hand,—Oh, oh!"

Ben now called out to know how far he had

dropped; and being informed, was immediately busy in the endeavour to reach the quarter indicated.

A repetition of the same stratagem, that had been employed above, produced the same result; and the badgered outlaw descended still lower, making good his lodgement with a grasp instinctively unerring, but now rendered more sure by the frightful death that threatened him below. This brought him within fifteen feet of the jaws of his ruthless enemies.

The frantic howl, screech, and halloo that burst from dog, man, and boy, when the object of their pursuit thus became distinctly visible, and their continued reduplications—breaking upon the air with a wild, romantic fury—were echoed through the lonely forest at this unwonted hour, like some diabolical incantation, or mystic rite of fantastic import, as they have been sometimes fancied in the world of fiction, to picture the orgies of a grotesque superstition. The whole pack of dogs was concentrated upon one spot, with heads erect and open mouths, awaiting the inevitable descent of their victim into the midst of their array.

Ben, indefatigable in his aim, had already arrived at the junction of the main branch of the tree with the trunk; and there united in the general uproar. Hazard now interposed and commanded silence; and then directed the people to secure the dogs, as his object was to take the game alive. This order was obeyed, but not without great difficulty; and, after a short delay, every dog was fast in hand. We took time, at this juncture, to pause. At Ned's suggestion, Wilful was lifted up by one of the negroes,

with the assistance of Ben, to the first bough, which being stout enough to give the dog, practised in such exploits, a foothold, though not the most secure, he was here encouraged, at this perilous elevation, to renew the assault. Wilful crept warily upon his breast, squatting close to the limb, until he reached that point where it began to arch downward, and from whence it was no longer possible for him to creep farther. During this endeavour he remained mute, as if devoting all his attention to the safe accomplishment of his purpose ; but as soon as he gained the point above mentioned, he recommenced barking with unwearied earnestness. The opossum began now to prepare himself for his last desperate effort. An active enemy in his rear had cut off his retreat, and his further advance was impossible, without plunging into the grasp of his assailants. As if unwilling to meet the irrevocable doom, and anxious to linger out the brief remnant of his minutes, even in agony,—showing how acceptable is life in its most wretched category,—the devoted quadruped still refused the horrid leap ; but, releasing his fore feet, swung downwards from the bough, holding fast by his hind legs and tail,—the latter being endued with a strong contractile power and ordinarily used in this action. Here he exhibited the first signs of pugnacity ; and now snapped and snarled towards the crowd below, showing his long array of sharp teeth, with a fierceness that contrasted singularly with the cowering timidity of his previous behaviour. In one instant more Wilful, as if no longer able to restrain his impatience, or, perhaps, desirous to signalize him-

self by a feat of bravery, made one spring forward into the midst of the foliage that hung around his prey, and came to the ground, bringing with him the baffled subject of all this eager pursuit.

Ned seized Wilful in the same moment that he reached the earth; and thus prevented him from inflicting a wound upon his captive. The opossum, instead of assaying a fruitless effort to escape, lay upon the turf, to all appearance, dead. One or two of those who stood around struck him with their feet; but, faithful to the wonderful instinct of his nature, he gave no signs of animation; and when Hazard picked him up by the tail, and held him suspended at arm's length with the dogs baying around him, the counterfeit of death was still preserved.

More with a view to exhibit the peculiarities of the animal than to prolong the sport, Hazard flung him upon the ground and directed us to observe his motions. For a few moments he lay as quiet as if his last work had been done; and then slowly and warily turning his head round, as if to watch his captors, he began to creep, at a snail's pace, in a direction of safety; but, no sooner was pursuit threatened, or a cry raised, than he fell back into the same supine and deceitful resemblance of a lifeless body.

He was at length taken up by Ben, who causing him to grasp a short stick with the end of his tail, (according to a common instinct of this animal) threw him over his shoulders, and prepared to return homeward.

It was now near three o'clock; and we speedily

betook ourselves to the mansion, fatigued with the exploits of the night.

"After all," said Harvey Riggs, as he lit a candle in the hall, preparatory to a retreat to his chamber, "we have had a great deal of toil to very little purpose. It is a savage pleasure to torture a little animal with such an array of terrors, merely because he makes his livelihood by hunting. God help us, Ned, if we were to be punished for such pranks!"

"To tell the truth," replied Ned, "I had some such misgivings myself to-night, and that's the reason I determined to take our captive alive. To-morrow I shall have him set at liberty again; and I think it probable he will profit by the lesson he has had, to avoid molesting the poultry-yard!"

CHAPTER XIV.

ONE ACT OF A FARCE.

THE next morning we fell into a consultation, or rather resolved ourselves into a committee of the whole, on the subject of Ned's affairs; and the result of our deliberation was, that we should forthwith proceed to the Brakes, and there renew our operations as circumstances might favour.

Hazard, it will be remembered, had determined to assume a more sapient bearing in his intercourse with Bel, and to dazzle her with a display of learning and sentiment. "I will come up, Mark," said he, "as near as possible to that model of precision and grace, the ineffable Swansdown,—whom Bel thinks one of the lights of the age."

Ned, accordingly, withdrew to make his toilet; and, in due time, reappeared, decked out in a new suite of clothes, adjusted with a certain air of fashion that he knew very well how to put on. His cravat, especially, was worthy of observation, as it was composed with that elaborate and ingenious skill which, more than the regulation of any other part of the apparel, denotes a familiarity with the usages of the world of dandyism.

"I fancy this will do," said he, eyeing his person, and turning himself round so as to invite our inspec-

tion. "I think I have seized upon that secret grace that fascinates the imagination of female beholders."

We agreed that nothing could be better.

"I flatter myself," he continued, pleased with the conceit, "that I shall amaze her to-day. But remember, you are not to laugh, nor make any remarks upon my conversion. I mean to conduct this thing with a sort of every day ease."

"You may trust us," said Harvey, "if you are careful not to overdo your own play. Don't be too preposterous."

Here ended all that is necessary to be told of the preliminaries to our visit, and we now shift the scene to the moment when our triumvirate arrived at the Brakes, somewhere about eleven o'clock.

We found the ladies preparing to take a morning ride. Their horses were at the door, and Ralph was ready to escort them. Our coming was hailed with pleasure; and we were immediately enlisted in their service. I thought I could perceive some expression of wonder in Bel's face when her eye fell upon Hazard; and indeed his appearance could scarcely escape remark from any one intimately acquainted with him. His demeanor corresponded to his dress. Instead of the light, careless, cavalier manner in which he was wont to address the family at the Brakes, there was an unsmiling sobriety in his accost, and a rather awkward gravity. Bel imputed this to the coldness she had shown at their former interview; and, annoyed by the reflection that she had unjustly dealt with him, she was now almost as awkward as himself in framing her deportment in

such wise as might convey her regret for what had passed, without absolutely expressing it in language.

This desire on her part favoured our design, and we had therefore little difficulty, when we came to mount our horses, to despatch Bel and Hazard in the van of the party. I immediately took Catharine under my convoy ; and Harvey and Ralph brought up the rear.

For the first fifteen minutes our conversation was all common-place ; and Ned frequently looked round with a droll expression of faint-heartedness. We had chosen a road that wound through the shade of a thick wood, and our horses' feet fell silently upon the sand. In a short time we arrived at a piece of scenery of very peculiar features. It was an immense forest of pine, of which the trees, towering to the height of perhaps a hundred feet or more, grew in thick array, shooting up their long and sturdy trunks to nearly their full elevation without a limb, resembling huge columns of a slaty hue, and uniting their clustered tops in a thick and dark canopy. No other vegetation diversified the view ; even the soil below exhibited the naked sand, or was sparsely covered with a damp moss, which was seen through the russet veil formed by the fallen and withered foliage of the wood. This forest extended in every direction as far as the eye could pierce its depths,—an image of desolate sterility ; and the deep and quiet shade which hung over the landscape cast upon it a melancholy obscurity. Where the road penetrated this mass the trees had been cut away in regular lines, so as to leave, on either side, a perpen-

dicular wall of mathematical precision, made up of vast pillars that furnished a resemblance to a lengthened aisle in some enormous cathedral.

When we entered into this pass, Bel, with her hair-brained cavalier, was still in advance; and the rest of us were riding immediately after them in one platoon. Ned was evidently daunted, and by no means played off the bold game he had threatened; but an opportunity now arrived, and as if taking courage from the occasion, he launched out in a style that took us by surprise.

Bel had remarked to him the uncommon character of the scene, and said that, from its novelty, it had always been a favourite spot. "This place is familiar to you," she added.—

"I know each lane," said he, quoting from Milton, with an emphatic earnestness—

"And every alley green,
Dingle and bushy dell, in this wild wood."

"And every bosky bourne," said Harvey, from the rear, drawling it out, like a school-boy reciting verses.—

"From side to side,
My daily walks and ancient neighbourhood."

—"Hold your profane tongue, Harvey! It is not fit for such as you to mar the thoughts of the divine bard by uttering them with your jesting lips."

Bel stared at Ned and then smiled.

"Riggs," continued Hazard, "is the most inveterate jester I ever knew. He spreads the contagion into all societies. For my part, I think there

are scenes in nature, as there are passages in life, which ought to repress merriment in the most thoughtless minds ; and this is one of them. Such a spot as this kindles up a sort of absorbing, superstitious emotion in me that makes me grave."

"I observe that you are grave," remarked Bel.

"Since I left college," said Ned, "and particularly since my last return to Swallow Barn, I have devoted a great deal of my time to the study of those sources of poetical thought and association which lurk amongst the foundations of society."—

"Hear that!" whispered Harvey to me.

"I venerate," proceeded Ned, "old usages ; popular errors have a charm for my imagination, and I do not like to see them rubbed out. 'The superstitious, idleheaded eld,' as the poet calls it, has a volume of delightful lore that I study with rapture. And although, I dare say, you have never observed my secret devotion to such pursuits.—"

"No indeed! I never suspected you of it," interrupted Bel.

—"I have taken great pains to preserve the race of sprites and witches from the ruin that threatens them. The poetry of this local mythology, Bel, is always rich, and renders the people who possess it not only more picturesque, but more national, and, in many respects, more moral."

"I am delighted to hear you say so," said Bel, innocently, "for I have precisely the same opinion."

"Indeed!" exclaimed Ned. "I did not know there was another human being in Virginia that would venture to acknowledge this."

“Nor I neither,” whispered Harvey again; “we shall hear more anon.”

“This belief,” continued Ned, “is, to the ignorant, a tangible religion which takes hold of the vulgar imagination with a salutary terror; while to cultivated minds it furnishes treasures of classical beauty. The ancients”—

“Heaven preserve us!” said Harvey, still in a low voice; “now for something in the style of parson Chub.”

Ned turned round and smiled. “The ancients, Bel—I see Harvey does not believe me—but the ancients stocked such a place as this with tutelary deities: they had their nymphs of the wood and grove, of the plain, of the hill, the valley, the fountain, the river, and the ocean. I think they numbered as many as three thousand. I can hardly tell you their different denominations; but there were Oreads and Dryads and Hamadryads, Napeæ, Nereids, Naiads, and—the devil knows what all!”

“That was a slip,” said Harvey, aside; “one more and he is a lost man.”

Bel opened her eyes with amazement at this volley of learning, as if utterly at a loss to understand its meaning.

“Our English ancestors,” proceeded Ned, “in the most palmy age of their poetry, had their goblin and elf and *oupe*, ‘swart fairy of the mine,’ ‘blue meagre hag,’ and ‘stubborn unlaid ghost,’—to say nothing of witch and devil. Our times, more philosophic, have sadly dispeopled these pleasure-grounds of romance.”

"Indeed have they!" cried Bel, who was listening in wondering attention.

"You see it every where," added Ned; "they are gradually driving away even the few harmless wanderers that, for a century past, inhabited such spots as this; and in a short time we shall not have the groundwork for a single story worth reading."

"Ned calls that sentiment," said Harvey. "It looks amazingly like a schoolmaster's lecture."

This remark, although intended only for us in the rear, was overheard by both Ned and Bel; upon which Ned reined up his horse, so as to face us, and burst out a-laughing.

"I'll thank you, Harvey Riggs," said he, "when I am engaged in a confidential discourse, to keep your proper distance: I do not choose to have such an impenetrable, hardened outlaw to all the fascinations of romance and poetry, within hearing."

"Indeed, upon my word, cousin Harvey!" said Bel, "Mr. Hazard has been contributing very much to my edification."

We had now passed the confines of the pine forest, and were following a road that led by a circuit round to the Brakes, so as to approach the house from the quarter opposite to that by which we had left it. By this track it was not long before we concluded our ride and found ourselves assembled in the parlour.

"How did I acquit myself?" inquired Ned of Harvey and myself, when we were left alone.

"You have utterly astounded us both," replied Harvey; "and, what is better, Bel is quite enchant-

ed. Where, in the name of balderdash! did you get all that nonsense?"

"'Gad, I once wrote an essay on popular superstitions!" answered Ned, "and had it all at my finger-ends. So, I thought I would take the chance of the pine forest to give it to Bel."

"It had a very prosy air," said Harvey. "However, you are on the right track."

During the day Ned made a great many efforts at sentiment, but they generally ended either in unmeaning words or dull discourses, which came from him with a gravity and an earnestness that attracted universal remark; and by nightfall, it was admitted by the ladies, that Hazard had a good deal of information on topics to which he was hitherto deemed a total stranger, but that he had certainly lost some of his vivacity. Catharine said, "she was sure something unpleasant had occurred to him: his manners were strange;—she should not be surprised if he had some affair of honour on hand,—for, he evidently talked like a man who wanted to conceal his emotions. It was just the way with gentlemen who were going to fight a duel."

Bel was also perplexed. She could not account for it, except by supposing that he was more deeply wounded by her conduct than he chose to confess. It made her unhappy. In short, Ned's substitution of a new character began already to make him dull, and to disturb the rest of the company.

When we announced our intention to return to Swallow Barn after tea, old Mr. Tracy interposed to prevent it. He said he had set his heart upon a

hand at whist, and that we must remain for his gratification. Our return was accordingly postponed; and when, at ten o'clock, the old gentleman retired to rest, we were challenged by Harvey to a game at brag. The consequence was, that, all unconscious of the flight of the hours, we were found in our seats when the servants came in the morning and threw open the shutters, letting in the daylight upon a group of sallow, bilious and night-worn faces, that were discovered brooding over a disorderly table, in the light of two candles that were flaring in their sockets and expending their substance, in overflowing currents, upon the board.

Alarmed by this disclosure, we broke up the sitting, and were shown by Ralph to our unseasonable beds.

CHAPTER XV.

THE FATE OF A HERO.

WHETHER it was that Hazard was anxious to conceal from the family his last night's frolic; or that his thoughts were engrossed with the approaching crisis in his affairs; or, perchance, that he was nervous from overwatching during the two previous nights, and unable to sleep, he rose early, and met the family at their usual breakfast time. Neither Harvey, Ralph, nor myself, suffered under the same difficulties, and, therefore, it was fully ten o'clock before we were seen in the parlour.

Ned's mien was truly sad. He had a haggard look, a stagnated, morbid complexion, and blood-shot eyes. His dress, which the day before had been adjusted with such an unwonted precision, afforded now an expressive testimony of the delinquent irregularity of its wearer. Nothing more infallibly indicates the long nocturnal revel than the disordered plight of the dress the next morning: a certain rakish air is sure to linger about its deepened folds, and betray the departure from the sober usages of life.

Hazard's manners corresponded with this unhappy exterior. A certain lassitude attended his movements, and a pitiful dejection sat upon his visage. If he had been master of his own actions, he would

never have risked the perilous fortunes of the day in his present shattered condition; but a spell was upon him, and it seemed as if fate had decreed him to abide the chance. He was moody; and conversed with the ladies with a bearing that implied an abstracted mind and an alarmed conscience. Sometimes, it is true, he raised his spirits to a forced gaiety, but it was manifest, in spite of this, that he was disquieted, pensive, and even melancholy. What added to the singularity of these phenomena was, that while Catharine and Bel were yet in the parlour, he got up abruptly, and wandered out upon the lawn, and then took a solitary ramble towards the river, where he was observed, from the windows, walking to and fro, absorbed in contemplation.

None of these symptoms of a perturbed imagination escaped Bel. She was exceedingly puzzled, and revolved in her mind all that had lately passed, to ascertain the cause. At length,—as it usually happens with women in such cases,—when she found herself unable to penetrate the mystery, her heart began to attune itself to pity. She grew to be quite distressed. Harvey read the workings of her thoughts in her face, and took an opportunity to draw her into a private conference.

“My dear Bel, you see how it is,” said he, shaking his head mournfully. “Poor fellow! I didn’t expect to see it come to such an extremity as this.”

“In the name of wonder, cousin! I pray you, what is it?” demanded Bel.—“You alarm me.”

“Ah!” returned Harvey, turning up his eyes, and laying his hand upon his breast—“It cannot be con-

cealed. These are the very doleful doings of the little Archer. The young gentleman is cruelly transfixed ;—he is spitted with the bolt, and is ready to be geared to a smoke-jack, and turned round and round before the fire that consumes him like a roasting woodcock.”

“ Let us have a truce to jesting,” said Bel.—“ And tell me, Harvey,—for indeed I cannot guess it,—what ails Mr. Hazard?”

“ You would never believe me,” replied Harvey, “ although I have told you a hundred times, that Ned was a man of deep and secret emotions. Now, you must perceive it ;—for the fact is becoming too plain to be mistaken. I consider it a misfortune for any man who wishes to stand well with a woman, to have been educated in habits of close intimacy with her. She is certain, in that case, to be the last person to do justice to his merits.”

“ It would be vanity in me, cousin,” said Bel, “ to persuade myself that Edward Hazard was so much interested in my regard as to grow ill on that account. What have his merits to do with any supposed attachment to me?”

“ He desires to be thought a liege man to his lady, Bel!” answered Harvey. “ To tell you the truth, Ned’s as full of romance as you are ; and I have been looking to see some extravagance that would defy all calculation : some freak that would not fail to convince even *you* that the man was on the verge of madness. And now, here it is ! he has gone through five degrees of love.”

“ Five degrees ! Pray, what are they ?”

“The first is the *mannerly* degree: it is taken at that interesting epoch when a man first begins to discover that a lady has an air, a voice, and a person more agreeable than others; he grows civil upon this discovery; and if he has any wit in him it is sure to appear. The next is the *poetical* degree; it was in this stage that we surprised Ned upon the bank of the river, when he was singing out your name so musically, for the entertainment of Mark Littleton. The third is the *quixotic* love, and carries a gentleman in pursuit of stray hawks, and sets him to breaking the heads of saucy bullies. The fourth is the *sentimental*; when out comes all his learning, and he fills his mistress’s head with unimaginable conceits. Then comes the *horrible*: you may know this, Bel, by a yellow cheek, a wild eye, a long beard, an unbrushed coat, and a most lamentable, woe-begone, lackadaisical style of conversation. This sometimes turns into the *furious*; and then, I would not answer for the consequences! It strikes me that Ned looks a little savage this morning.”

“Cousin, that is all very well said,” interrupted Bel. “But, I see none of your degrees in Edward Hazard.”

“Why, he has not slept a wink for two nights past,” said Harvey.

“And pray, what prevented him from sleeping?”

“Thinking of you, Bel! You have been buzzing about in his brain, like a bee in his night-cap. And it stands to reason! neither man nor beast can do without sleep. If he were a rhinoceros he must eventually sink under such privations. There he was,

the livelong night, stalking about like a spectre on the banks of Acheron!"

"And you, Harvey," added Bel, laughing, "were one of the principal imps that stalked by his side. You are not aware that I have been made acquainted with your vagaries. I happen to know that you were engaged in the refined and elegant amusement of hunting an opossum all night, with a band of negroes."

"Who was so indiscreet as to tell you that?" asked Harvey. "I am sure the story has been marred in the telling; and, therefore, I will relate to you the plain truth. Ned was uneasy in mind, and could not close his eyes; so, like the prince in the story-book, he summoned his followers to attend him to the chase, in the vain hope that he should find some relief from the thoughts that rankled—"

"Irreclaimable cousin Harvey!"

"Fact, I assure you! Nothing takes off the load from the mind like an opossum hunt."

"And then, last night," resumed Bel, "you were up playing cards until daylight. That was to chase away sorrow too, I suppose?"

"Ned could not sleep last night neither," said Harvey. "But Bel, don't say until *daylight*. We broke up at a very reasonable hour."

"I have heard all about it," answered Bel.

"I admit," returned Harvey, "that appearances are a little against us: but, they are only appearances. If you had seen how Ned played, you would have been satisfied that the game had no charms for him; for he sighed,—swore, and flung away his mo-

ney like a fool. I suppose he must have lost, at least, a hundred dollars."

"And with it, his good looks and peace of mind besides," added Bel. "Gaming, fighting and drinking! Ah, me!"

"All for love, Bel! all for love! It is the most *transmographying* passion!" exclaimed Harvey. "Things the most opposite in nature come out of it. Now, tell me honestly,—have you not seen a change in Ned that surprises you?"

"Indeed I have," answered Bel.

"What do you impute it to?"

"I am sure I do not know."

"Then, to be done with this levity," said Harvey, "it is what I have said. Ned is awkward in his zeal to serve you; but he is the truest of men. He gets into all manner of difficulties on your account, and suffers your displeasure like a martyr. He talks of you, even in his sleep; and grows tiresome to his friends with the eternal repetition of your praises. It is a theme which, if you do not put an end to it, will grow to be as hackneyed as a piece of stale politics. If you could make it consistent, Bel, with your other arrangements, I do really think it your duty to put the youth out of misery: for, he never will be fit company for any rational man until this infection is cured."

"You would not have me marry a man I do not love," said Bel, gravely.

"No, indeed, my dear Bel," returned Harvey. "But I have been all along supposing you did love him."

“ You know my objections,” said Bel.

“ I think they were all removed yesterday,” answered Harvey.

“ If they were, they have come back again to-day.”

“ That shows,” said Harvey, “ what a ticklish thing is this love. May the saints shield me from all such disasters as falling in love !”

“ Your prayer has been granted before it was asked,” returned Bel, smiling.

Here ensued a pause, during which the lady stood for some moments wrapt in thought, with her foot rapidly beating against the floor.

“ I do not think,” she said at last, “ at least, I am not altogether certain, cousin, that I love him well enough to”—

“ Faith, Bel, I think you come pretty near to it,” whispered Harvey; “ the longer you ponder over such a doubt, the clearer it will appear.—Drum it out with your foot ; that is the true device :—Love is very much a matter of the nerves after all.”

“ I will talk no more !” exclaimed Bel, with a lively emotion.

With these words, she retreated into the drawing-room, and sat down to the piano, where she played and sung as if to drown her thoughts.

During all this while, the unconscious subject of this colloquy was pursuing his secret meditations. It is meet that I should tell my reader what was the real cause of the cloud that sat upon his brow. In truth, he was endeavouring to screw his courage up to a deed of startling import. It was his fixed re-

solve, when he crept to his bed at the dawn, to bring matters, that very day, to some conclusion with his mistress ; and this fancy took such complete possession of his faculties, that he found it vain to attempt repose. His fortitude began to waver as the hour of meeting Bel drew nigh, and every moment shook the steadiness of his nerves. He cast a glance at the reflection of his forlorn figure in the glass, and his heart grew sick within him. As if ashamed of the tremor that invaded his frame, he swore a round oath to himself—that come what would, he would fulfil his purpose. It was in this state of feeling that he appeared at breakfast. Every instant the enterprise grew more terrible to his imagination ; until it was, at last, arrayed before his thoughts as something awful. It is a strange thing that so simple a matter should work such effects ; and stranger still, that, notwithstanding the painful sensations it excites, there should lurk at the bottom of the heart a certain remainder of pleasant emotion, that is sufficient to flavour the whole. Ned experienced this ; and inwardly fortified his resolution by frequent appeals to his manhood. In such a state of suspense it was not to be expected that he should be much at ease in conversation. On the contrary, he spoke like a frightened man, and accompanied almost every thing he said with a muscular effort at deglutition, which is one of the ordinary physical symptoms of fear.

His walk by the river side was designed to reassemble his scattered forces ; an undertaking that he found impossible in the face of the enemy : They were a set of militia-spirits that could not be brought

to rally on the field of battle. Having argued himself into a braver temper, he returned from his wanderings and stalked into the drawing-room, with an ill-counterfeited composure. By a natural instinct, he marched up behind Bel's chair, and for some moments seemed to be absorbed with the music. After a brief delay, during which the colour had flown from his cheek, he crossed the room to the window, and, with his hands in his pockets, gazed out upon the landscape. Restless, uncertain and perplexed, he returned again to the chair, and cast a suspicious and rueful glance around him.

Harvey observing how matters stood, silently tripped out of the room.

Bel executed a lively air, and concluded it with a brisk pounding upon the keys; and then sprang up, as if about to retreat.

"Play on," said Ned, with a husky voice; "don't think of stopping yet. I delight in these little melodies. You cannot imagine, Bel, how music exhilarates me."

"I didn't know that you were in the room," returned Bel. "What shall I play for you?"

"You can hardly go amiss. Give me one of those lively strains that make the heart dance," said he, with a dolorous accent. "But you have some exquisite ballads too; and I think you throw so much soul into them that they are irresistible. I will have a ballad."

Whilst he was wavering in his choice she struck up a waltz. Ned, during this performance, sauntered to the farther end of the drawing-room; and,

having planted himself opposite a picture that hung against the wall, stood minutely surveying it, with his lips, at the same time, gathered up to an inarticulate and thoughtful whistle. The cessation of the music recalled him to the piano with a start; and he hastened to say to Bel,—that there was something unspeakably pathetic in these simple and natural expressions of sentiment; that it belonged to the ballad to strike more directly upon the heart than any other kind of song; and that, for his part, he never listened to one of those expressive little compositions without an emotion almost amounting to melancholy.

What is he talking about?—thought Bel. She paused in profound astonishment: and then asked him, if he knew what it was she had been playing?

“The tune is familiar to me,” stammered Ned. “But, I have a wretched memory for names.”

“You have heard it a thousand times,” said she. “It is the waltz in the Freyschutz.”

“Oh, true!” exclaimed Ned. “It is a pensive thing; it has several touching turns in it. Most waltzes have something of that in them. Don’t you think so?”

“Most waltzes,” replied Bel, laughing, “have a great many turns in them: but, as to the pensiveness of the music, I never observed that.”

“Indeed!” exclaimed Ned, confounded past all hope of relief; “It depends very much upon the frame of mind you are in. There are moods—and they come on me sometimes like shadows—which predispose the heart to extract plaintive thoughts

from the liveliest strains.—If there be one desponding cord in the strings of the soul,—that one will begin to vibrate—with a single sympathetic note—that may be hurried across it in the rush of the gayest melody.—I mean,—that there is something in all music that arouses mournful emotions,—when the mind is predisposed to—melancholy.”

As a man who takes his seat in a surgeon-dentist's chair, to have his teeth filed, having made up his mind to endure the operation, bears the first application of the tool with composure, but, feeling a sense of uneasiness creeping upon him with every new passage of the file across the bone, is hurried on rapidly to higher degrees of pain, with every succeeding jar ; until, at last, it seems to him as if his powers of sufferance could be wound up to no higher pitch, and he, therefore, meditates an abrupt leap from the hands of the operator,—so did Ned find himself, as he plunged successively from one stage to the other of the above-recited, exquisite piece of nonsense.

When he had finished, his face (to use the phrase of a novel writer) ‘ was bathed in blushes ;’ and Bel had turned her chair half round, so as to enable her to catch the expression of his countenance ; for, she began to feel some misgiving as to the soundness of his intellect.

Of all the ordinary vexations of life it is certainly the most distressing, for a man of sense to catch himself unseasonably talking like a fool, upon any momentous occasion wherein he should especially desire to raise an opinion of his wisdom ; such as in

the case of a member of congress making his first speech, or of an old lawyer before a strange tribunal, or, worse than all, of a trembling lover before a superfastidious mistress. The big drops of perspiration gathered on Ned's brow: he felt like a thief taken in the mainour: he was caught in the degree of *back berinde and bloody hand*, known to the Saxon Forest laws, with his folly on his back. He could have jumped out of the window; but, as it was, he only ordered a servant to bring him a glass of water, and coughed with a short dry cough, and swallowed the cool element at a draught.

As motion conduces to restore the equilibrium of the nerves, Ned now paced up and down the apartment, with stately and measured strides.

"Courage!" said he, mentally. "I'll not be frightened!" So, he made another convulsive motion of the œsophagus,—such as I have seen a mischievous, truant boy make, when on his trial before the pedagogue—and marched up directly behind Bel.

All this time she sat silent; and taking the infection of fear from her lover, began to cower like a terrified partridge.

"Miss Tracy," said Ned, after a long pause, with a feeble, tremulous utterance, accompanied by a heavy suspiration.

"Sir—"

"Miss Tracy,"—here Ned put his hands upon the back of Bel's chair, and leaned a little over her;—"You,—you—play very well,—would you favour me with another song,—if you please?"

"I havn't sung a song for you," replied Bel.

"Then, you can do it, if you would try."

"No. It would be impossible. I am out of voice."

"So am I," returned Ned, with comic perturbation. "It is strange that we should both have lost our voices at the very time when we wanted them most."

"I am sure I don't see," said Bel, blushing, "any thing extraordinary in my not being able to sing."

"Well,—I think it very extraordinary," said Ned, with a dry laugh and an affected, janty air, as he took a turn into the middle of the room,—“that the fountains of speech should be sealed up, when I had something of the greatest importance in the world to communicate to you.”

"What is that?" inquired Bel.

"That I am the most particularly wretched and miserable coxcomb in the whole State of Virginia," said he, rising into a more courageous tone.

"Your speech serves to little purpose," muttered Bel, "if it be to utter nothing better than that."

"I am a boy,—a drivelling fool," continued Ned, very little like a man who had lost his power of articulation—"I am vexed with myself, and do not deserve to be permitted to approach you."

Bel was covered with confusion; and an awkward silence now intervened, during which she employed herself in turning over the leaves of a music-book.

"Do you relent, Bel?" said Ned, in a soft and beseeching accent. "Have you thought better of the proposition I made you a year ago? Do you think you could overcome your scruples?"

Bel, somewhat startled by these tender tones, withdrew her eyes from the music-book, and slowly turned her head round to the direction of the voice. There, to her utter amazement, was her preposterous lover on one knee, gazing pitifully in her face.

It is necessary that I should stop at this interesting moment, to explain this singular phenomenon; for, doubtless, my reader concludes Ned to be the veriest mountebank of a lover that ever tampered with the beautiful passion.

It is common to all men, and, indeed, to all animals, when sore perplexed with difficulties, to resort for protection to the strongest instincts nature has given them. Now, Ned's predominating instinct was to retreat behind a jest, whenever he found that circumstances galled him. For some moments past he had been brightening up, so that he had almost got into a laugh,—not at all dreaming that such a state of feeling would be unpropitious to his suit; and when he arrived at the identical point of his wooing above described, he was sadly at a loss to know what step to take next. His instinct came to his aid, and produced the comic result I have recorded. It seemed to strike him with that deep sense of the ridiculous, that is apt to take possession of a man who seriously makes love; and the incorrigible wight, therefore, reckless of consequences, dropped upon his knee,—one-tenth part in jest, and nine-tenths in earnest. It was well nigh blowing him sky high!

“Is this another prank, Mr. Hazard?” said Bel.—“Am I to be for ever tortured with your untimely mirth? How,—how can you sport with my feelings

in this way!" Here she burst into tears; and, putting her hand across her eyes, the drops were seen trickling through her fingers.

Ned suddenly turned as pale as ashes. "By all that is honest in man!" he exclaimed,—and then ran on with a list of lover-like abjurations, vowing and protesting, in the most passionate terms,—according to the vulgar phrase, "by all that was black and blue,"—that he was devoted to his mistress, body and soul. Never did there rush from an opened flood-gate a more impetuous torrent than now flowed from his heart through the channel of his lips. He was hyperbolically oratorical; and told her, amongst other things, that she "was the bright luminary that gilded his happiest dreams."

"I have not deserved this from you," said Bel, whose emotions were too violent to permit her to hear one word of this vehement declaration. "At such a moment as this, you might have spared me an unnecessary and cruel jest."

She arose from her seat and was about to retire; but Ned, springing upon his feet at the same time, took her by the hand and detained her in the room.

"For heaven's sake, Bel!" he ejaculated, "what have I done? Why do you speak of a jest? Never in my life have my feelings been uttered with more painful earnestness!"

"I cannot answer you now," returned Bel, in a tone of affliction; "leave me to myself."

"Isabel Tracy!" said Ned, dropping her hand, as he assumed a firm and calm voice, "you discard me now for ever. You fling me back upon the world

the most wretched scapegrace that ever hid himself in its crowds."

"I neither promise nor reject," said Bel, beginning to tremble at Ned's almost frenzied earnestness. "If I have mistaken your temper or your purpose, you have yourself to blame. It is not easy to overcome the impressions which a long intercourse has left upon my mind. You have seemed to me, heretofore, indifferent to the desire to please: You have taught me to think lightly of myself, by the little value you appeared to place upon my regard: You have jested when you should have been serious, and have been neglectful when I had a right to expect attention: You have offended my prejudices on those points that I have been accustomed to consider indispensable to the man I should love: You will not wonder, therefore, that I should misconceive your conduct. I must have a better knowledge of you, and of my own feelings, before I can commit myself by a promise. Pray, permit me to retire."

This was uttered with a sedate and womanly composure that forbade a reply, and Bel left the room.

Hazard was thrown, by this scene, into a new train of sensations. For the first time in his life, he was brought to comprehend the exact relation he held to his mistress.—He had no further purpose in remaining at the Brakes; and he and I, accordingly, very soon afterwards set out for Swallow Barn.

We discussed fully the events of the morning as we rode along; and, upon the whole, we considered this important love-affair to have passed through its

crisis, and to rest upon auspicious grounds. This conclusion arose upon Ned's mind in a thousand shapes :

—"I have got a mountain off my shoulders," said he; "I am unpacked; and feel like a man who has safely led a forlorn hope.—I would fight fifty Waterloos, rather than go through such a thing again! Egad! I can sing and laugh once more. Bel's a woman of fine sense, Littleton: She is not to be trifled with. Faith, I stand pretty fairly with her, too! It is certainly no refusal: 'Faint heart never won fair lady.' A lover to thrive must come up boldly to the charge.—But, after all, I was considerably fluttered,—not to say most unspeakably alarmed."

These, and many more such fragments of a boasting, doubtful and self-gratulating spirit, burst from him in succession; and were, now and then, accompanied with lively gesticulations on horseback, which if a stranger could have seen, they would have persuaded him that the performer was either an unhappy mortal on his way to a madhouse, or a happy lover on the way from his mistress.

CHAPTER XVI.**ORATORY.**

As some adventurous schoolboy, who, having but lately learned to swim, has gone, upon a fair summer evening, to the river hard by, to disport himself in the cool and limpid wave, so did I first sit down to write this book: And as that same urchin, all diffident of his powers, has never risked himself beyond the reach of some old, stranded hulk, not far from shore; but now, enchanted by the fragrance of the season, by the golden and purple-painted clouds, and by the beauty of the wild-flowers that cluster at the base of the shady headland on the farther side of a narrow cove; and incited by the jollity of his boyhood, and seduced by the easy, practick eloquence of a heedless, good-natured playfellow, he has thoughtlessly essayed to reach the pleasant promontory which he has gained in safety, albeit, faint-hearted and out of breath:—so have I waywardly ventured on the tide of Ned's courtship; but, having reached such a sheltered headland, do, in imitation of my daunted schoolboy, here break up my voyage; like him, thinking it safest to get back by trudging round the pebbly margin of the cove.

In other words, I esteem myself lucky in having followed Ned's love-affair into a convenient resting-place, where I am willing, at least for the present, to

leave it; and shall indeed be thankful if no future event, during my sojourn at Swallow Barn, shall impose upon me the duty of tracing out to my readers the sequel of this tortuous and difficult history. For wisely has it been said, "that the current of true love never did run smooth;"—to me it seems that its path is like that of the serpent over the rock: And that chronicler shall have reason to count himself sadly tasked, whose lot it may be to follow the lead of a capricious maiden wheresoever it shall please her fickleness to decoy her charmed and fretful lover. Little did I dream, indulgent reader, that when I came to the Old Dominion to write down the simple scenes that are acted in a gentleman's hall, I should, in scarce a month gone by, find myself tangled up in a web of intricate love-plots that should so overmatch my slender powers! But I have borne me, as you have witnessed, like a patient and trusty historian, through the labyrinth of my story; and now, right gladly, escape to other matters more german to my hand.

To say nothing, then, of the manner in which Ned Hazard bore his present doubtful fortune, nor what resolves he took in this emergency; nor even dwelling upon his frequently repeated visits to the Brakes, during which, I rejoice to think, nothing especially worthy of note occurred; I pass over some days, in order that I may introduce my reader to a new scene.

Meriwether, one night when we were about to retire to rest, suggested to Ned and myself,—and the suggestion was made half in the tone of a request,

implying that he would be pleased if we adopted it,—that we might have an agreeable jaunt if we would consent to accompany him, the next morning, in his ride to the Quarter. Now, this Quarter is the name by which is familiarly known that part of the plantation where the principal negro population is established.

“You, doubtless, Mr. Littleton,” said he, “take some interest in agricultural concerns. The process of our husbandry,—slovenly to be sure,—may, nevertheless, be worthy of your observation. But I can add to your amusement by showing you my blooded colts, which, it is not vanity to affirm, are of the finest breed in Virginia; and when I say that,—it is equivalent to telling you that there is nothing better in the world.”

Here Meriwether paused for a moment, with that thoughtful expression of countenance that indicates the gathering up of one's ideas; then changing the tone of his voice to a lower key, he continued,—

“The improvement of the stock of horses,—notwithstanding this matter is undervalued in some portions of our country,—I regard as one of the gravest concerns to which a landed proprietor can devote his attention. The developement of the animal perfections of this noble quadruped, by a judicious system of breeding, requires both the science and the talent of an accomplished naturalist. We gain by it symmetry, strength of muscle, soundness of wind, ease of action, speed, durability, power of sustaining fatigue, and fitness for the multiform uses to which this admirable beast is subservient. What,

sir, can be more worthy of a portion of the care of a patriotic citizen? But look, my dear sir, at the relation which the horse holds to man. We have no record in history of an age wherein he has not been intimately connected with the political and social prosperity of the most powerful and civilized nations. He has always assisted to fight our battles, to bear our burthens, to lighten our fatigues, and to furnish our subsistence. He has given us bread by tillage and meat by the chase. He has even lodged in the same homestead with his master man, frequently under the same roof: He has been accustomed to receive his food from our hands, and to be caressed by our kindness. We nurse him in sickness, and guard him in health. He has been, from one age to another, the companion of the warrior at home, his trusty friend in travel, and his sure auxiliary and defence in battle. What more beautiful than the sympathy between them? when the cockles of his master's heart rise up at the sound of distant war, he neighs at the voice of the trumpet, and shakes his mane in his eagerness to share the glory of the combat."

Frank had now got to striding backward and forward through the room; and, at this last flourish, came up to the table, where he stood erect; then, in that attitude, went on.

"And yet,—however martial his temper,—he will amble gently under the weight of the daintiest dame, and yield obedience to her tender hand and silken rein. I have horses in my stable now, that, in the

field upon a chase, will champ their bits, and bound with an ardour that requires my arm to check; whilst the same animals, at home here, are as passive to Lucretia's command as a lady's pony."

"You say so," interrupted my cousin Lucretia, "but, indeed Mr. Meriwether, I do not like to ride these blooded horses!"

Meriwether continued, without heeding the interruption.

—"The horse has a family instinct, and knows every member of the household: he recognizes his master's children when they come to his stall, and is pleased to be fondled by them. Then, see how faithfully he drudges in the field, and wears away his life in quiet and indispensable services. I venerate the steady sobriety of the robust, broad-chested, massive-limbed wagon-horse, that toils without repining, through the summer heats and winter snows. I contemplate, with a peculiar interest, the unremitting labour of the stage-horse, as he performs his daily task with unrelaxed speed from one year's end to another: and,—you may smile at it,—but I have a warm side of my heart for the thoughtful and unobtrusive hack that our little negroes creep along with to mill. But, above all, where do you find such a picture of patience, considerateness, discretion, long suffering, amiable obedience, (here Frank began to smile,) as in the faithful brute that bears his master,—say a country-doctor, for example, or a deputy sheriff, or one of your weather-beaten, old, tippling,—(at each of these epithets the orator laughed)—gossiping, night-wandering——"

“*Noctua bundus*,” said Mr. Chub, who was sitting all the time at one of the windows.—

—“Right!” replied Meriwether, turning towards the parson and waving his hand,—“night-wandering politicians? I say, where is there a finer type of resignation, christian resignation, than in the trusty horse that bears such a master, through all seasons, no matter how inclement,—fast, without refusing, and slow, without impatience,—for hours together; and then stands, perhaps, as I have often seen him, with his rein fastened to a post, or to a fence corner, without food or drink; and, as likely as not, (for he is subject to all discomforts,) facing a drifting snow or a pelting hail-storm, for the livelong day; or through the dreary watches of the night, solitary, silent, unamused, without one note of discontent; without one objurgatory winnow to his neglectful master? And then, at last, when the time arrives when he is to measure his homeward way, with what a modest and grateful undertone he expresses his thanks! The contemplation of these moral virtues in the horse, is enough to win the esteem of any man for the whole species. Besides, what is a nation without this excellent beast? What machinery or labour-saving inventions of man could ever compensate him for the deprivation of this faithful ally?”—

I do not know how long Meriwether would have continued this laudatory oration, for he was every moment growing more eloquent, both in manner and matter, and, no doubt, would very soon have struck out into some episodes that would have carried him along, like a vessel caught up in the trade winds, had

not my cousin Lucretia warned him that it was growing too late for so promising a discourse ; which having the effect to bring him to a stop, I availed myself of the opportunity to say, that I should be highly gratified with the proposed ride. So did Ned.

"Then," said he, "remember I ride at sunrise: Lucretia will give us a cup of coffee before we set out. Be up, therefore, at the crowing of the cock!"

CHAPTER XVII.**STABLE WISDOM.**

ALMOST with the first appearance of light, Meriwether came and knocked at our chamber doors, so earnestly that the whole household must have been roused by the noise. Our horses could be heard pawing the gravel at the front door, impatient of delay. The sun was scarcely above the horizon before we were all mounted and briskly pursuing our road, followed by Carey, who seemed on the present occasion to be peculiarly charged with professional importance.

The season was now advanced into the first week of August: a time when, in this low country, the morning air begins to grow sharp, and to require something more than the ordinary summer clothing. The dews had grown heavier; and the evaporation produced that chilling cold which almost indicated frost. There was, however, no trace of this abroad; but every blade of grass, and every spray was thickly begemmed with dewdrops. The tall and beautiful mullen, which suggested one of the forms of the stately candlebra—almost the first plant that puts forth in the spring, and amongst the first to wither—was now to be seen marshalled in groups over the fallows, with its erect and half-dried spire hung round

with that matchless jewelry, which the magic hand of night scatters over the progeny of earth. The fantastic spiderwebs hung like fairy tissues over every bush, and decked with their drapery every bank; whilst their filaments, strung with watery beads, and glittering in the level beams of the sun, rendered them no longer snares for the unwary insects for which they were spread. Our road through the woods was occasionally waylaid by an obtrusive pinebranch that, upon the slightest touch, shook its load of vapour upon our shoulders, as we stooped beneath it. The lowing of cows and the bleating of sheep struck upon our ear from distant folds; and all the glad birds of summer were twittering over the woodland and open plain. The rabbit leaped timidly along the sandy road before us, and squatted upon his seat, as if loth to wet his coat amongst the low whortleberry and wild-indigo that covered the contiguous soil.

Emerging from the forest, a gate introduced us to a broad stubblefield, across whose level surface, at the distance of a mile, we could discern the uprising of several thin lines of smoke, that formed a light cloud which almost rested on the earth; and, under this, a cluster of huts were dimly visible. Near these, an extensive farmyard surrounded a capacious barn together with some fodder-houses and stacks of grain, upon which were busily employed a number of labourers who, we could see, were building up the pile from a loaded wagon that stood close by.

As we advanced, a range of meadows opened to our view, and stretched into the dim perspective, un-

til the eye could no longer distinguish their boundary. Over this district, detached herds of horses were observable, whisking their long tails as they grazed upon the pasture, or curvetting over the spaces that separated them from each other.

“There!” said Meriwether, kindling up at the sight of this plain, “there is the reward I promised you for your ride. I have nothing better to show you at Swallow Barn. You see, on yonder meadow, some of the most unquestioned nobility of Virginia. Not a hoof strays on that pasture, that is not warmed by as pure blood as belongs to any potentate in the world.”

Carey rode up to us, at this speech, to observe, as I supposed, the effect which his master’s communication might have upon me; for he put on a delighted grin, and said somewhat officiously—

“I call them my children, master Littleton.”

“Truly then, Carey, you have a large family,” said I.

“They are almost all on ’em, sir,” replied Carey, “straight down from old Diomed, that old master Hoomes had *fotch* out from England, across the water more than twenty years ago. Sir Archy, master Littleton, was a son of old Diomed, and I can’t tell you how many of his colts I’ve got. But, sir, you may depend upon it, he was a great horse! And *thar* was Duroc, master! You’ve hearn on him?—I’ve got a heap of colts of Duroc’s.—Bless your heart! he was another of old Diomed’s.”

“Carey is a true herald,” said Meriwether. “Nearly all that you see have sprung from the Dio-

med stock. It is upwards of forty years since Diomed won the Derby in England: He was brought to this country in his old age; and is as famous amongst us, almost, as Christopher Columbus; for, he may be said to have founded a new empire here. Besides that stock, I have some of the Oscar breed; one of the best of them is the gelding I ride: You may know them, wherever you see them, by their carriage and indomitable spirit."

"I know nothing about it," said I,—“but I have heard a great deal said of the Godolphin Arabian.”—

"I can show you some of that breed, too," replied Meriwether,—“Wildair, who I believe was a grandson of the Arabian.”—

"Old Wildair—mark you, master!" interrupted Carey, very sagely,—“not Col. Symmes' Wildair.”

"Old Wildair, I mean," rejoined Frank.—“He was imported into Maryland, and taken back to England before the Revolution:—but I have some of his descendants.”

"And *thar's* Regulus's breed," said Carey. “They tell me he was genuine Arabian too.”

"I am not sure," returned Meriwether, “that I have any of that breed.—Carey affects to say that there are some of them here.”—

"Bless your soul! master Frank," interrupted the old groom,—“did'nt I carry the Ace of Diamonds, over here to the Bowling Green, that next summer coming after the war, to—”

"Ride on and open the gate for us," said Frank.—“Set that old negro to talking of pedigrees, and his tongue goes like a mill!”

We now entered upon the meadow, and soon came up with several of the beautiful animals whose ancestry had been the subject of this discussion. They were generally in the wild and unshorn condition of beasts that had never been subjected to the dominion of man. It was apparent that the proprietor of the stock kept them more for their nobleness of blood than for any purpose of service. Some few of the older steeds showed the care of the groom; but even these were far from being in that sleek state of nurture which we are apt to associate with the idea of beauty in the horse. One, skilled in the points of symmetry, would, doubtless, have found much to challenge his admiration in their forms; but this excellence was, for the most part, lost upon me. Still, however, unpractised as I was, there was, in the movements of these quadrupeds, a charm that I could not fail to recognize. No sooner were we descried upon the field, than the different troops, in the distance, were set in motion, as if by some signal to which they were accustomed; and they hurried tumultuously to the spot where we stood, exerting their utmost speed, and presenting a wonderfully animated spectacle. The swift career of the horse, upon an open plain, is always an interesting sight; but as we saw it now, exhibited in squadrons, pursuing an unrestrained and irregular flight, accompanied with wild and expressive neighs and enlivened with all the frolicsome antics that belong to high-mettled coursers,—it was a scene of singularly gay and picturesque beauty. The ludicrous earnestness, too, with which they

crowded upon us!—there was in it the natural grace of youth, united with the muscular vigour of maturity. One would rear playfully, as he thrust himself into the compact assembly; another would advance at a long, swinging trot, striking the ground at every step with a robust and echoing stroke, and then, halt suddenly, as if transfigured into a statue. Some would kick at their comrades, and seize them with their teeth in the wantonness of sport: others would leap, in quick bounds, and make short circuits, at high speed, around the mass, with heads and tails erect, displaying the flexibility of their bodies in caracols of curious nimbleness. The younger colts would impudently claim to be familiar with the horses we rode; and were apt to receive, in return, a severe blow for the intrusion. Altogether, it was a scene of boisterous horse-play, well befitting the arrogant nature of such a licentious, high-blooded, far-descended and riotous young nobility.

It may be imagined that this was a sight of engrossing interest to Meriwether. Both he and Carey had dismounted, and were busy in their survey of the group, all the while descanting upon the numberless perfections of form that occurred to their view; and occasionally interlarding their commendations with the technical lore of genealogy, which, so far as I was concerned, might as profitably have been delivered in Greek.

The occasion of this rapid concentration of our cavalry was soon explained. Meriwether was in the habit of administering a weekly ration of salt to

these wandering hordes at this spot ; and they, therefore, were wont to betake themselves to the rendezvous, with all the eagerness we had witnessed, whenever any sign was afforded them that the customary distribution was to be made. Care was now taken that they should not be disappointed in their reasonable expectations ; and Carey was, accordingly, despatched to the stable for the necessary supplies.

Having gratified our curiosity in this region, we now visited the farm-yard. Within this enclosure, a party of negroes were employed in treading out grain. About a dozen horses were kept at full trot around a circle of some ten or fifteen paces diameter, which was strewed with the wheat in sheaf. These were managed by some five or six little blacks, who rode like monkey caricaturists of the games of the circus, and who mingled with the labours of the place that comic air of deviltry which communicated to the whole employment something of the complexion of a pastime. Whilst we remained here, as spectators of this stirring and busy occupation, a dialogue took place, which, as it made some important veterinary disclosures, I will record for the benefit of all those who take an interest in adding to the treasures of pharmacy.

One of the horses had received an injury in a fore-leg, a day or two before ; and was now confined in the stable under the regimen of the overseer. The animal was brought out for inspection, and the bandages, which had been bound round the limb, were

removed in our presence. To a question as to the cause of this injury, Carey replied—

“The mischeevous young devil wa’nt content with the paster, but she must be loping over the fence into the cornfield! It was a marcy she wa’nt foundered outright, on the green corn; but she sprained her pasten-joint, any how;—which she desarved for being so obstropolous.”

A consultation was now held upon the case, at which divers of the elder negroes assisted. But, in general, every attempt by any of these to give an opinion was frowned down by the authoritative and self-sufficient Carey, who was somewhat tyrannical in the assertion of his prerogative.

Frank Meriwether ventured to suggest that the injured part should be bathed frequently with ice-water; to which prescription our ancient groom pointedly objected,—saying, that all the *cretur* wanted, was to have her leg dressed, every night and morning, with a wash that he could make, of vinegar and dockweed, and half a dozen other ingredients, which, he affirmed, would produce a cure, “in almost no time.”

A conspicuous and, till now, somewhat restive member of the council, was a broad-shouldered, dwarfish, old negro, known by the name of uncle Jeff, who had manifested several decided symptoms of a design to make a speech; and now, in despite of Carey’s cross looks, gave his advice in the following terms—

“One of the stonishingst things for a sprain that I

knows on, is this—" said he, stepping into the ring and laying the fingers of his right hand upon the palm of his left—" Bless your soul, Mas Frank! I have tried it, often and often, on people,—but, in pertickler, upon horses: oil of spike—" he continued, striking his palm, at the enumeration of each ingredient;—" oil of spike, campfire, a little castile soap, and the best of whiskey, all put into a bottle and boiled half away—It's mazing how it will cure a sprain! My old 'oman was sick abed all last winter, with a sprain on her knee; and she tried Doctor Stubbs, and the leech doctor, and all the tother larned folks—but no use, tell she tuck some my intment! She said herself—if you believe me—thar was none on'em no touch to my intment. It's mazing, Mas Frank! Oh, oh!—"

" Sho!" ejaculated Carey, in a short, surly growl, after hearing this wise morsel of experience to the end, and looking as angry as a vexed bull-dog; " Sho! Jeff, you tell me! Think I never seed a hos with a sprained foot, all the way up to my time of life? Stan off, man! I knows what I am about?"

Meriwether turned to me, with a look of jocular resignation, and said, laughing—

" You see how it is! This old magnifico will allow no man to have an opinion but himself. Rather than disturb the peace, I must submit to his authority. Well, Jeffry, my old fellow, as we can't convince Mr. Carey, I suppose we had better not make him angry. You know what an obstinate, cross-grained, old bully, he is? I am afraid he will take us

both in hand, if we contradict him : so I'm for letting him alone."

"Consarn his picter!" said Jeff, in a low tone of voice, accompanied by a laugh, in which all the other negroes joined, as we broke up the consultation and walked away

CHAPTER XVIII.**THE QUARTER.**

HAVING despatched these important matters at the stable, we left our horses in charge of the servants, and walked towards the cabins, which were not more than a few hundred paces distant. These hovels, with their appertenances, formed an exceedingly picturesque landscape. They were scattered over the slope of a gentle hill without order; and many of them were embowered under old and majestic trees. The rudeness of their construction rather enhanced the attractiveness of the scene. Some few were built after the fashion of the better sort of cottages; but age had stamped its heavy traces upon their exterior: the green moss had gathered upon the roofs, and the coarse weatherboarding had broken, here and there, into chinks. But the more lowly of these structures, and the most numerous, were nothing more than plain log-cabins, compacted pretty much on the model by which boys build partridge-traps; being composed of the trunks of trees, still clothed with their bark, and knit together at the corners with so little regard to neatness that the timbers, being of unequal lengths, jutted beyond each other, sometimes to the length of a foot. Perhaps, none of these latter sort were more than twelve feet

square, and not above seven in height. A door swung upon wooden hinges, and a small window of two narrow panes of glass were, in general, the only openings in the front. The intervals between the logs were filled with clay; and the roof, which was constructed of smaller timbers, laid lengthwise along it and projecting two or three feet beyond the side or gable walls, heightened, in a very marked degree, the rustic effect. The chimneys communicated even a droll expression to these habitations. They were, oddly enough, built of billets of wood, having a broad foundation of stone, and growing narrower as they rose, each receding gradually from the house to which it was attached, until it reached the height of the roof. These combustible materials were saved from the access of the fire by a thick coating of mud; and the whole structure, from its tapering form, might be said to bear some resemblance to the spout of a tea kettle; indeed, this domestic implement would furnish no unapt type of the complete cabin.

From this description, which may serve to illustrate a whole species of habitations very common in Virginia, it will be seen, that on the score of accommodation, the inmates of these dwellings were furnished accordnig to a very primitive notion of comfort. Still, however, there were little garden-patches attached to each, where cymblings, cucumbers, sweet potatoes, water-melons and cabbages flourished in unrestrained proximity. Add to this, that there were abundance of poultry domesticated about the premises, and it may be perceived that, whatever might be the inconveniences of shelter, there was no want

of what, in all countries, would be considered a reasonable supply of luxuries.

Nothing more attracted my observation than the swarms of little negroes that basked on the sunny sides of these cabins, and congregated to gaze at us as we surveyed their haunts. They were nearly all in that costume of the golden age which I have here, tofore described; and showed their slim shanks and long heels in all the varieties of their grotesque natures, from the most knock-kneed to the most bandy-legged. Their predominant love of sunshine, and their lazy, listless postures, and apparent content to be silently looking abroad, might well afford a comparison to a set of terapins luxuriating in the genial warmth of summer, on the logs of a mill-pond.

And there, too, were the prolific mothers of this redundant brood,—a number of stout negro-women who thronged the doors of the huts, full of idle curiosity to see us. And, when to these are added a few reverend, wrinkled, decrepit old men, with faces shortened as if with drawing-strings, noses that seemed to have run all to nostril, and with feet of the configuration of a mattock, my reader will have a tolerably correct idea of this negro-quarter, its population, buildings, external appearance, situation and extent.

Meriwether, I have said before, is a kind and considerate master. It is his custom frequently to visit his slaves, in order to inspect their condition, and, where it may be necessary, to add to their comforts or relieve their wants. His coming amongst them, therefore, is always hailed with pleasure. He has

constituted himself into a high court of appeal, and makes it a rule to give all their petitions a patient hearing, and to do justice in the premises. This, he tells me, he considers as indispensably necessary;—he says, that no overseer is entirely to be trusted: that there are few men who have the temper to administer wholesome laws to any population, however small, without some omissions or irregularities; and that this is more emphatically true of those who administer them entirely at their own will. On the present occasion, in almost every house where Frank entered, there was some boon to be asked; and I observed, that in every case, the petitioner was either gratified or refused in such a tone as left no occasion or disposition to murmur. Most of the women had some bargains to offer, of fowls or eggs or other commodities of household use, and Meriwether generally referred them to his wife, who, I found, relied almost entirely on this resource, for the supply of such commodities; the negroes being regularly paid for whatever was offered in this way.

One old fellow had a special favour to ask,—a little money to get a new padding for his saddle, which, he said, “galled his cretur’s back.” Frank, after a few jocular passages with the veteran, gave him what he desired, and sent him off rejoicing.

“That, sir,” said Meriwether, “is no less a personage than Jupiter. He is an old bachelor, and has his cabin here on the hill. He is now near seventy, and is a kind of King of the Quarter. He has an old horse, that he extorted from me last

Christmas; and I never come here without finding myself involved in some fresh consequences from my donation. I believe now, however, that he is fully equipped with every thing but spurs, with which I mean to supply him. But he is a preposterous coxcomb; Ned has given him an old cocked-hat, and he wears it on Sundays, with a conceit that has excited the jealousy of all the negroes on the plantation."

From this view of the negro population at Swallow Barn I should not hesitate to pronounce them a comparatively comfortable and contented race of people, with much less of the care and vexation of life than I have often observed in other classes of society. I expressed this opinion to Meriwether. His reply may serve to explain the feelings of an intelligent slave-holder on this subject.

"This topic," said he, "has grown to possess a fearful interest of late. The world has begun to discuss the evils of slavery; and a part of the debate has been levelled to the comprehension of our negroes. I believe there is no class of men who may not be persuaded that they suffer some wrong in the organization of society;—and, perhaps, it is true; then, how much easier is it to inflame the ignorant minds of these people, especially with a subject so indefensible as slavery? It is theoretically and morally wrong; and, of course, it may be made to appear wrong in all its modifications. But, surely, if these people are consigned to our care, and put upon our commonwealth, without our agency, the only duty that is left to us is to administer whole-

some laws for their government, and to make their servitude as tolerable to them as we can. We are not bound to submit to internal convulsions to get rid of them; nor have we a right, in the desire to free ourselves, to whelm them in greater evils than they suffer here: A violent removal of them, or a general emancipation would produce one or the other of these consequences. When we can part with them on terms easy to ourselves and to them, I would do it. In the mean time, we must treat them kindly and justly. As to the evils they suffer, I do not believe in them:—the evil generally is on the side of the master. They are required to do less work than any other labourers in society, they have as many privileges as are compatible with the nature of their occupations: they are subsisted in general as comfortably, nay, in *their* estimation of comforts,—more comfortably than the tillers of the soil of other nations. And as to the severities that are alleged to be practised upon them, I think there is more malice than truth in the accusation: the slave-holders, in this country at least, are, in the main, men of kind and humane tempers, as pliant to the touch of pity and compassion as any class in any country; and as little likely to inflict sufferings upon their dependants. Indeed, the owner of slaves is less apt to be harsh in his requisitions of labour, than those men are who toil much themselves; because, it is almost invariably true, that those who are in the habit of severely tasking themselves, are most inclined to regulate their demands upon others by their own standard. Our slaves are punished for misdemeanors, exactly as

disorderly or dishonest persons are punished in all communities. The different mode of inflicting the punishment upon slaves causes it to be more remarked. If a man in New York is committed to prison or chained in a cell, for robbery, it is called an act of justice, because it is done by the public authorities; but if a negro in Virginia should rob his neighbour's barn, he is whipped by the overseer; and all that the world knows of it is—that a black man has been cruelly whipped by order of his master. The punishments in this community very little exceed in amount the penalties exacted in other communities.

“It is very well worth the attention of our legislature to consider whether the negro population be ill used; and I would give my hearty concurrence to a law to punish cruelty in masters, because it concerns humanity, as well as good government, that all such abuses of power should be checked. But, as to myself,—and I believe I may speak for my neighbours,—such a law would be found of exceeding rare application.

“Whenever emancipation of slaves, or the abolition of slavery is to be required, the requisition must come from the slave-holding states themselves, as they are the only persons in this country who are able to deal with the subject. All other men will be deluded by the feeling which the abstract question of slavery excites in their minds,—a feeling of unmitigated abhorrence of its injustice. We, on the contrary, have every motive to calm and prudent counsel. Our lives, fortunes, families,—even our commonwealth—are put at the hazard of this resolve. In the mean

time, therefore, it seems to me that the real friends of humanity and justice should rather conspire to allay the ferments of the country on this question, and, especially, to soothe the mind of the slave himself, and reconcile him to a destiny which, in fact, is more free from want, care or sorrow, than that of most others who perform the same offices.

“It has sometimes occurred to me,—and I am disposed to cherish the idea now,—that we in Virginia might elevate our slave population to a more respectable footing, by infusing into it something of a feudal character. I would establish a class of privileged serfs, somewhat like those, formerly, in parts of Germany. These should be selected from the most deserving negroes above the age of forty-five years. They should be entitled to hold small tracts of land, under their masters, rendering for it a certain rent, payable either in personal service or money. I would create manorial jurisdictions, and give the masters or stewards of these manors, high civil and criminal judicial authority; and I would enact a code of laws particularly adapted to such a class. The effect of this system would be to relieve us from the support of a superfluous slave population; to furnish incentives to good conduct on the part of our slaves, by placing before them the hope of attaining this feudal rank; and it would reduce the administration of punishment amongst our slaves to such specific offences as would show, in most cases, the motive and the extent of the infliction;—a circumstance that would take away from it the objection of its being considered capricious or vindictive.

“I have not carried out all the details of my plan,” continued Meriwether,—“but I have a fancy that this idea may be improved to advantage,—and I should like myself to begin the experiment. Jupiter here, should be my first feudatory,—my tenant in soccage,—my old villain.”

“I suspect,” said I, “Jupiter considers that his dignity is not to be enhanced by any enlargement of privilege—as long as he is allowed to walk about in his cocked hat as **King of the Quarter.**”

“Perhaps not,” replied Meriwether, laughing:—“then I shall be forced to make my commencement upon Carey.”

“Carey,” interrupted Hazard,—“would think it small promotion to be allowed to hold land under you.”

“Faith, I shall be without a feudatory to begin with!”—said Meriwether.—“But come with me: I have to make a visit to the cabin of old Lucy.”

CHAPTER XIX.**A NEGRO MOTHER.**

LUCY'S cottage was remote from the rest of the cabins, and seemed to sleep in the shade of a wood upon the skirts of which it was situated. In full view from it was a narrow creek, or navigable inlet from the river, which was seen glittering in the sunshine through the screen of cedars and shrubbery that grew upon its banks. A garden occupied the little space in front of the habitation; and here, with some evidence of a taste for embellishment which I had not seen elsewhere in this negro hamlet, flowers were planted in order along the line of the enclosure, and shot up with a gay luxuriance. A draw-well was placed in the middle of this garden, and some few fruit trees were clustered about it. These improvements had their origin in past years, and owed their present preservation to the thrifty care of the daughter of the aged inhabitant, a spruce, decent and orderly woman who had been nurtured among the family servants at Swallow Barn, and now resided in the cabin, the sole attendant upon her mother.

When we arrived at this little dwelling, Lucy was alone, her daughter having, a little while before, left her to make a visit to the family mansion. The old

woman's form showed the double havock of age and disease. She was bent forward, and sat near her hearth, with her elbows resting on her knees; and her hands (in which she grasped a faded and tattered handkerchief,) supported her chin. She was smoking a short and dingy pipe; and, in the weak and childish musing of age, was beating one foot upon the floor with a regular and rapid stroke, such as is common to nurses when lulling a child to sleep. Her gray hairs were covered with a cap; and her attire generally exhibited an attention to cleanliness, which showed the concern of her daughter for her personal comfort.

The lowly furniture of the room corresponded with the appearance of its inmate. It was tidy and convenient, and there were even some manifestations of the ambitious vanity of a female in the fragments of looking-glass, and the small framed prints that hung against the walls. A pensive partner in the quiet comfort of this little apartment, was a large cat, that sat perched upon the sill of the open window, and looked demurely out upon the garden,—as if soberly rebuking the tawdry and garish bevy of sunflowers that erected their tall, spinster-like figures so near that they almost thrust their heads into the room.

For the first few moments after our arrival, the old woman seemed to be unconscious of our presence. Meriwether spoke to her without receiving an answer; and, at last, after repeating his salutation two or three times, she raised her feeble eyes towards him, and made only a slight recognition by a

bow. Whether it was that his voice became more familiar to her ear, or that her memory was suddenly resuscitated, after her master had addressed some questions to her, she all at once brightened up into a lively conviction of the person of her visiter; and, as a smile played across her features, she exclaimed,—

“God bless the young master! I didn't know him. He has come to see poor old mammy Lucy!”

“And how is the old woman?” asked Meriwether, stooping to speak, almost in her ear.

“She has'nt got far to go,” replied Lucy. “They are a-coming for her:—they tell me every night that they are a-coming to take her away.”

“Who are coming?” inquired Frank.

“They that told the old woman,” she returned, looking up wildly and speaking in a louder voice, “that they buried his body in the sands of the sea.—”

Saying these words, she began to open out the ragged handkerchief which, until now, she had held in her clenched hand.—“They brought me this in the night,” she continued,—“and then, I knew it was true.”

In the pause that followed, the old negro remained in profound silence, during which the tears ran down her cheeks. After some minutes she seemed suddenly to check her feelings and said, with energy,—

“I told them it was a lie: and so it was!—The old woman knew better than them all. Master Frank didn't know it, and Miss Lucretia didn't know it, but mammy Lucy, if she is old, knew it well!—Five years last February!—How many years, honey, do you think a ship may keep going steady on without stopping?—It is a right long time,—isn't it, honey?”

This exhibition of drivelling dotage was attended with many other incoherent expressions that I have not thought it worth while to notice ; and I would not have troubled my reader with these seemingly unmeaning effusions of a mind in the last stages of senility, if they had not some reference to the circumstances I am about to relate. The scene grew painful to us as we prolonged our visit ; and therefore, after some kind words to the old woman, we took our departure. As we returned to Swallow Barn, Frank Meriwether gave me the particulars of old Lucy's pathetic history, which I have woven, with as much fidelity as my memory allows, into the following simple and somewhat melancholy narrative.

ABE.

DURING the latter years of the war of the revolution my uncle Walter Hazard, as I have before informed my reader, commanded a troop of volunteer cavalry, consisting principally of the yeomanry in the neighbourhood of Swallow Barn; and, at the time of the southern invasion by Lord Cornwallis, this little band was brought into active service, and shared, as freely as any other corps of the army, the perils of that desultory warfare which was waged upon the borders of North Carolina and Virginia. The gentlemen of the country, at that time, marshalled their neighbours into companies; and, seldom acting in line, were encouraged to harass the enemy wherever opportunity offered. The credit as well as the responsibility of these partisan operations fell to the individual leaders who had respectively signalized themselves by their zeal in the cause.

This kind of irregular army gave great occasion for the display of personal prowess; and there were many gentlemen whose bold adventures, during the period alluded to, furnished the subject of popular anecdotes of highly attractive interest. Such exploits, of course, were attended with their usual marvels; and there was scarcely any leader of note who could not recount some passages in his adventures, where he was indebted for his safety to the

attachment and bravery of his followers,—often to that of his personal servants.

Captain Hazard was a good deal distinguished in this war, and took great pleasure in acknowledging his indebtedness, on one occasion, for his escape from imminent peril, to the address and gallantry of an humble retainer,—a faithful negro, by the name of Luke,—whom he had selected from the number of his slaves to attend him as a body-servant through the adventures of the war.

It furnishes the best answer that can be made to all the exaggerated opinions of the misery of the domestic slavery of this region, that, in the stormiest period of the history of the United States, and when the whole disposable force of the country was engrossed in the conduct of a fearful conflict, the slaves of Virginia were not only passive to the pressure of a yoke which the philosophy of this age affects to consider as the most intolerable of burthens, but they also, in a multitude of instances, were found in the ranks, by the side of their masters, sharing with them the most formidable dangers, and manifesting their attachment by heroic gallantry.

After the close of the war Captain Hazard was not unmindful of his trusty servant. Luke had grown into a familiar but respectful intimacy with his master, and occupied a station about his person of the most confidential nature. My uncle scarcely ever rode out without him, and was in the habit of consulting him upon many lesser matters relating to the estate, with a seriousness that showed the value

he set upon Luke's judgment. He offered Luke his freedom ; but the domestic desired no greater liberty than he then enjoyed, and would not entertain the idea of any possible separation from the family. Instead, therefore, of an unavailing, formal grant of manumission, my uncle gave Luke a few acres of ground, in the neighbourhood of the Quarter, and provided him a comfortable cabin. Before the war had terminated, Luke had married Lucy, a slave who had been reared in the family, as a lady's maid, and, occasionally, as a nurse to the children at Swallow Barn. Things went on very smoothly with them, for many years. But, at length, Luke waxed old, and began to grow rheumatic ; and, by degrees, retired from his customary duties, which were rendered lighter as his infirmities increased. Lucy, from the spry and saucy-eyed waiting-woman, was fast changing into a short, fat and plethoric old dame. Her locks accumulated the frost of each successive winter ; and she, too, fell back upon the reserve of comfort laid up for their old age by their master,—who himself, by a like process, had faded away, from the buxom, swashing madcap of the revolutionary day, into a thin, leather-cheeked old campaigner, that, sometimes, told hugely long stories, and sent for Luke to put his name on the back of them. In short, five and thirty years, had wrought their ordinary miracles ; and first, the veteran Luke disappeared from this mortal stage ; and then his master : and old Lucy was left a hale and querulous widow, with eight or nine children, and her full dower interest in the cabin and its curtilage.

The youngest, but one, of her children was named Abraham—universally called Abe. All before Abe had arrived at manhood, and had been successively dismissed from Lucy's cabin, as they reached the age fit to render them serviceable, with that satisfied unconcern that belongs to a negro mother who trusts to the kindness of her master. This family was remarkable for its intelligence; and those who had already left the maternal nest had, with perhaps one or two exceptions, been selected for the mechanical employments upon the estate:—they were shoemakers, weavers, or carpenters; and were held in esteem for their industry and good character. Abe, however, was an exception to the general respectability of Luke's descendants. He was, at the period to which my story refers, an athletic and singularly active lad, rapidly approaching to manhood; with a frame not remarkable for size, but well knit, and of uncommonly symmetrical proportions for the race to which he belonged. He had nothing of the flat nose and broad lip of his tribe,—but his face was rather moulded with the prevailing characteristics of the negroes of the West Indies. There was an expression of courage in his eye that answered to the complexion of his mind: he was noted for his spirit, and his occasional bursts of passion which, even in his boyhood, rendered him an object of fear to his older associates. This disposition was coupled with singular shrewdness of intellect, and an aptitude for almost every species of handicraft. He had been trained to the work of a blacksmith, and was, when he chose to be so, a useful auxiliary at the anvil.

But a habit of associating with the most profligate menials belonging to the extensive community of Swallow Barn, and the neighbouring estates, had corrupted his character, and, at the time of life which he had now reached, had rendered him offensive to the whole plantation.

Walter Hazard could never bear the idea of disposing of any of his negroes ; and when Meriwether came to the estate, he was even more strongly imbued with the same repugnance. Abe was, therefore, for a long time, permitted to take his own way,—the attachment of the family for his mother procuring for him an amnesty for many transgressions. Lucy, as is usual in almost all such cases, entertained an affection for this outcast, surpassing that which she felt for all the rest of her offspring. There was never a more exemplary domestic than the mother : nor was she without a painful sense of the failings of her son ; but this only mortified her pride without abating her fondness—a common effect of strong animal impulses, not merely in ignorant minds. Abe had always lived in her cabin, and the instinct of long association predominated over her weak reason ; so that although she was continually tormented with his misdeeds, and did not fail to reprove him even with habitual harshness, still her heart yearned secretly towards him. Time fled by, confirming this motherly attachment, and, in the same degree, hardening Abe into the most irreclaimable of culprits. He molested the peace of the neighbourhood by continual broils ; was frequently detected in acts of depredation upon the adjoining farms ; and had once

brought himself into extreme jeopardy by joining a band of out-lying negroes, who had secured themselves, for some weeks, in the fastnesses of the low-country swamps, from whence they annoyed the vicinity by nocturnal incursions of the most lawless character. Nothing but the interference of Meriwether, at the earnest implorings of Lucy, saved Abe, on this occasion, from public justice. Abe was obliged in consequence to be removed altogether from the estate, and consigned to another sphere of action.

Meriwether revolved this matter with great deliberation; and, at length, determined to put his refractory bondsman in the charge of one of the pilots of the Chesapeake, to whom, it was supposed, he might become a valuable acquisition;—his active, intelligent and intrepid character being well suited to the perilous nature of that service. The arrangements for this purpose were speedily made, and the day of his removal drew nigh.

It was a curious speculation, on the part of the family, and an unpleasant one, to see how Lucy would bear this separation. The negroes, like all other dependants, are marked by an abundant spirit of assentation. They generally agree to whatever is proposed to their minds, by their superiors, with an acquiescence that has the show of conviction. But, it is very hard to convince the mind of a mother, of the justice of the sentence that deprives her of her child,—especially a poor, unlearned, negro mother. Lucy heard all the arguments to justify the necessity of sending Abe abroad; assented to all; bowed her

head, as if entirely convinced ;—and thought it—very hard. She was told that it was the only expedient to save him from prison ; she admitted it ; but still said—that it was a very cruel thing to sever mother and son. It was a source of unutterable anguish to her, that no kindness on the part of the family could mitigate. Forgetting Abe's growth to manhood, his delinquencies, the torments he had incessantly inflicted upon her peace, and unmindful of the numerous children that, with their descendants, were still around her, she seemed to be engrossed by her affection for this worthless scion of her stock ;—showing how entirely the unreasoning instincts of the animal sway the human mind, in its uneducated condition. All the considerations that proved Abe's banishment a necessary and even, for himself, a judicious measure, seemed only to afford additional reinforcements to the unquenchable dotings of the mother.

From the time of the discovery of the transgression which brought down upon Abe the sentence that was to remove him from Swallow Barn, until the completion of the preliminary arrangements for his departure, he was left in a state of anxious uncertainty as to his fate. He was afraid to be seen at large, as some risk was hinted to him of seizure by the public authorities ; and he, therefore, confined himself, with a sullen and dejected silence, in Lucy's cabin,—seldom venturing beyond the threshold ; and, when he did so, it was with the stealthy and suspicious motion which is observable in that class of animals that pursue their prey by night, when induced to stir abroad in daytime.

It is a trait in the disposition of the negroes on the old plantations, to cling with more than a freeman's interest to the spot of their nativity. They have a strong attachment to the places connected with their earlier associations,—what in phrenology is called inhabitiveness;—and the pride of remaining in one family of masters, and of being transmitted to its posterity with all their own generations, is one of the most remarkable features in these negro clans. Being a people of simple combinations and limited faculty for speculative pleasures, they are a contented race,—not much disturbed by the desire of novelty. ABE was not yet informed whether he was to be sold to a distant owner, given over to public punishment, or condemned to some domestic disgrace. Apparently, he did not much care which:—his natural resoluteness had made him dogged.

It was painful, during this period, to see his mother. In all respects unlike himself, she suffered intensely; and, though hoary with sixty winters, hovered about him, with that busy assiduity which is one of the simplest forms in which anxiety and grief are apt to show themselves. She abandoned her usual employments, and passed almost all her time within her cabin, in a fretful subserviency to his wants; and, what might seem to be incompatible with this strong emotion of attachment,—though, in fact, it was one of the evidences of its existence,—her tone of addressing him was that of reprimand, seldom substituted by the language of pity or tenderness. I mention this, because it illustrates one point of the negro character. She provided for him, as for a sickly child, what little de-

licacies her affluence afforded ; and, with a furtive industry, plied her needle through the livelong night, in making up, from the scanty materials at her command, such articles of dress as might be found or fancied to be useful to him, in the uncertain changes that awaited him. In these preparations there was even seen a curious attention to matters that might serve only to gratify his vanity ; some fantastical and tawdry personal ornaments were to be found amongst the stock of necessaries that her foresight was thus providing.

I hope I shall not be thought tedious in thus minutely remarking the trifles that were observable in the conduct of the old domestic on this occasion. My purpose is to bring to the view of my reader an exhibition of the natural forms in which the passions are displayed in those lowest and humblest of the departments of human society, and to represent truly a class of people to whom justice has seldom been done, and who possess many points of character well calculated to win them a kind and amiable judgment from the world. They are a neglected race, who seem to have been excluded from the pale of human sympathy, from mistaken opinions of their quality, no less than from the unpretending lowliness of their position. To me, they have always appeared as a people of agreeable peculiarities, and not without much of the picturesque in the developement of their habits and feelings.

When it was, at last, announced that Abe was to be disposed of in the manner I have mentioned, the tidings were received by the mother and son various-

ly, according to their respective tempers. Lucy knew no difference between a separation by a hundred or a thousand miles: she counted none of the probabilities of future intercourse; and the traditional belief in the dangers of the seas, with their unknown monsters, and all the frightful stories of maritime disaster, rose upon her imagination with a terrifying presage of ill to her boy. Abe, on the other hand, received the intelligence with the most callous unconcern. He was not of a frame to blench at peril, or fear misfortune; and his behaviour rather indicated resentment at the authority that was exercised over him, than anxiety for the issue. For a time, he mused over this feeling in sullen silence: but, as the expected change of his condition became the subject of constant allusion among his associates, and as the little community in which he had always lived gathered around him, with some signs of unusual interest, to talk over the nature of his employments, a great deal reached his ears from the older negroes, that opened upon his mind a train of perceptions that were highly congenial to the latent properties of his character. His imagination was awakened by the attractions of this field of adventure; by the free roving of the sailor; and by the tumultuous and spirit-stirring roar of the ocean, as they were pictured to him in story. His person grew erect, his limbs expanded to their natural motion, and he once more walked with the light step and buoyant feelings of his young and wayward nature.

The time of departure arrived. A sloop that had been lying at anchor in the creek, opposite to Lucy's

cabin, was just preparing to sail. The main-sail was slowly opening its folds, as it rose along the mast: a boat with two negroes had put off for the beach, and the boatmen landed with a summons to Abe, informing him that he was all they now staid for. Abe was seated on his chest in front of the dwelling; and Lucy sat on a stool beside him, with both of his hands clasped in hers. Not a word passed between them; and the heavings of the old woman's bosom might have been heard by the standers-by. A bevy of negroes stood around them: the young ones, in ignorant and wondering silence; and the elders conversing with each other in smothered tones, with an occasional cheering word addressed to mammy Lucy—as they called her. Old uncle Jeff was conspicuous in this scene. He stood in the group, with his corn-cob pipe, puffing the smoke from his bolster-lips, with lugubriously lengthened visage.

The two boatmen pressed into the crowd to speak to Lucy, but were arrested by the solemn Jeff, who, thrusting out his broad, horny hand and planting it upon the breast of the foremost, whispered, in a half audible voice,—“The old woman's taking on!—wait a bit—she'll speak presently!”

With these words, the whole company fell into silence and continued to gaze at the mother. Abe looked up, from the place where he sat, through his eye-lashes, at the little circle, with an awkwardly counterfeited smile playing through the tears that filled his eyes.

“It a'most goes to kill her,” whispered one of the women to her neighbour.

"I've seen women," said Jeff, "this here way, afore in my time: they can bear a monstrous sight. But, when they can once speak, then it's done,—you see."

Lucy was now approached by two or three of the old women, who began to urge some feeble topics of consolation in her ear, in that simple phrase which nature supplies, and which had more of encouragement in its tones than in the words: but the only response extracted was a mute shake of the head, and a sorrowful uplifting of the eye, accompanied by a closer grasp of the hands of Abe.

"Its no use," said Jeff, as he poured a volume of smoke from his mouth, and spoke in a deep voice, in the dialect of his people,—“its no use till nature takes its own way. When the tide over yonder (pointing to the river) comes up, speeches arn't going to send it back: when an old woman's heart is full it's just like the tide.”

"The wind is taking hold of the sail," said one of the boatmen, who until now had not interfered in the scene, "and the captain has no time to stay."

Lucy looked up and directed her eye to the sloop, whose canvass was alternately filling and shaking in the wind, as the boat vacillated in her position. The last moment had come. The mother arose from her seat, at the same instant, with her son, and flung herself upon his neck, where she wept aloud.

"Didn't I tell you so!" whispered Jeff to some old crones; "when it can get out of the bosom by the eyes, it carries a monstrous load with it."

"To be sure!" exclaimed the beldams, which is a form of interjection amongst the negroes, to express both assent and wonder.

This burst of feeling had its expected effect upon Lucy. She seemed to be suddenly relieved, and was able to address a few short words of parting to Abe: then taking from the plaits of her bosom, a small leather purse containing a scant stock of silver,—the hoard of past years—she put it into the unresisting hand of Abe. The boy looked at the faded bag for a moment, and gathering up something like a smile upon his face, he forced the money back upon his mother, himself replacing it in the bosom of her dress. "You don't think I am going to take your money with me!" said he, "I never cared about the best silver my master ever had: no, nor for freedom neither. I thought I was always going to stay here on the plantation. I would rather have the handkerchief you wear around your neck, than all the silver you ever owned."

Lucy took the handkerchief from her shoulders, and put it in his hand. Abe drew it into a loose knot about his throat, then turned briskly round, shook hands with the by-standers, and, shouldering his chest, moved with the boatmen, at a rapid pace, towards the beach.

In a few moments afterwards, he was seen standing up in the boat, as it shot out from beneath the bank, and waving his hand to the dusky group he had just left. He then took his seat, and was watched by his melaucholy tribe until the sloop, falling away before the wind, disappeared behind the remotest promontory.

Lucy, with a heavy heart, retired within her cabin, and threw herself upon a bed; and the comforting gossips who had collected before her door, after lingering about her for a little while, gradually withdrew, leaving her to the assiduities of her children.

Some years elapsed; during which interval frequent reports had reached Swallow Barn, relating to the conduct and condition of Abe; and he himself had, once or twice, revisited the family. Great changes had been wrought upon him: he had grown into a sturdy manhood, invigorated by the hardy discipline of his calling. The fearless qualities of his mind, no less than the activity and strength of his body, had been greatly developed to the advantage of his character; and, what does not unfrequently happen, the peculiar adaptation of his new pursuits to the temper and cast of his constitution, had operated favourably upon his morals. His errant propensities had been gratified; and the alternations between the idleness of the calm and the strenuous and exciting bustle of the storm, were pleasing to his unsteady and fitful nature. He had found, in other habits, a vent for inclinations which, when constrained by his former monotonous avocations, had so often broken out into mischievous adventures. In short, Abe was looked upon by his employers as a valuable seaman; and the report of this estimation of him had worked wonders in his favour at Swallow Barn.

From the period of his departure up to this time, poor old Lucy nursed the same extravagant feelings towards him; and these were even kindled into a warmer flame by his increasing good repute. Her

passion, it may be called, was a subject of constant notice in the family: It would have been deemed remarkable in an individual of the most delicate nurture; but, in the aged and faithful domestic, it was a subject of commiseration on account of its influence upon her happiness, and had almost induced Meriwether to recall Abe to his former occupation; although he was sensible that, by doing so, he might expose him to the risk of relapsing into his earlier errors. But, besides this, Abe had become so well content with his present station that it was extremely likely he would, of his own accord, have sought to return to it. The vagrant, sunshiny, and billowy life of a sailor has a spell in it that works marvelously upon the heedless and irresponsible temperament of a negro. Abe was, therefore, still permitted, like a buoy, to dance upon the waves, and to woo his various destiny between the lowest trough of the sea, and the highest white-cap of the billow.

At the time to which my story has now advanced, an event took place that excited great interest within the little circle of Swallow Barn. It was about the breaking up of the winter—towards the latter end of February—some four years ago, that in the afternoon of a cheerless day, news arrived at Norfolk that an inward-bound brig had struck upon the shoal of the middle ground, (a shallow bar that stretches seaward beyond the mouth of the Chesapeake, between the two capes,) and, from the threatening aspect of the weather, the crew were supposed to be in great danger. It was a cold, blustering day, such as winter sometimes puts on when he is about

to retreat:—as a squadron, vexed with watching a politic enemy, finding itself obliged, at last, to raise the blockade, is apt to break ground with an unusual show of bravado.—The wind blew in gusts from the north-west; a heavy rack of dun and chilly clouds was driven churlishly before the blast, and spitted out some rare flakes of snow. These moving masses were forming a huge, black volume upon the eastern horizon, towards the ocean, as if there encountering the resistance of an adverse gale. From the west the sun occasionally shot forth a lurid ray, that, for the instant, flung upon this dark pile a sombre, purple hue, and lighted up the foam that gathered at the top of the waves, far seaward; thus opening short glimpses of that dreary ocean over which darkness was brooding. The sea-birds soared against the murky vault above them; and, now and then, caught upon their white wings the passing beam, that gave them almost a golden radiance; whilst, at the same time, they screamed their harsh and frequent cries of fear or joy. The surface of the Chesapeake was lashed up into a fretful sea, and the waves were repressed by the weight of the wind; billow pursuing billow with an angry and rapid flight, and barking, with the snappish sullenness of the wolf. Across the wide expanse of Hampton Road might have been seen some few bay-craft, apparently not much larger than the wild-fowl that sailed above them, beating, with a fearful anxiety, against the gale, for such harbours as were nearest at hand; or scudding before it under close-reefed sails, with ungovernable speed, towards the anchorages to leeward. Every

moment the wind increased in violence ; the clouds swept nearer to the waters ; the gloom thickened ; the birds sought safety on the land ; the little barks were quickly vanishing from view ; and, before the hour of sunset, earth, air, and, sea were blended into one mass, in which the eye might vainly endeavour to define the boundaries of each : whilst the fierce howling of the wind, and the deafening uproar of the ocean gave a desolation to the scene, that made those, who looked upon it from the shore, devoutly thankful that no ill luck had tempted them upon the flood.

It was at this time that a pilot boat was seen moored to a post at the end of a wooden wharf that formed the principal landing place at the little seaport of Hampton. The waves were dashing, with hollow reverberations, between the timbers of the wharf, and the boat was rocking with a violence that showed the extreme agitation of the element upon which it floated. Three or four sailors—all negroes—clad in rough pea-jackets, with blue and red woollen caps, were standing upon the wharf or upon the deck of the boat, apparently making some arrangements for venturing out of the harbour. The principal personage among them, whose commands were given with a bold and earnest voice, and promptly obeyed, was our stout friend Abe, now grown into the full perfection of manhood, with a frame of unsurpassed strength and agility. At the nearer extremity of this wharf, land-ward, were a few other mariners, white men, of a weather-beaten exterior, who had seemingly just walked from the village to the landing-place, and were engaged in a grave consultation upon some

question of interest. This group approached the former while they were yet busy with the tackling of the boat. Abe had stepped a-board with his companions, and they were about letting all loose for their departure.

"What do you think of it now, Abe?" asked one of the older seamen, as he turned his eyes towards the heavens, with a look of concern. "Are you still so crazy as to think of venturing out in this gale?"

"The storm is like a young wolf," replied Abe. "It gets one hour older and two worse. But this isn't the hardest blow I ever saw, Master Crocket."

"It will be so dark to-night," said the other, "that you will not be able to see your jib; and, by the time the wind gets round to north-east, you will have a drift of snow that will shut your eyes. It will be a dreadful night outside of the capes: I see no good that is to come of your foolhardiness."

"Snow-storm or hail-storm, it's all one to me," answered Abe. "The little Flying-Fish has ridden, summer and winter, over as heavy seas as ever rolled in the Chesapeake. I knows what she can do, you see!"

"Why, you could'nt find the brig if you were within a cable's length of her, such a night as this," said another speaker; "and if you were to see her I don't know how you are to get along side."

"You wouldn't say so, master Wilson," returned Abe, "if you were one of the crew of the brig yourself. We can try, you know; and if no good comes on it, let them that *saunt* me judge of that. I always obeys orders!"

"Well," replied the other, "a negro that is born to be hanged—you know the rest, Abe:—the devil may help you, as he sometimes does."

"There is as good help for a negro as there is for a white man, master Wilson—whether on land or water. And no man is going to die till his time comes. I don't set up for more spirit than other people; but I never was afraid of the sea."

During this short dialogue, Abe and his comrades were busily reefing the sail, and they had now completed all their preparations. The day had come very near to the hour of sunset. Abe mustered his crew, spoke to them with a brave, encouraging tone, and ordered them to cast off from the wharf. In a moment, all hands were at the halyards; and the buoyant little Flying Fish sprang off from her moorings, under a single sail double-reefed, and bounded along before the wind, like an exulting doe, loosened from thralldom, on her native wastes.

"That's a daring fellow!" said one of the party that stood upon the wharf, as they watched the gallant boat heaving playfully through the foam—"and would'nt mind going to sea astride a shark, if any one would challenge him to it."

"If any man along the Chesapeake," said another, "can handle a pilot boat in such weather—Abe can. But it's no use for a man to be tempting providence in this way. It looks wicked!"

"He is on a good errand," interrupted the first speaker. "And God send him a successful venture! That negro has a great deal of good and bad both in him—but I think the good has the upper hand."

The Flying Fish was soon far from the speakers, and now showed her little sail, as she bent it down almost to kiss the water, a spotless vision upon the dark and lowering horizon in the east. At length she was observed close hauled upon the wind, and rapidly skimming behind the headlands of Old Point Comfort; whence, after some interval, she again emerged, lessened to the size of a water fowl by distance, and holding her course, with a steady and resolute speed, into the palpable obscure of the perspective.

When the last trace of this winged messenger of comfort was lost in the terrific desert of ocean, with its incumbent night, the watchful and anxious spectators on the wharf turned about and directed their steps, with thoughtful forebodings, to the public house at some distance in the village.

From what I have related, the reader will be at no loss to understand the purpose of this perilous adventure. The fact was, that as soon as the intelligence reached Norfolk that the brig had got into the dangerous situation which I have described, some of the good people of that borough took measures to communicate with the crew, and to furnish them such means of relief as the suddenness of the emergency enabled them to command. The most obvious suggestion was adopted of despatching, forthwith, a small vessel to bring away those on board, if it should be ascertained that there was no hope of saving the brig itself. This scheme, however, was not so easy of accomplishment as it, at first, seemed. Application was made to the most experienced mariners in

port to undertake this voyage ; but, they either evaded the duty, by suggesting doubts of its utility, or cast their eyes towards the heavens and significantly shook their heads, as they affirmed there would be more certainty of loss to the deliverers than to the people of the stranded vessel. The rising tempest and the unruly season boded disaster to whomsoever should be so rash as to encounter the hazard. Rewards were offered ; but these, too, failed of effect, and the good intentions of the citizens of Norfolk were well nigh disappointed, when chance brought the subject to the knowledge of our old acquaintance Abe. This stout-hearted black happened to be in the borough at the time ; and was one of a knot of seamen who were discussing the proposition of the chances of affording relief. He heard, attentively, all that was said in disparagement of the projected enterprise ; and it was with some emotion of secret pleasure that he learned that several seamen of established reputation had declined to undertake the venture. The predominant pride of his nature was aroused ; and he hastened to say, that whatever terrors this voyage had for others, it had none for him. In order, therefore, that he might vouch the sincerity of his assertion by acts, he went immediately to those who had interested themselves in concerting the measure of relief, and tendered his services for the proposed exploit. As may be supposed, they were eagerly accepted. Abe's conditions were, that he should have the choice of his boat, and the selection of his crew. These terms were readily granted ; and he set off, with a busy

alacrity, to make his preparations. The Flying Fish was the pilot-boat in which Abe had often sailed, and was considered one of the best of her class in the Chesapeake. This little bark was, accordingly, demanded for the service, and as promptly put at Abe's command. She was, at that time, lying at the pier at Hampton, as I have already described her. The crew, from some such motive of pride as first induced Abe to volunteer in this cause, was selected entirely from the number of negro seamen then in Norfolk: They amounted to four or five of the most daring and robust of Abe's associates, who, lured by the hope of reward, as well as impelled by that spirit of rivalry that belongs to even the lowest classes of human beings, and which is particularly excitable in the breasts of men that are trained to dangerous achievements, readily enlisted in the expedition, and placed themselves under the orders of their gallant and venturous captain.

This tender of service and its acceptance, produced an almost universal reprobation of its rashness, from the sea-faring men of the port. And while all acknowledged that the enterprise could not have been committed to a more able or skilful mariner than Abe, yet it was declared to be the endeavour of a fool-hardy madman who was rushing on his fate. The expression of such distrust only operated as an additional stimulant to Abe's resolution, and served to hurry him, the more urgently forward, to the execution of his purpose. He, therefore, with such despatch as the nature of his preparations allowed, mustered his intrepid crew in the harbour of Norfolk, and

repaired with them to the opposite shore of the James River, to the little sea-port, where my reader has already seen him embarking upon his brave voyage, amidst the disheartening auguries of wise and disciplined veterans of the sea.

I might stop to compare this act of an humble and unknown negro, upon the Chesapeake, with the many similar passages in the lives of heroes whose names have been preserved fresh in the verdure of history, and who have won their immortality upon less noble feats than this; but History is a step-mother, that gives the bauble fame to her own children, with such favouritism as she lists, overlooking many a goodly portion of the family of her husband Time. Still, it was a gallant thing, and worthy of a better chronicler than I, to see this leader and his little band—the children of a despised stock—swayed by a noble emulation to relieve the distressed; and (what the fashion of the world will deem a higher glory) impelled by that love of daring which the romancers call chivalry—throwing themselves upon the unruly waves of winter, and flying, on the wing of the storm, into the profound, dark abyss of ocean, when all his terrors were gathering in their most hideous forms; when the spirit of ill shrieked in the blast, and thick night, dreary with unusual horrors, was falling close around them; when old mariners grew pale with the thought of the danger, and the wisest counselled the adventurers against the certain doom that hung upon their path:—I say, it was a gallant sight to see such heroism shining out in an humble and unlettered slave of the Old Dominion!

They say the night that followed was a night of the wildest horrors. Not a star twinkled in the black heavens: the winds rushed forth, like some pent-up flood suddenly overbearing its barriers, and swept through the air with palpable density: men, who chanced to wander at that time, found it difficult to keep their footing on the land: the steeples of Norfolk groaned with the unwonted pressure; chimneys were blown from their seats; houses were unroofed, and the howling elements terrified those who were gathered around their own hearths, and made them silent with fear: the pious fell upon their knees: nurses could not hush their children to sleep: bold-hearted revellers were dismayed, and broke up their meetings: the crash of trees, fences, out-buildings mingled with the ravings of the tempest: the icicles were swept from the eaves, and from every penthouse, till they fell in the streets like hail: ships were stranded at the wharves, or were lifted, by an unnatural tide, into the streets: the ocean roared with more terrific bass than the mighty wind, and threw its spray into the near heaven, with which it seemed in contact: and, as anxious seamen looked out at intervals during the night, towards the Atlantic, the light-house, that usually shot its ray over the deep, was invisible to their gaze, or seen only by glimpses, like a little star immeasurably remote, wading through foam and darkness.

What became of our argonauts?—The next morning told the tale. One seaman alone of the brig survived to relate the fate of his companions. In the darkest hour of the night their vessel went to pieces,

and every soul on board perished, except this man. He had bound himself to a spar, and, by that miraculous fortune which the frequent history of shipwreck recounts, he was thrown upon the beach near Cape Henry. Bruised, chafed and almost dead, he was discovered in the morning and carried to a neighbouring house, where care and nursing restored him to his strength. All that this mariner could tell was, that early in the night,—perhaps about eight o'clock,—and before the storm had risen to its height, (although, at that hour, it raged with fearful vehemence,) a light was seen gliding, with the swiftness of a meteor, past the wreck; a hailing cry was heard as from a trumpet, but the wind smothered its tones and rendered them inarticulate; and, in the next moment, the spectre of a sail (for no one of the sufferers believed it real) flitted by them, as with a rush of wings, so close that some affirmed they could have touched it with their hands: that, about an hour afterwards, the same hideous phantom, with the same awful salutation, was seen and heard by many on board, a second time: that the crew, terrified by this warning, made all preparations to meet their fate; and when at last, in the highest exasperation of the storm, the same apparition made its third visit, the timbers of the brig parted at every joint, and all, except the relater himself, were supposed to have been engulfed in the wave, and given to instant death.

Such, was the sum of this man's story. What was subsequently known, proved its most horrible conjecture to be fatally true.

Various speculation was indulged, during the first week after this disaster, as to the destiny of Abe and his companions. No tidings having arrived, some affirmed that nothing more would ever be heard of them. Others said that they might have luffed up close in the wind and ridden out the night, as the Flying Fish was staunch and true: others, again, held that there was even a chance that they had scudded before the gale, and, having good sea-room, had escaped into the middle of the Atlantic. No vessels appeared upon the coast for several days, and the hope of receiving news of Abe, was not abandoned.

The next week came and went. There were arrivals, but no word of the Flying Fish. Anxiety began to give way to the conviction that all were lost. But, when the third week passed over, and commerce grew frequent, as the spring advanced, all doubts were abandoned, and the loss of the Flying Fish and her crew, ceased any longer to furnish topics of discussion.

My reader must now get back to Swallow Barn. The story of Abe's adventure had reached the plantation, greatly exaggerated in all the details; none of which were concealed from Lucy. On the contrary, the wonder-loving women of the Quarter daily reported to her additional particulars, filled with extravagant marvels, in which, so far from manifesting a desire to soothe the feelings of the mother and reconcile her to the doom of Abe, all manner of appalling circumstances were added, as if for the pleasure of giving a higher gust to the tale.

It may appear unaccountable, but it was the fact, that Lucy, instead of giving herself up to such grief as might have been expected from her attachment to her son, received the intelligence even with composure. She shed no tears, and scarcely deserted her customary occupations. She was remarked only to have become more solitary in her habits, and to evince an urgent and eager solicitude to hear whatever came from Norfolk, or from the Chesapeake. Scarcely a stranger visited Swallow Barn, for some months after the event I have recounted, that the old woman did not take an occasion to hold some conversation with him; in which all her inquiries tended to the tidings which might have existed of the missing seamen.

As time rolled on, Lucy's anxiety seemed rather to increase; and it wrought severely upon her health. She was observed to be falling fast into the weakness and decrepitude of age: her temper grew fretful, and her pursuits still more lonesome. Frequently, she shut herself up in her cabin for a week or a fortnight, during which periods she refused to be seen by any one. And now, tears began to visit her withered cheeks. Meriwether made frequent efforts to reason her out of this painful melancholy: her reply to all his arguments was uniformly the same;—it was simple and affecting—“I cannot give him up, master Frank!”

In this way a year elapsed; but, with its passage, came no confirmation to Lucy's mind of the fate of her son; and so far was time from bringing an assuagement of her grief, that it only cast a more per-

manent dejection over her mind. She spoke continually upon the subject of Abe's return, whenever she conversed with any one; and her fancy was filled with notions of preternatural warnings, which she had received in dreams, and in her solitary communings with herself. The females of the family at Swallow Barn exercised the most tender assiduities towards the old servant, and directed all their persuasions to impress upon her the positive certainty of the loss of Abe; they endeavoured to lift up her perception to the consolations of religion,—but the insuperable difficulty which they found in the way of all attempts to comfort her, was the impossibility of convincing her that the case was, even yet, hopeless. That dreadful suspense of the mind, when it trembles in the balance between a mother's instinctive love for her offspring, on the one side, and the thought of its perdition on the other, was more than the philosophy or resignation of an ignorant old negro woman could overcome. It was to her the sickness of the heart that belongs to hope deferred,—and the more poignant, because the subject of it was incapable of even that moderate and common share of reason that would have intelligently weighed the facts of the case.

Months were now added to the year of unavailing regrets that had been spent. No one ever heard Lucy say wherefore, but all knew that she still reckoned Abe's return amongst expected events. It was now, in the vain thought that the old woman's mind would yield to the certainty implied by the lapse of time and the absence of tidings, that my

cousin Lucretia prepared a suit of mourning for her, and sent it, with an exhortation that she would wear it in commemoration of the death of her son. Meriwether laid some stress upon this device; for, he said, grief was a selfish emotion, and had some strange alliance with vanity.—It was a metaphysical conceit of his, which was founded in deep observation; and he looked to see it illustrated in the effect of the mourning present upon Lucy. She took the dress—it was of some fine bombazet,—gazed at it, with a curious and melancholy eye, and then shook her head and said,—it was a mistake:—“I will never put on that dress,” she observed, “because it would be bad luck to Abe. What would Abe say if he was to catch mammy Lucy wearing black clothes for him?”

They left the dress with her, and she was seen to put it carefully away. Some say that she was observed in her cabin, one morning soon after this, through the window, dressed out in this suit; but she was never known to wear it at any other time. About this period, she began to give manifest indications of a decay of reason. This was first exhibited in unusual wanderings, by night, into the neighbouring wood; and then, by a growing habit of speaking and singing to herself. With the loss of her mind her frame still wasted away, and she gradually began to lose her erect position.

Amongst the eccentric and painful developments of her increasing aberration of mind, was one that presented the predominating illusion that beset her in an unusually vivid point of view.

One dark and blustering night of winter, the third anniversary of that on which Abe had sailed upon his desperate voyage,—for Lucy had noted the date, although others had not,—near midnight, the inhabitants of the Quarter were roused from their respective cabins by loud knockings in succession at their doors; and when each was opened, there stood the decrepit figure of old Lucy, who was thus making a circuit to invite her neighbours, as she said, to her house.

“He has come back!” said Lucy to each one, as they loosed their bolts; “he has come back! I always told you he would come back upon this very night! Come and see him! Come and see him! Abe is waiting to see his friends to-night.”

Either awed by the superstitious feeling that a maniac inspires in the breasts of the ignorant, or incited by curiosity, most of the old negroes followed Lucy to her cabin. As they approached it, the windows gleamed with a broad light, and it was with some strange sensations of terror that they assembled at her threshold, where she stood upon the step, with her hand upon the latch. Before she opened the door to admit her wondering guests, she applied her mouth to the keyhole, and said in an audible whisper, “Abe, the people are all ready to see you, honey! Don’t be frightened,—there’s nobody will do you harm!”

Then, turning towards her companions, she said, bowing her head,—

“Come in, good folks! There’s plenty for you all. Come in and see how he is grown!”

She now threw open the door, and, followed by the rest, entered the room. There was a small table set out, covered with a sheet; and upon it three or four candles were placed in bottles for candlesticks. All the chairs she had were ranged around this table, and a bright fire blazed in the hearth.

“Speak to them, Abe!” said the old woman, with a broad laugh. “This is uncle Jeff, and here is Dinah, and here is Ben,”—and in this manner she ran over the names of all present; then continued,—

“Sit down, you negroes! Have you no manners! Sit down and eat as much as you choose; there is plenty in the house. Mammy Lucy knew Abe was coming: and see what a fine feast she has made for him!”

She now seated herself, and addressing an empty chair beside her, as if some one occupied it, lavished upon the imaginary Abe a thousand expressions of solicitude and kindness. At length she said,—

“The poor boy is tired, for he has not slept these many long nights. You must leave him now:—he will go to bed. Get you gone! get you gone! you have all eaten enough!”

Dismayed and wrought upon by the unnatural aspect of the scene, the party of visitors quitted the cabin almost immediately upon the command; and the crazed old menial was left alone to indulge her sad communion with the vision of her fancy.

From that time until the period at which I saw her, she continued occasionally to exhibit the same evidences of insanity. There were intervals, however, in which she appeared almost restored to her

reason. During one of these, some of the negroes hoping to remove the illusion that Abe was still alive, brought her a handkerchief resembling that which she had given to him on his first departure ; and, in delivering it to her, reported a fabricated tale, that it had been taken from around the neck of Abe, by a sailor who had seen the body washed up by the tide upon the beach of the sea, and had sent this relic to Lucy as a token of her son's death. She seemed, at last, to believe the tale ; and took the handkerchief and put it away in her bosom. This event only gave a more sober tone to her madness. She now keeps more closely over her hearth, where she generally passes the livelong day, in the posture in which we found her. Sometimes she is heard muttering to herself,—“ They buried his body in the sands of the sea,” which she will repeat a hundred times. At others, she falls into a sad but whimsical speculation, the drift of which is implied in the question that she put to Meriwether whilst we remained in her cottage ; —“ How many years may a ship sail at sea without stopping?”

CHAPTER XX.**CLOUDS.**

THE time had now arrived when it was necessary for me to return to New York. It was almost two months since I had left home, and I was cautioned by my northern friends not to remain in the low-country of Virginia longer than until the middle of August. Hazard endeavoured to persuade me that the season had all the indications of being unusually healthy, and that I might therefore remain without risk. He had manifestly views of his own to be improved by my delay, which rendered him rather an interested adviser; and, in truth, we had grown so intimate by our late associations, that I felt it somewhat difficult to bring myself to the necessary resolution of taking leave. But go I must—or inflict upon my good mother and sisters that feminine torture which visits the bosoms of this solicitous sex when once their apprehensions are excited on any question of health. I therefore announced my fixed determination on the subject to the family, and pertinaciously met all the arguments which were directed to unsettle my resolve, with that hardy denial of assent which is the only refuge of a man in such a case. My preparations were made, and the day of my departure was named.

Unluckily for my plan, the elements made war against it. The very day before my allotted time, there came on a soft, drizzling rain, which began soon after breakfast; and when we met at dinner, Hazard came to me, rubbing his hands and smiling with a look of triumph, to tell me that however obstinate I might be in my purpose, here was a flat interdict upon it.

“We generally have,” said he, “what we call a long spell in August. The rain has begun; and you may consider yourself fortunate if you get away in a week.” I took it as a jest; but the next morning, when I went to my chamber-window, I found that Ned’s exultation was not without some reason. It had rained all night, not in hard showers, but in that gentle, noiseless outpouring of the heavens, which showed that they meant to take their own time to disburthen themselves of their vapour. Far as my eye could reach, the firmament was clad in one broad, heavy, gray robe. The light was equally diffused over this mass, so as entirely to conceal the position of the sun; and, somewhat nearer to earth, small detachments of dun clouds floated across the sky in swift transit, as if hastening to find their place in the ranks of the sombre army near the horizon. I came down to breakfast, where the family were assembled at a much later hour than usual. A small fire was burning in the hearth: the ladies were in undress, and something of the complexion of the sky seemed to have settled upon the countenances of all around me;—a quiet, unelastic, sober considerateness, that was not so frequently disturbed as

before with outbreaks of merriment. My cousin Lucretia poured out our coffee with a more sedate and careful attention : Prudence looked as if she had overslept herself :—Meriwether hung longer over the newspaper than common, and permitted us to take our seats at table some time before he gave up reading the news. The little girls had a world of care upon their shoulders ;—and Parson Chub despatched his meal with unwonted expedition, and then, thrusting his hands into his pockets, went into the hall, and walked to and fro thoughtfully. Hazard was the only one of the party who appeared untouched by the change of the weather ; and he kept his spirits up by frequent sallies of felicitation directed to me, on the auspicious prospect I had before me.

After breakfast we went to the door. The rain pattered industriously from the eaves down upon the rosebushes. The gravel walk was intersected by little rivers that also ran along its borders ; and the grass-plots were filled with lakes. The old willow, saturated with rain, wept profuse tears, down every trickling fibre, upon the ground. The ducks were gathered at the foot of this venerable monument, and rested in profound quiet, with their heads under their wings. Beyond the gate, an old plough-horse spent his holiday from labour in undisturbed idleness—his head downcast, his tail close to his rump and his position motionless, as some inanimate thing, only giving signs of life by an occasional slow lifting up of his head—as if to observe the weather—and a short, horse-like sneeze.

The rain poured on ; and now and then some one

would affirm that it grew brighter, and that, perhaps, at mid-day it would clear up. But mid-day came, and the same continual dripping fell from leaf, and roof, and fence. There was neither light nor shade: all the picturesque had vanished from the landscape: the foreground was full of falling drops, and the perspective was mist. The dogs crept beneath the porch, or intruded, with their shaggy and rain-besprinkled coats, into the hall, leaving their footsteps marked upon the floor wherever they walked. The negro women ran across the yard with their aprons thrown over their heads. The working men moved leisurely along, like sable water-gods, dripping from every point, their hats softened into cloth-like consistence, and their faces, beneath them, long, sober and trist. During the day, Rip made frequent excursions out of doors, and returned into the house with shoes covered with mud, much to the annoyance of Mistress Winkle, who kept up a quick and galling fire of reproof upon the young scapegrace. As for Hazard and myself, we betook ourselves to the library, whither Meriwether had gone before us, and there rambled through the thousand flowery by-paths of miscellaneous literature; changing our topics of study every moment, and continually interrupting each other by reading aloud whatever passages occurred to provoke a laugh. This grew tedious in turn; and then we repaired to the drawing-room, where we found the ladies in a similar unquiet mood, making the like experiments upon the piano. We were all nervous.

Thus came and went the day. The next was no

better. When I again looked out in the morning, there stood the weeping willow, the same vegetable Niobe as before, and there the meditative ducks; there the same horse,—or another like him,—looking into the inscrutable recesses of a fence corner; and there the dogs, and the muddy-footed Rip. To vary the scene, we took umbrellas and walked out, holding our way trippingly over the wet path towards the bridge. The pigeons, like ourselves, tired of keeping the house, had ranged themselves upon the top of the stable, or on the perches before the doors of their own domicil, dripping images of disconsolateness. A stray flock of blackbirds sometimes ventured across the welkin; and the cows, in defiance of the damp earth, had composedly lain down in the mud. The only living thing who seemed to feel no inconvenience from the season was the hog, who pursued his epicurean ramble in despite of the elements.

The rain poured on; and the soaked field and drenched forest had no pleasure in our eyes; so, we returned to the house, and again took refuge in the library. Despairing of the sun, I at length sat down to serious study, and soon found myself occupied in a pursuit that engrossed all my attention.

I have said before that Meriwether had a good collection of books. These had been brought together without order in the selection, and they presented a mass of curious literature in almost every department of knowledge. My love of the obsolete led me amongst the heavy folios and quartos that lumbered the lower shelves of the library, where I pitched upon a thin, tall folio, that contained the following

pithy title page, which I have copied exactly as I found it:—"Some account of the Renowned Captayne John Smith, with his travel and adventures in the Foure Quarters of the Earthe; showing his gallante Portauce in divers perillous Chaunces, both by Sea and Land: his Feats against the Turke, and his dolefull Captivitie in Tartaria. Also, what befell in his Endeavours towards the Planting of the Colonie of Virginia; and, in especiall, his Marvellous Prouess and Incredible Escapes amongst the Barbarous Salvages. Together with Sundrie other Moving Accidents in his Historie. London. Imprinted for Edward Blackmore, 162—."

This title was set out in many varieties of type, and occupied but a small portion of the page, being encompassed by a broad margin which was richly illuminated with a series of heraldic ornaments, amongst which was conspicuous the shield with three turbaned heads and the motto "vincere est vivere." There were, also, graphic representations of soldiers, savages and trees, all coloured according to nature, and, as the legend at the foot imported, "graven by John Barra."

The date of the work had been partially obliterated,—three numerals of the year being only distinguishable; but from these it was apparent that this memoir was published somewhere about the end of the first quarter of the seventeenth century—perhaps about 1625, or not later than 1629.

The exploits of Captain Smith had a wonderful charm for that period of my life when the American Nepos supplied the whole amount of my reading;

but I have never, since that boyish day, taken the trouble to inquire whether I was indebted for the captivation of the story to the events it recorded, or to my own pleasant credulity,—that natural stomach for the marvellous, which, in early youth, will digest agate and steel. This little chronicle, therefore, came most opportunely in my way ; and I gave myself up to the perusal of it with an eager appetite.

I was now on the spot where Smith had achieved some of his most gallant wonders. The narrative was no longer the mere fable that delighted my childhood ; but here I had it in its most authentic form, with the identical print, paper and binding in which the story was first given to the world by its narrator—for aught that I knew, the Captain himself—perhaps the Captain's good friend, old Sam Purchas, who had such a laudable thirst for the wonderful. This was published, too, when thousands were living to confute the author if he falsified in any point.

And here, on a conspicuous page, was " An Exact Portraictuer of Captayne Iohn Smith, Admiral of all New England," taken to the life ; with his lofty brow that imported absolute verity on the face of it, and his piercing eye, and fine phrenological head, with a beard of the ancient spade cut ; arrayed in his proper doublet, with gorget and ruff ; one arm a-kimbo, the other resting on his sword. Below the picture were some fair lines inferring that he " was brass without, and gold within." Throughout the volume, moreover, were sundry cuts showing the Captain in his most imminent hazards, of a flatter-

ing fancy, but in total disregard of all perspective. And here, in view of the window, was the broad James River, upon which he and his faithful Mosco, (otherwise called by the more euphonious name of Uttasantasough), two hundred years gone by, had sailed, in defiance of twenty kings whose very names I am afraid to write. History is never so charming as under the spell of such associations; the narrative avouched by present monuments, and fact sufficiently dim by distance, for the imagination to make what it pleases out of it, without impugning the veracity of the story.

I have sometimes marvelled why our countrymen, and especially those of Virginia, have not taken more pains to exalt the memory of Smith. With the exception of the little summary of the schools, that I have before noticed,—and which is unfortunately falling into disuse,—some general references to his exploits as they are connected with the history of our states, and an almost forgotten memoir by Stith, we have nothing to record the early adventures and chivalric virtues of the good soldier, unless it be some such obsolete and quaint chronicle as this of Swallow Barn, that no one sees. He deserves to be popularly known for his high public spirit, and to have his life illustrated in some well told tale that should travel with Robinson Crusoe and the Almanack—at least through the Old Dominion:—and in the Council Chamber at Richmond, or in the Hall of Delegates, the doughty champion should be exhibited on canvass in some of his most picturesque conjunctures: And then, he should be lifted to that

highest of all glorifications,—the truest touchstone of renown,—the signposts.

Smith's character was moulded in the richest fashion of ancient chivalry; and, without losing any thing of romance, was dedicated, in his maturer years, to the useful purposes of life. It was marked by great devotion to his purpose, a generous estimate of the public good, and an utter contempt of danger. In the age in which he lived, nobleness of birth was an essential condition to fame. This, unfortunately for the renown of Smith, he did not possess; otherwise, he would have been as distinguished in history as Bayard, Gaston de Foix, Sir Walter Manny, or any other of the mirrors of knighthood whose exploits have found a historian. Smith, however, was poor, and was obliged to carve his way to fame without the aid of chroniclers; and there is, consequently, a great obscurity resting upon the meagre details which now exist of his wonderful adventures. These rude records show a perplexing ignorance of geography, which defies all attempts at elucidation. Muniments, however, of unquestionable authenticity, still exist to confirm the most remarkable prodigies of his story. The patent of knighthood conferred upon him by Sigismund Bathor, in 1603, is of this character. It recites some of the leading events of his life, and was admitted to record by the Garter King-at-Arms of Great Britain, twenty-two years afterwards, when Smith's services in the establishment of the American colonies attracted a share of the public attention.

He possessed many of the points of a true knight.

He was ambitious of honour, yet humble in his own praise,—tempering his valour with modesty, and the reckless gallantry of the cavalier with irreproachable manners. A simple testimony to this effect, but a sincere one, is given by an old soldier who had followed him through many dangers, and who shared with him the disasters of the defeat at Rothenturn. It is appended, by the author of it, to Smith's account of New England. His name was Carlton, and he had served as Smith's ensign in the wars of Transylvania. The reader may be gratified to peruse some of these lines, addressed to the "honest Captaine."

"Thy words by deeds, so long thou hast approved,
Of thousands know thee not, thou art beloved.
And this great Plot will make thee ten times more
Knowne and beloved than e'er thou wert before.
I never knew a warrior yet but thee,
From wine, tobacco, debts, dice, oaths so free.

* * * * * * *

Your true friend, sometime your souldier,

THO. CARLTON."

The uncouthness of the verse accords with the station of the writer, and gives a greater relish of honesty to the compliment.

It may be pleasing to the fairer portion of my readers, to learn something of his devotion to dames and lady-love, of which we have good proof. He was so courteous and gentle, that he might be taken for a knight sworn to the sex's service. He was a bachelor too, by 'r lady!—and an honour to his calling; mingling the refinement of Sir Walter Raleigh, his

prototype, with the noble daring of Essex and Howard. Hear with what suavity and knightly zeal he commends his gratitude to the sex, in recounting his various fortunes “to the illustrious and most noble Princesse, The Lady Francis, Duchesse of Richmond and Lenox;” and with what winning phrase, like a modest cavalier, he consigns his History of Virginia to her protection!—

“I confesse my hand, though able to wield a weapon among the Barbarous, yet well may tremble in handling a pen among so many judicious: especially, when I am so bold as to call so piercing and so glorious an Eye, as your Grace, to view these poore ragged lines. Yet my comfort is, that heretofore, honorable and vertuous Ladies, and comparable but amongst themselves, have offered me rescue and protection in my greatest dangers: even in forraine parts, I have felt relief from that sex. The beauteous Lady Tragabizanda, when I was a slave to the Turkes, did all she could to secure me. When I overcame the Bashaw of Nalbritz in Tartaria, the charitable Lady Callamata supplied my necessities. In the utmost of many extremities, that blessed Pokahontas, the great King’s daughter of Virginia, oft saved my life. When I escaped the crueltie of Pirates and most furious stormes, a long time alone, in a small boat at Sea, and driven ashore in France, the good Lady, Madam Chanoyes, bountifully assisted me.

“And so verily, these adventures have tasted the same influence from your Gracious hand, which hath given birth to the publication of this narration.” And,

thereupon, he prays that his "poore booke," which had "no helpe but the Shrine of her glorious name to be sheltered from censorious condemnation," might be taken under her protection; and "that she would vouchsafe some glimpse of her honorable aspect to accept his labours," that they might be presented "to the King's Royall Majestie, the most admired Prince Charles, and the Queene of Bohemia."

He tells her that "her sweet Recommendations would make it worthier their good countenances," and concludes by assuring her, "that this page should record to Posteritie that his service should be to pray to God that she might still continue the Renowned of her Sexe, the most honored of Men, and The Highly Blessed of God."

How much does all this flavour of the perfect knight of romance! But, to revert to our Legend.—The authorship of this memoir is left in mystery. There was no preface nor explanation of the circumstances in which it was written. I rather incline to ascribe it to George Piercie, brother of the Earl of Northumberland, who was Smith's lieutenant in Virginia, and, like himself, richly tinctured with the spirit of the age. It is certain that Piercie furnished some portions of Smith's History of Virginia, and was always a gallant comrade in danger. I think there is something in this nameless story that shows the hand of one fond of the wars; and it is most likely that Smith, in their long intercourse, had often relieved the tediousness of their solitary watches by these narratives, so grateful to the ear of a soldier.

These are thrown together in such loose manner

as might beseem a warrior who had given more time to his sword than to his pen. A part of the narrative is avowedly furnished by Francisco Ferneza, a learned Italian, who was secretary to Sigismund, and who was, probably, personally acquainted with Smith. This person wrote an account of the wars of Transylvania, and corroborates the facts which led the unfortunate Sigismund to confer the order of knighthood upon our brave captain.

It is my purpose to amuse my reader with a cursory compilation from the gay and careless narrative of my late discovered Legend.

THE CHRONICLE OF THE LIFE OF JOHN
SMITH.

WHEN John Smith began the world, your soldier was your only gentleman. Henry the Fourth had set France on fire with his gallant fancies, and "win and wear" was the true practick of the day. The Low Countries furnished a fair harvest to the English reapers; and the glories of "brave Lord Willoughby" and of Captains Norris and Turner, on the fields of Flanders, formed the theme of household ballads, that had been sung in Smith's ear until he grew frantic with ambition. So, like a young Varlet of chivalry, with the heart of a lion, a stalwart arm, a good sword, and withal a slender purse, in the year of grace 1594, with scant fifteen years upon his poll, he took his leave of the town of Lynn, in Norfolk,—where he had been bound apprentice to a merchant,—to seek his fortune wherever honour, throughout the wide world, was most surely to be won. He first went to France; but as that nation had just made a truce to take breath, he was not long in finding his way to that fruitful land of sieges, the Low Countries, whither he went under the banner of Captain Joseph Duxbury.

His education was none of the best, for youths of his temperament do not take very kindly to book and candle; but his disposition was cheery and venturous, and fit to make the best of whatever

might fall out; his person graceful, and his manners modest; and his face, if the "portraictuer" tell truth, was not unhandsome. At least, so I figure him to my mind from what I glean of his history.

The Low Countries were overstocked with galants. And therefore, after a brief service in the field, our Varlet, having studied what he might of the art of war, began to look further about him. If it were only his "cue to fight," there was no lack of the trade for such a cockerel. But he was tender of conscience, and did not like to abet the quarrel between Christian nations; especially while there was a Turk to be hacked upon the Danube. In fact, he was a lover of the picturesque, and yearned for outlandish adventures.

The Sultan had gained great renown by his recent wars, and he was then in the field with that most gorgeous of all creations, a Moslem army. Smith, therefore, proposed to himself some fortune with the Arch-duke Ferdinand. He travelled slowly, and looked about him as he went; and, being of a trusting temper, soon slipped into one of those pit-falls which this world always contrives for the unwary. It chanced that he fell into the company of four worthies of a stamp very common in unquiet times, "for all of them were knaves." They had the address to persuade him that one was a Lord, and the others his retainers. Like many before them, they had just

Come forth of the Low Countree,
With never a penny of money—

and having embarked with him in Flanders to sail

to St. Vallery in Picardy, they contrived, on landing, to rob him of his trunks, and with them, of all his worldly gear. So entirely did they strip him, that he was obliged to sell his cloak, though it was in deep winter, to pay his passage. So much for the first lesson of experience to the "Admiral of New England."

It is, doubtless, a hard thing to be set down in a strange country without money. But this was a common mishap in those days, amongst soldiers; and one of that profession might wisely trust to fortune. She did not now abandon Smith, but threw him in the way of a fellow soldier who was bound to Caen in Normandy. This good man, seeing that he had a blithe lad beside him, was touched with pity for his poverty, and not only supplied his present wants, but gave him convoy and welcome to a goodly circle of friends. Amongst the rest, the Lady Columber, at Caen, took a fancy to him, and brought him amongst many persons of worship, who amply reimbursed his losses, and tempted him with so much fair entertainment, that he had well nigh forgotten his purpose against the Turk. From all which I conclude that he was a comely youth, of pleasant demeanour.

Here, lest his noble ardour should evaporate amongst the blandishments of a life of idleness, he took up the resolution expressed in the ballad;—

“When he had rested him awhile
In play and game and sportt,
He said he would gōe prove himself,
In some adventurous sort.”

And, accordingly, after a short delay, he set out again upon his travels. In this second wandering he visited many cities in France, being principally led to the seaports, in the hope of finding a ship of war bound up the Mediterranean. This circuit was not without some rough adventures; for he again felt the pinch of poverty, from which he was relieved by charity; and he also did a deed of some note, in punishing Cursell, one of the four thieves who had robbed him of his trunks. He met this freebooter in a wood, alone; and, as a Varlet of chivalry was an extremely pugnacious animal, he did not fail to bring his spoiler to his weapon: the result was, that Cursell, as my Legend says, "no more, from that time forward, cozened honest men;" from whence we derive a significant conclusion. This feat happened in the neighbourhood of the residence of a nobleman with whom Smith had enjoyed a former acquaintance, the Lord Ployer, to whom he immediately betook himself, and received from him prompt and needful aid; which favours were long and gratefully remembered by our hero, as I find by "The History of Virginia," where Anas Todkil writes,—“this place (Accomack) we called Point Ployer, in honour of that most honourable house of Mounsey in Britaine, that, in an extream extremitie, once relieved our Captayne.”

From Brittany, the young adventurer went to Marseilles, where he took shipping for Italy. The ship in which he embarked was filled with pilgrims, under vows to St. Peter's at Rome. There were many misadventures attending their sailing: first,

they were driven by foul weather into Toulon; and then, they were compelled to come to anchor under the little Isle of St. Marguerite, on the coast of Savoy. The winds increased in violence, the waves tossed more angrily, and the heavens grew blacker, the longer Smith remained on board. A vote was accordingly taken by the passengers, who, gravely judging him to be a Huguenot, readily discovered the cause of impediment to the voyage. So they made a Jonah of him, and flung him into the sea,—not so far from shore, however, but that he was able to reach St. Marguerite's kindly beach.

The next day, a Captain Laroche, with a French ship from Brittany, a near friend of Lord Plover, took him off the island; and, being set upon a cruise, found in the bachelor Smith a ready comrade. The Captain Laroche was a gallant sailor, and as full of adventure as our hero could wish. Moreover, he drew kindly to his recruit, as well for the love he bore their common friend, as for the congeniality of their tempers. They stood across to Cape Bona, thence to the isle of Lampidosa, and, shortly afterwards, they made Alexandria in Egypt, where they staid long enough to deliver a cargo. Thence, cruising round Candia, Rhodes, and through the Archipelago, and back again, doubling Cape Matapan, and occasionally touching where their necessities or convenience required, they reached the island of Corfu.

Every' thing that walked, in these quarrelsome days, and every thing that swam, went armed in proof; and Laroche, like a true knight, "wooded

danger as a bride." He and Smith both longed for work in the way of their trade. It was near at hand. They left Corfu, bound for Otranto,—

" And days they scant had sayled three,
Upon the voyage they took in hand,
But there they met with a noble shipp,
And stoutly made it stay and stand."

A Venetian argosy, richly freighted, and homeward bound, hove in sight. The two belligerents were well manned, but the advantage in size was greatly in favour of the enemy. It was a fine sight to look upon! There was no idle parade, in those days, between merchantmen of different nations, speaking each other out of courtesy, to hear the news, or get the longitude, or a supply of pork and biscuit. He that wanted a fight could not go wrong; for the world was made up of war, and "play or pay" was the rule of the game. They both stood to quarters, and a fierce engagement ensued, in which victory long hung hovering over either banner. At last, the Venetian veiled his top, and gave up to the conquerors as much of his store of "piled velvets, cloth of gold, piastres, sequins and sultanies" as they thought fit to take. After this, each prosecuted his voyage; the vanquished home, and the victor to Antibes in Piedmont, whither he went to repair. Here, Smith, having taken his first degree in nautical life, by which he became afterwards so famous, and having won a thousand sequins in honourable battle, went ashore to woo dame Fortune on another strand.

He now accounted himself a proper man, and, thereupon, cocking his beaver, and trolling the old stave—"St. George he was for England—St. Denis was for France," he took to the road, like a free companion, and travelled all the way to Naples, having seen some strange sights at Rome on his journey. Thence, he came back, by another route, to Florence, to Mantua, to Padua, and to Venice; visiting gay cities; consorting with cavaliers and choice spirits; romping with rustic lasses; outfacing bluff bandits; and tuning himself up to the key of that wayward, disorderly time, in the best humour of a bon-camarado who wore silken doublet and trusty Toledo. Right joyously, I ween, did he look upon the delightful fields of sunny Italy! And, since the days of the admirable Creichton, never strode across them a more elastic foot! For he was now about twenty years of age, with a plentiful pocket, a thirst for fame, and a robust constitution,—all three con-
ducing to the hey-day current of his blood.

Boundless as was his love of travel, it was inferior to his love of feats of arms. The Emperor, Rodolph the Second was at that time in the height of his quarrel with the Sultan Mahomet the Third, who had just commenced his reign by strangling his nineteen brothers, and drowning ten of his father's wives; and all Europe was armed to the teeth. Smith looked with an affectionate interest to these broils; and hither tended his steps. But resolving, before he took service, to see something of the Turk in his own strongholds, he crossed from Venice to Dalmatia, and forthwith set out for Albania. Here, defying

Musselman and mountain, private treachery and open challenge, he threaded the defiles of these tangled regions alone; became a renegade for the nonce; put on the capote and turban; walked into their camp; ate pillau and drank sherbet; lodged in their fastnesses and towers of strength; and surveyed every thing with a practised and wily judgment. Then, turning north, he crossed Mount Hæmus, and traversing Bosnia and Sclavonia, he reached Gratz in Stiria, where the Archduke held his head-quarters.

A man of mettle was not to be lost in a crowd where blows fell thicker than there were heads to bear them; and Smith, accordingly, soon won favour with Lord Ebersbaught, and Baron Kisell, and, through them, with Voldo, Earl of Meldritch; all three of them officers of note in the Austrian army.

The Turks had just taken Caniza, and were now besieging Olimpach. Ebersbaught commanded in the place, and Kisell, at the head of the Archduke's artillery, vexed the besiegers from without. Smith entered with the latter as a volunteer, and did good service. He invented a night telegraph, by which the two armies were enabled to communicate, and thus to concert a scheme which, "in a most cunninglie devised stratageme," by our young volunteer, drove the Turk from his lines, and compelled him to raise the siege. He was immediately complimented for this exploit with a company of two hundred and fifty men, in the regiment of Count Meldritch.

Thus ended Smith's first campaign. The Emperor now began to make himself ready for further operations. He raised three armies, of which the first

was put under the command of his brother, the Archduke Mathias, and the Duke Mercury,—who took the principal charge in the field. This army was directed to the defence of Lower Hungary; and with a part of it, amounting to thirty thousand men, Duke Mercury marched to the leaguer of Stuhl-Weissemburg. The regiment of Meldritch was with this detachment; and, with his gallant colonel, Smith shared, says the chronicle, “in many a bloody sallie, strange stratajeme, and valiant exploit;—but, chiefly, was he commended for the invention of a hand-grenade, that “wrought wondrous detriment to the enemie.”

After much trouble and many blows, Stuhl-Weissemburg was taken by the Duke. But the Turks, having reinforced their army, marched forward with a purpose to regain their city. They met the Duke on the plains of Girke, where a most desperate battle ensued, in which Meldritch performed prodigies of valour, and where Smith had his horse shot, and was himself badly wounded. The Duke, however, won the day, and put an end to the campaign in that quarter.

This occasioned a separation of the forces. There was now a triangular war going on in Transylvania. The native Prince, Sigismund Bathor, was contending for his crown against the Emperor; and of the three armies above mentioned, one was sent by the Emperor, under the famous George Basta, against Sigismund. The Turk, on the other hand, was vexing the same Prince from the Wallachian frontier; and both Basta and Sigismund had abundance of ill

will against the Turk. Here was a pretty Gordian knot to be cut by the sword!

After the defeat of the Turks at Girke, Meldritch was ordered to join his troops with Basta's. Now, Meldritch was himself a Transylvanian, and much beloved. Whereupon he resolved,—having nothing more to his liking,—rather to help the Prince against the Turk, than Basta against the Prince. A soldier of fortune might in this age, without prejudice to the honour of his calling, change his colours as often as he pleased,—only preserving good faith in his contracts. Besides, the Emperor was somewhat of a sluggish paymaster; and as to booty,—there was not so much of that as there were buffets! For all which reasons, Count Meldritch, and his follower Smith, found no great difficulty in taking their soldiers into the Transylvanian service. Sigismund received them, as all men in straits are apt to receive a friend,—with open arms and fair promises. “And straitway,” affirms the legend, “they were despatched to trie conclusions against their old enemy the Turkes.”

Transylvania was diversely mastered. The Prince kept his footing in some parts of the territory, the Emperor had possession of others, and the Turks had garrisons in some of the southern mountainous defiles. It was in this latter district that the estates of the father of Count Meldritch lay, and he hoped to rescue them from the enemy. Here he accordingly, with Sigismund's permission, carried on a desultory war.

When the spring opened, Meldritch sat down before Regall, a strong fortification and town in the

Zarkam country of Wallachia, encompassed with mountains, and well garrisoned with a motley band of Turks, Tartars, Robbers and Renegades. His army was eight thousand strong; the Turks greatly exceeded that force; but the Zekler Prince Moyses, with an army of nine thousand soldiers, came and added his forces to those of Meldritch, and assumed command of the whole.

This city of Regall was hitherto deemed an impregnable spot, and the Turks were vain-glorious in their boasts of defence. The siege was long and obstinate, and some bloody skirmishes ensued between the out posts. Several months were spent; till, at last, matters began to grow tedious to the impatient besiegers. The country around them was rich in picturesque beauty; the season delicious; and all things contributed to warm the blood into a mettlesome gallop. Our gallants were high in heart; but none so high as the young Captain Smith. And the Turks were proud and scornful, as in those days, when the Sultan's banner floated in Buda, they had good right to be.

There was within the walls a belted knight, of a laudable ambition to do something worthy of his spurs; the Lord Turbashaw by name. This warrior was the very pink of Eastern chivalry, and burned to signalize himself in presence of his mistress. So, merely to amuse the gentle dames of Regall, he caused a defiance to be carried to the Christian host, to any Captain of their army to meet him in single fight, at such time and place as should be agreed on. The Christian cavaliers were overjoyed at this pro-

posal. Their answer was prompt and courteous; "they were right glad to certifie to the Lord Turbasha how well they approved his challenge."

The champion was yet unnamed, and many sought the honour. It was resolved, therefore, to choose him by lot. On whom might it fall but upon our bachelor!

The day for the encounter was appointed; the lists were prepared, and all the ordinances of chivalry were duly observed. A truce of twelve days for the enjoyment of the pastime was proclaimed, and every thing in either camp assumed the cheerful bustle that of yore belonged to a passage at arms. It was strange to see hostile men, whom no purpose of charity nor thought of good could seduce from the fell pursuit of war, suddenly pile their arms, and meet in brotherhood and amity, to revel in the sight of private carnage, and to look upon the flowing of the blood of their best companions. Yet such was the delight of chivalry!

When the day arrived, the lists were surrounded with whatever beauty dwelt in Regall. Idlers crowded up to the palisades; and the motley rabble of the country, beggars, ballad-singers and bandits, Gypsies, Greeks and Jews, thronged to see the sport. Nobles and knights took their seats of worship; and the promiscuous soldiery mingled in the crowd without fear of treachery or thought of feud. "The men at arms were drawn up in battalia at each extremity of the lists; pennons flaunted in the breeze; and bold and sturdie warriors rode to and fro in the

menie with joyous looks." The Cross and the Crescent fluttered from opposite ends of the barriers; and one or two knights stood in full armour, the supporters and guardians of each.

After the heralds had proclaimed the defiance and the answer, the trumpet sounded for the onset. "And thereupon,"—according to my author—"the Lord Turbashaw, all bedecked in bright and dazzling armour, such as that wont to be borne by Infidels, shining with gold and silver and precious stones, and on his shoulders the semblance of rich and glittering winges, came stately forth upon the field; the voice of hoboyes and other martial musicke governed the order of his step; and beside him two Janisaries, whereof one bore his lance, and the other led his horse. And now, on the other side, Smith, clad all in mail, with but a single page bearing his lance, and no other musicke but a flourish of trumpets, and with his horse led behind him, advanced to the centre of the lists. And here the two combatants exchanged salutes, with knightly courtesy,—such as beseemeth gallant cavaliers:—and, being readie dight, each did mount in saddle." At the sound of the charge, the lances were thrown, and the Turk was wounded; but this so enraged his valour, that they speedily closed in more desperate battle, and, as a verse of an ancient date says—

"Then tooke they out their two good swordes,
And layden on full faste,
Till helm and hauberk, mail and sheelde
They all were well nye brast."

"Then," saith the Legend, "did ill success be

tide the Pagan Lord ; for Smith, making his vantage good, pierced him thorow the bars of his helmet, with such a mortal thrust that he fell dead to the ground ; whereupon, the conqueror quicklie got down from his horse, and took off his adversarie's head from his body ; and presented it to the Lord Moyses, who received it with great joy in the presence of the whole armie."

The death of Turbashaw so wrought upon his friend Gualgo, that, in a paroxysm of rage, he defied the conquerer to do battle with him ; and, as Smith was now pledged, by the laws of the duello, to stand against all comers, he did not delay to answer the challenge ; and accordingly, the next day, before the same goodly company, with all the pomp of this sad pastime, they met in the same lists. The rash Gualgo had a ready swordsman to deal with ; and his head, too, soon became a victor's prize, with forfeiture of his horse and costly armour.

Smith, no longer a Varlet, had now won his rank, according to the ancient laws of chivalry, as a Chevalier tres hardie ; and was looked upon, in all men's eyes, as a warrior tried. He was loth to let his courage sleep. The siege waxed dull ; the place was strong, and the beleagured enemy, taught by experience, had grown wary. The flame of glory blazed brighter than ever in our young soldier's heart ; and he employed his time in martial sports, relieving the unprofitable hours of his delay by practice with the sword and lance.

At length, coveting some new adventure, " By my troth !" said he, " I will teach the saucie Turke to

amuse his dame with somewhat beside his sakre and falcon!" "And straightway," continues the narrative, "he hied him to the Prince Moyses, to whom, with much winning speech, and reasons well set forth in soldierly termes, he urged the delight he might afford if his behest should be granted; which was no other than that, for relief of the tediousness of the leaguer, he should be permitted to despatch to the citie a trusty messenger, to pay back the presumptuous challenge of the Turke, by telling him that there were yet some christian heads to be won, if the fayre ladies of Regall would deign to send out some warrior of ranke to undertake the hazard."

The Lord Moyses consenting to this reasonable request, an envoy was sent to bear the message. The Turks were not to be frightened by bravado; for they had abundance of valiant men; and this insolent taunt brought forth a chosen and sturdy champion, one Bony Molgro. The appointments were all made with the same ceremonies as before, and a bloody conflict ensued, which brought our springald into extreme peril. They fought first with pistols, then with battle axes, with which some lusty blows were given, that had nearly unhorsed the challenger. In the course of the fight, Smith was wounded; and a shout of triumph rent the air from the Turkish army. The chances were against his life; but his consummate skill as a horseman "stood him in excellent stead; for, fetching a circuit round his antagonist, and so featly bending his body as thereby to avoid the blows aimed at him, he presentlie found his advantage so open, that, with one quicke leap,

he skilfully struck down his foe with his sword, piercing him clean through to the back." This brought Bony Molgro from his horse; and, in little time, his head was added to the spoils of our notable warrior. Truly, the ladies of Regall had a dainty entertainment in these broils!

After these victories, Smith was received by the army with great pomp; and, as an acknowledgment of his valour and knightly bearing, Moyses conferred upon him some presents of great price; a richly caparisoned steed, namely, and a scimeter and baldrick worth three hundred ducats: and Count Meldritch promoted him to a rank of honourable trust in his regiment.

Regall at length capitulated; and Smith's name was trumpeted abroad with worthy praise. The report of his valour reaching Sigismund, our hero received from the prince's hand the honours of knight-hood, with a permission to wear three Turks' heads in his shield, and on his colours. To this boon the prince added a yearly pension of three hundred ducats, and presented the young knight, also, his picture set in gold. These honours were conferred in 1603, when Smith was but twenty-four years old.

History tells how speedily the Emperor, by the help of the trusty George Basta, put an end to the pretensions of Sigismund as an independent sovereign in Transylvania, and reduced him to the rank of a Baron of Bohemia; in which character he subsequently lived at Prague.

Upon the happening of these events, the army was disbanded, and Basta found himself surrounded with

the malecontent soldiery of Sigismund, whom therefore, to keep in good humour, he sought every opportunity to employ on distant service. Opportunely for this design, a new quarrel now arose.

The Waywode of Wallachia had just died, and the Sultan had sent Jeremy Mohila to take possession of that province; who having followed that fashion of despots common since the days of Nimrod, namely, of oppressing his people beyond all human endurance, was obliged to take to flight, by reason of some popular tumults. This circumstance suggested to Basta a profitable method of employing his idle soldiers; and, thereupon, Earl Meldritch, with some other officers of note, among whom was our hero Smith, was sent into Wallachia to assist in establishing, in the name of the Emperor, Stephen Rudul as Waywode of the province. Jeremy, in the mean time, had gathered an army of forty thousand men, Tartars, Moldavians and Turks, by which means he contrived to turn the tables on Rudul before the arrival of Meldritch and his friends. These, however, reached Wallachia with thirty thousand men in their train, and affairs soon became to assume a pleasant belligerent aspect. A bloody battle was fought near Rebrinke, in which Jeremy was completely routed; and, it is said, five-and-twenty thousand men were left "rotting in the sun;"—a trifle, considering how cheaply men are hired for such a game! News now came to Rudul, that "certain raskaile Tartars" were committing depredations on the borders of Moldavia. Whereupon, Meldritch was detached with thirteen thousand men to keep

them quiet on that frontier. As ill luck would have it, this was a most pernicious stratagem practised by Jeremy; for the cunning Turk had prepared an ambush, and lay in wait with a large army. Meldritch fell into the snare, and soon found himself surrounded by a fierce and bloody-minded multitude. He retreated, as well as he was able, into the valley of Veristhorne, upon the river Altus, in that straitened country known as the Rotherturn Pass. On all sides of him were high mountains; and nothing remained for him but to trust to his valour in a desperate effort to fight his way through "the hellish numbers" of his enemy. It was a bold sally that they made! but it cost them fully as much as it was worth. Basta is accused of having betrayed this gallant army into this difficulty, with the wicked purpose of having them destroyed. He certainly, if this be true, had much reason to rejoice in his success; for not above fourteen hundred escaped, which they did by swimming the river; and all the rest were slain, "or left for no better than dead men" upon the field. Thus died many noblemen of renown, and many gallant gentlemen. Count Meldritch was amongst the survivors, as also two Englishmen of Smith's company,—ensign Carlton and sergeant Robinson; whilst our hero himself was most grievously wounded, and lay amongst the dead bodies. Luckily for him, however, his armour being somewhat costly, the ruffians, in the hope of ransom, made him a prisoner, and used some care for his recovery. He got well just in time to be taken to Axiopolis, where he was set up for sale in the market place, and bought by the Pa-

sha Bogal,—a Turkish Falstaff,—who, boasting of his prowess, sent him to Constantinople to be laid at the feet of the young Charatza Tragabizanda, as a Bohemian nobleman taken by the pasha's own hand in battle.

The affair of Rothenturn Pass was a sad drawback to our hero. There is nothing so apt to disconcert the schemes of a young and aspiring cavalier, who has taken off three Turks' heads, and filled his own with notions of glory, as death. The next thing to this, is being sold for a slave. Both of them, it will be allowed, are sufficiently disagreeable to a mettlesome gallant who has won the honours of knighthood, a shield, and a yearly pension of three hundred ducats. Smith, however, was an imp of fame, and his present difficulties only served to introduce him to a more strange and eventful fortune; for, being restored to health, he was decked out in a lowly habit and sent off to Constantinople, and set to work amongst the roses and orange trees in the garden of the unmatched Lady Tragabizanda. This lady was a prime beauty, with all the susceptibility of a sentimental coquette, who had nothing to do all day but sit by a sparkling fountain, hear the tales of interminable story-tellers, and be fanned by a troop of little slaves, with fans of peacock feathers. Whilst her lover, the Pasha Bogal, was playing the braggart on the frontier, and capturing giants, the gentle dame softly sighed, as her eye fell upon the unfortunate Bohemian prince, in his menial dress, digging at the roots of her rose-bushes.

She had, as was common amongst Turkish belles,

a smattering of Italian;—and one day, when the dragon that guarded her was asleep, she contrived to throw out a few sifting interrogatories in that language to our hero, who, in the same tongue, gave her to understand that her amorous lord was a preposterous braggadocio, and a liar to boot, and he himself an English gentleman, purchased at half price in the slave market at Axiopolis. But Smith, as I said in the beginning, was a handsome fellow, with a brave, insinuating way about him; and he began to work wonders in the heart of the dame. In truth, she fell plainly in love with him; and he, not to be ungrateful, began to incline as violently to her. And this is the first and only love affair of our gallant captain, whereof I find any record in history.

As often as opportunity favoured, the Charatza took means to mitigate the severity of her captive's fortune by such little assiduities a pretty woman only knows how to offer, and an enthralled bachelor how to value. One day she sent him a clove, a rose, and a piece of cloth; which device he had grown practised enough in Turkish love-making to understand according to the liturgy: the clove signified, "I have long loved you, although you are ignorant of it;" the rose, "I condole with your misfortunes, and would make you happy;" and the cloth "to me you are above price." His reply was that of a Chevalier tres hardie: it was conveyed by returning a spear of straw, with the words appropriate to the symbol written on the envelope, "Olim sana yazir," "receive me as your slave."

Affairs had well nigh come to a critical pass; for,

shortly after this, the lovers had a stealthy meeting at moonlight; and our hero, who had a stomach for any hazard, whispered in her ear how excellent it would be to climb over the garden wall, by the help of a cypress, whilst he would undertake to strangle her keepers; and then, after clearing the confines of their prison, he said, they might make their way over sea to England. And there, upon the spot, like an impassioned galliard, he dropped on one knee, seized her hand, kissed it, and swore to be her own true knight. The beautiful girl hesitated, faltered and wept:

The wall was so high,
And the sea was so deep!

The lover pressed his suit, and pressed her hand; protested that all dangers of earth, air or sea were very bagatelles to the all-conquering energy of his passion; and again gently besought her consent. Whereupon—

“The ladye blushed scarlette redde,
And fette a gentle sighe:
Alas, Syr Knighte, how may this bee,
For my degree’s so highe?”

There is no telling how this matter might have ended, if it had not been for an old woman,—no less a crone than the Lady Tragabizanda’s own mother,—who happened to be listening to the nightingale under the covert of a fig-tree, whence, in the moonlight, she perceived the gallant slave upon his knees before her daughter. Here followed a direful explosion! The assignation was broken up in a storm of Turkish objurgation; the lady was ordered off to her

bower, and the lover to his cell, to be chained to the wall, and to dream of the bowstring. The next day, however, Smith was shipped off in a chaloupe, on a voyage up the Black Sea ; the purpose of which sudden removal he afterwards discovered to be, to prevent his being sold, and that the Lady Tragabizanda, to avoid this mishap, had been compelled to send him to her brother Timour, Pasha of Nalbritz, among the Nogai Tartars.

The voyage was long, but not without interest to Smith, as it gave him a sight of new countries. He coasted along, on the northern shore, beyond the Crimea, and was at last conducted into the country lying between Caucasus and the Don, in which region was this pleasant site of Nalbritz. Timour, although the brother of the lovely Charatza, was nothing better than a hard-headed savage, surrounded by hard-hearted barbarians. The Pasha, having received some intelligence of what had transpired in the garden, straightway stripped the unlucky captain of his habiliments, and substituted for them a rough tunic of wool, and an iron collar, and then set him to wait upon his ruffians, "in the meanest place of all."

If there be ever a time when a gay and ambitious spirit may be excused for sinking into despondency, it is when a young soldier, who has won a crest, and almost won a princess, is installed in the lowest office of a Tartar's household ; with a sturdy sheep-skin savage to flourish a whip over his back, and, just as the whim prompts, to lay it upon his shoulders. It made Smith very dogged ; but, it did not subdue

his temper. For, one day, the Pasha had him threshing corn, and, in order to see how the work was getting on, rode out to his grange, and was somewhat rude in his demeanour. Smith flourished his threshing bat with his usual address, and as soon as the Pasha happened to come within his reach, he contrived to give the implement a lively gesticulation in the air, and brought it down, with excellent effect, upon his lord's cranium. And instantly there was an end of Timour the Tartar!

There was no time to be lost; so, stripping the body of its foppery, he indued himself with the spoil; thrust the brutal carcass under a heap of straw; mounted the fine Arabian charger that champ'd his bit hard by; and, with scimeter by his side, and pistols in his belt, betook himself to the desert, an unquestioned Tartar knight; with the speed of an uncaged pigeon, leaving the towers of Nalbritz behind him.

For sixteen days he sped across the wilderness, challenging all wayfarers, and exacting such scant hospitality as his good sword or fair words might win him. All his confident gaiety of heart revived within him, and he travelled his forlorn path as merrily as ever bridegroom travelled to his mistress.

His first halt in Christendom was at a petty Russian fortress upon the Don, where "the charitable Lady Callamata" relieved his wants with many kindnesses. Pursuing his journey, he arrived at Hermanstadt. Thence he went to Leipsic, where he met Prince Sigismund, who received him with much affection, and gave him, with other tokens of regard,

fifteen hundred ducats. Here he also found his bluff old friend Count Meldritch. He now travelled through Germany and France, and came to Paris; thence he went into Spain, visiting Burgos, Valladolid, Madrid, Cordova, Cadiz, and other cities.

Not yet satisfied with his banquet of adventures, and having a new crop of chivalric fancies sprouting up in his heart, he began to look around for more employment. And where, of all the places on this fretful and pugnacious globe, does my reader suppose that this insatiate follower of a fray now turned himself to pick up a quarrel?

He betook himself to the Barbary coast, to visit the famous cities of Fez and Morocco. The occasion of this voyage was as follows: The Emperor Muley Hamet, amongst his innumerable children, had two sons who disputed the succession. Their names were Muley Shah and Muley Sidan. This bred a coolness in the family, which presently turned into a heat; and the affairs of the household came to be sadly involved.

It now came into our good knight's head that this was a marvellous proper debate, and was likely to afford many soldierly gratifications. "I will turn my Tartar scimeter to some wholesome account with these dog-headed Muleys: A nimble witte doth craftilie devise cunning fortunes," said he, as he cast up his computation of fame, and slid his hand along the blade of Timour's sabre, and then glanced his eye over his wardrobe. Accordingly, with his head stuffed full of the romance of the Alhambra, and his portmanteau filled with good store of new trunk-

hose, jerkin and doublet, he set forward for the dominions of Muley Hamet. But, before his arrival on the coast, lo! an accident happened in the family. It fell out in this way. Muley Hamet's principal wife had taken it into her head to help her son Muley Sidan to the throne. And as a woman, in her own house, is apt to manage adroitly whatever belongs to the domestic department, in this instance the Empress's tactics were very successful. She poisoned her husband, and Muley Shah, his son by another wife; and for fear there might be some disturbance from two of the young princesses, who were acquainted with the transaction, she poisoned them likewise, although one was her own daughter, and the other her step-daughter. After this, her favourite Muley Sidan, like a dutiful son, stepped into his father's vacant seat, where he sat cross-legged, —one of the most composed and magnificent of monarchs. This little incident completely restored the peace of the empire, and hushed up the family scandal. It, at the same time, put an extinguisher upon the flame of Moorish glory that burnt in the bosom of our hero. There was nothing left for him to do but to travel about for his amusement, which he did through the fair cities of Mauritania, for some months; until, growing tired of this innocent pastime, he was obliged, in his own despite, to hie him home to that luckless land of comfort, where the wager of battle was growing unfashionable, and where he had nothing to do but to be happy. So, biting a peevish lip, he e'en turned on his heel, and slowly wended his way to "merry England."

There he arrived with an addition, since he last saw it, of ten years' manhood on his brow, a tawny cheek, some honourable scratches, a light heart, and a thousand golden ducats in his pouch.

He had now gone through his probation; and from this time forward, his character exhibited the most serviceable qualities. From the ranting, easy, gay comrade, he suddenly became a thoughtful and stately patriot, and turned his attention to schemes of grave import, with an earnest desire to promote his country's good, and leave a name behind him that posterity might honour.

Some twenty years before this time, "the valiant Grenville," under the auspices of Sir Walter Raleigh, had made an ineffectual effort to plant a colony in Wingandacoa—afterwards called Virginia. The failure was sad;—the planters had all perished. In the year 1606, "certain of the nobility, gentry and merchants," who held a patent for the government of Virginia, prevailed on Captain Gosnell, and some others, to attempt a new settlement; and Smith, struck with the grandeur of the idea of founding a new empire, became a ready and zealous friend of the enterprise. The more he thought of it, the more it fired his imagination, and jumped with that brave, adventurous humour which was so prevalent in his character.

"Who can desire," says he, with great earnestness, in speaking of this career, "more content, that hath small meanes, or but onely his own merit to advance his fortunes, then to tread and plant that ground he has purchased by the hazard of his life?"

If he hath any graine of Faith or zeale in Religion, what can he do less hurtful to any, or more agreeable to God, then to seeke to convert those poore Salvages to know Christ and humanity? What so truly sures with honour and honesty, as the discovering things unknowne, erecting Townes, peopling Countries, informing the ignorant, reforming things unjust, teaching vertue and gaine to our native Mother Country?" It was with such sentiments that he entered upon that splendid emprise which has given the chief renown to his name. And he pursued it with a singleness of design that never was excelled.

After an earnest devotion to the cause of the colonies for nineteen years, and an expenditure from his own purse (by no means a plentiful one) of more than a thousand pounds; and after three years of the severest personal exposure and privation, he has occasion to say,—rather in the way of exultation than complaint,—“in neither of those countries have I one foot of land, nor the very house I builded, nor the ground I digged with my owne hands, nor ever any content (remuneration) or satisfaction at all.” His whole purpose was to rear up his beloved Virginia into a thriving and happy commonwealth; and with that aim, he valued no sacrifice at too high a price. “I have not been so ill bred,” said he, “but I have tasted of plenty and pleasure, as well as want and misery; nor doth necessitie yet, or occasion of discontent, force me to these endeavours; nor am I so ignorant what small thankes I shall have for my paines, or that manie would have the

world imagine them to be of great judgment, that can but blemish these my designs by their witty objections or detractions." In truth, he was guided by the most enlightened spirit: his valour, prudence, and temperate counsel accomplishing more towards the planting of the colony, than those of any other person of his day.

He remained in Virginia until the close of the year 1609, being for the first two years a member of the council, and for the last year the president. His history during that period is a narrative of noble daring, wise expedients, imminent perils, and all the chances of savage warfare, in which were signally displayed the virtues of a brave captain and of a skilful councillor. These adventures are full of deep interest, and they throw about the character of Smith a rich hue of romance, that, since the days of Froissart, scarcely belongs to any actor in the annals of men. When it is also recollected that the testimony upon these details is clear and indubitable, and that the hero of them was, during the passage of these events, only between twenty-seven and thirty years of age, we cannot but regard it as one of the most surprising exhibitions of history. For the story I must be content to refer my reader to Smith's own "History of Virginia," as it is not my purpose to pursue the chronicle into much of this portion of his life; seeing that the circumstances it relates, being largely connected with our national annals, are more commonly known than what I have given of his previous wanderings.

The colony had been sadly mismanaged by the

company in England. Instead of the sturdy natures, fit to contend with the rough spirit of the wilderness, it became the resort of "poore gentlemen, tradesmen, servingmen, libertines, and such like, ten times more fit to spoyle a commonwealth then maintaine one," and "unruly gallants, packed thither by their friends to escape ill destinies." This wretchedly assorted community found Smith's discipline but little tolerant of their lazy humours; whereupon, violent factions and seditions arose, which at last compelled him to throw up his commission, and to return to England. He did so, at the period above mentioned; having during the short space of his administration humbled the power of Powhatan, and explored the Chesapeake up to the country of the "Sasquesahanoughs."

His return is feelingly deplored by George Piercie, who has made it the occasion, with two of his company, to pay a grateful and eloquent compliment to his leader, in language which imputes to him the highest virtues of a "true knight." "What shall I say of him but this, that in all his proceedings he made justice his first guide, and experience his second; even hating basenesse, sloath, pride and indignitie more then any dangers: that never allowed more for himselfe then his souldiers with him: that upon no danger would send them where he would not lead them himselfe: that would never see us want what he either had or could, by any meanes, get us: that would rather want then borrow, or starve then not pay: that loved action more then words, and hated falshood and covetousness worse then death: whose adventures were our lives, and whose losse our deaths."

In England, after his return, he was chiefly employed in stirring up the public mind to the assistance of the plantations, communicating useful knowledge, and devising schemes for their success. In the year 1614 he visited New England, and the next year was furnished with two ships, for the establishment of a colony in that quarter, with the title of Admiral. But, not many days after leaving Plymouth, his own vessel proved unseaworthy, and he was obliged to put back, leaving his consort to proceed on her voyage. Being now furnished with nothing better than a small pinnace, he made a second attempt to cross the Atlantic, but was captured by pirates of his own nation. Escaping from these, he fell into the hands of a French cruiser, who compelled him to assist in several naval actions against the Spaniards; but being favoured, whilst off the Isle of Re, on the coast of France, with an opportunity of flight, he took a small boat, on a stormy night, and made for the shore. The violence of the tempest drove him out to sea, where he was tossed about for three days, alone, and without provisions. He succeeded however, after excessive toil, in reaching the shore at the mouth of the Garonne, whence he found his way to Rochelle, and again had reason to do homage to that sex who had never used him but with kindness, for the soothing attentions of "the excellent Madame Chanoyes."

Upon regaining his country, he found Pocahontas, who three years before had been married to John Rolfe. The story of his interview with her is told by himself in a letter to the queen, and, taken along with their former acquaintance, their romantic adven-

tures, her passionate love for him, her heroism and singular fortunes, constitutes one of the most touching episodes of personal history. The whole of this adventure shows our hero in the most attractive light, and has given him a renown that has long made his name a pleasant sound to a lady's ear. He never recurs to the "blessed Pocahontas" but with a tender remembrance, and in a strain of the softest and gentlest gratitude.

She was but a child of twelve or thirteen when she saved his life at Werowocomoco;—King Powhatan's most precious daughter—and she loved Smith with that instinctive love that nature kindles in the breast of unsophisticated woman for a noble and valiant cavalier. The hazards she encountered in his behalf were such as nothing but fervent affection could have endured. Some of these are told, by an eye-witness, with a touch of exquisite simplicity.

On one occasion, Smith and sixteen of his followers were in great straits at Pamaunkee, whither they had been beguiled by the address of Powhatan, who had prepared seven hundred warriors to way-lay them. But the bravery of the captain had baffled their scheme. The king at last, with a refined treachery under a seeming friendly guise, provided them a plentiful banquet at his own court, where he hoped to surprise them at supper, get possession of their arms, and put them to death. The narrative relates the event with scriptural plainness: "The Indians," says Piercie, or whoever be the narrator, "with all the merrie sports they could devise, spent the time till night. Then they all returned to Pow-

hatan, who all this time was making ready to surprise the house and him at supper. Notwithstanding, the eternal all-seeing God did prevent him, and by a strange meanes. For Pocahontas, his dearest jewell and daughter, in that darke night, came through the irksome woods, and told our captaine great cheere should be sent us by and by, but Powhatan, and all the power he could make, would after come kill us all,—if they that brought it could not kill us with our own weapons, when we were at supper : Therefore, if we would live, she wished us presentlie bee gone! such things as shee delighted in, hee would have given her ; but with the teares running downe her cheekes, shee said shee durst not be seene to have any ; for if Powhatan should know it, shee were but dead. And so shee ranne away by herselfe, as shee came.”

Pocahontas had grown up to woman's estate after Smith had quitted the country, and, being persuaded that he was dead, had consented to become the wife of Rolfe ; was converted to the christian faith, and now bore the title of the Lady Rebecca. “Hearing,” says Smith, “that she was at Branford, with divers of my friends I went to see her. After a modest salutation, without any word she turned about, obscured her face, as not seeming well contented. But, not long after, she began to talke, and remembered mee well what courtesies shee had done, saying, you did promise Powhatan what was yours should bee his, and he the like to you : you called him father,—being in his land a stranger, and by the same reason, so must I doe you!”

Smith's loyalty revolted, in those days of the divine right, at this familiarity in the daughter of a king, and he told her so; but she, not comprehending so refined a scruple, and reading his embarrassment in his looks, "with a well set countenance, she said, Were you not afraid to come into my father's countree, and caused feare to him and all his people—but me; and feare you here I should call you father? I tell you I will, and you shall call me childe; and so I will bee for ever and ever your countree-woman. They did tell us alwaies you were dead, and I knew no other till I came to Plimoth."

This amiable princess longed to return to her native wilds; and for this purpose, soon after the meeting above mentioned, repaired to Gravesend with her husband, to embark, but unhappily fell a prey to sickness before she got on ship-board. She left an only child, Thomas Rolfe, who was adopted and educated by Sir Lewis Stukely, and afterwards inherited a good estate in the realms of his royal grandfather.

The chronicle does not record the death of Smith; but, from another source, I learn that it happened in Cheshire in England, on the twenty-first of June, 1631, he being then fifty-two years of age. Many a coward has wondered how it comes to pass that so many men, with the most judicious forethought to avoid disaster, should be struck down in their first fray, whilst such danger-seeking wights as John Smith, who have worn out their shoes to find new perils to life and limb, should nevertheless run the whole gantlet of fate unscathed, and in the end die

soberly in their beds. Whereto I reply, that these gallants are the decoy-ducks of destiny, and live to tell of their escapes, that dubious men may be persuaded to great undertakings, and that the difficult passages of human affairs may be achieved even by the necessary loss of thousands of over-venturesome fools. If this be no answer, then I tell my querist that there is an old saw that settles the point; "Every bullet has its billet."

I closed the Chronicle, and restored it to its shelf in the library with a renewed admiration for the hero of the Old Dominion; in whom I found so much of plain sense, mingled with the glory of manhood; so much homely thought and wise precept sustaining dauntless bravery; so much gay and chivalrous adventure set off with such sturdy honesty, that I thought I could not better entertain my reader than by giving him a running sketch of the contents of the Chronicle, which I have endeavoured to do in the vein which the perusal excited in my own mind. Perhaps, the cavalier and lightsome tone in which the story is told by the author of the Chronicle, and his manifest leaning to invest his friend with the interest of a galliard and pleasant knight, may have thrown my thoughts into this channel. I desire my reader to get the history and read for himself, wherein I wish him grace to profit both in wisdom and delight. The

character seems to be summed up in the following passage from Chaucer, which, in opposition to the custom of all other writers, I append at the end of my story, as a motto,—instead of the beginning.

“A knight there was, and that a worthy man,
That fro the time that he firste began
To riden out, he loved chevalrie,
Trouthe and honour, fredom and curtesie.—
At mortal batailes hadde he ben fiftene,
And foughten for our faith at Tramissene
In listes thries, and ay slain his fo.
This ilke worthy knight hadde ben also
Somtime with the lord of Palatie,
Agen another hethen in Turkie:
And evermore he hadde a sovereine pris.
And though that he was worthy he was wise,
And of his port as meke as is a mayde,
He never yet no vilaine ne sayde
In alle his lif, unto no manere wight.
He was a veray parfit, gentil knight.”

CHAPTER XXI.**PLEASANT PROSPECTS.**

THE rain had ceased, and nature was again arrayed in the brilliancy of sunshine at the expiration of three days. The Chronicle had so pleasantly beguiled the term of my confinement, that I almost regretted the returning azure of the sky which was to summon me away from the delights of Swallow Barn. The air had grown cooler by the late rains; the verdure of the fields, before parched by the summer drought, was now partially revived, and the country wore something of the freshness of spring. I had determined that my homeward journey should be inland, and my design, therefore, was to take the public stage from Petersburg, thence to Richmond, Fredericksburg and Washington.

Soon after breakfast on the day of my departure, Meriwether's carriage was at the door to transport me as far as the first of the towns mentioned above. I found that my cousin Lucretia had provided me a store of refreshment sufficient to have sustained me all the way to New York. This was neatly put up in a basket, and placed in the carriage, on the plea that I might be hungry upon my journey; or, at all events, that I might not find as good fare at the inns as I desired. It was in vain to refuse; "the stages were long, and no one knew the comfort of being

well stocked with such necessaries until he was on the road." I submitted with a good grace, resolved to leave what was given me in the carriage, when I arrived at Petersburg.

And now came the moment of leave-taking, the most painful of all the accompaniments of travel. If I had been nurtured in the family from infancy, I could not have called forth more affectionate solicitude; and I was obliged to promise, what already was indeed my secret purpose, to repeat my visit. Meriwether expressed the kindest concern at my leaving him, and engaged, what was quite unusual for him, to write to me frequently after I should arrive at home. The little girls kissed me a dozen times, and the whole household, servants and all, collected at the door to exchange farewells. Ned Hazard now sprang into the carriage with me, and we drove off.

That night I arrived at Petersburg. Hazard and I parted here the next morning, with many vows of friendship.

In due course of time, I was safely seated at Longsides, upon the North River, where I have become famous, at least with my mother and sisters, for my long stories and rapturous commendations of Swallow Barn, and my peremptory way of telling how things are done in the Old Dominion.

POSTSCRIPT.

IN the course of the winter that followed my return to Longsides, I received several letters from Hazard, from Meriwether, and, indeed, from most of the family. Harvey Riggs, also, has been a punctual correspondent. A letter from him, dated the tenth of January, 1830, gives me a droll history of the festivities at the Brakes on the first day of the year, when, in pursuance of an arrangement which Ned himself had before communicated to me, Hazard and Bel were joined in the bands of holy wedlock, Bel having, at last, surrendered at discretion. Harvey's comments upon this incident are expressed in the following extract :—

“ After you left us, Ned relapsed into all his extravagancies. In truth, I believe Bel grew heartily tired of that incompatible formality of manner which he assumed at our instigation. It sat upon him like an ill fitted garment, and rendered him the dullest of mortals. Bel took the matter into consideration, and at last begged him to be himself again. Never did a school-boy enjoy a holiday more than he this freedom; the consequence was, that the wight ran immediately into the opposite extreme, and has carried the prize, notwithstanding he had trespassed against all deco-

rum, and had been voted incorrigible. The stars have had an influence upon this match! I devoutly believe that it all comes from old Diana's prophecy.

“Meriwether discourses philosophically upon the subject, and says that ‘marriage is a matter to be soberly looked at; for if it be unwisely contrived, it is one of the most irrevocable errors in the world, though not the most unlikely to have its full share of repentance.’”

The revelry had scarcely ceased at the date of this letter; and it was a part of the family plans that Ned should live, for the present, at the Brakes.

Accounts as late as April inform me, that Philly Wart had just been re-elected to the Legislature, much against his wish, and, indeed, in the face of his protestations that he declined a poll. He is said to have remarked, rather petulantly, at the close of the election, “that it was all nonsense to argue the question of constitutional doctrine,—here was a case in point,—the will of the constituent will bindt he representative in spite of all theories!” The worthy barrister had, a short time before, covered himself with glory by one of his most flowery speeches at the bar, in defending his brother, Toll Hedges, upon an indictment for an assault on one of the justices of the quorum.

It is at a still later date that Ned writes me touching the affairs at the Brakes. Mr. Tracy had not yet become reconciled to the extinction of the lawsuit. Ned accompanied him lately upon his morning ride, and the old gentleman took his course to the Apple-pie. Here, as Ned describes him, he took

a stand upon the mound that formed one of the abutments of the dam, and remained silently pondering over the landscape for a full hour, and, most of the time, tugging at his underlip with his hand. "It was singular," he remarked to Hazard, after this interval, "that Meriwether should have fallen into the error of thinking that he had a claim to this land. I have a mind to give him my ideas on paper. It will be instructive to you, Mr. Hazard."

"Frank stood upon his survey," replied Ned.

"I doubt if there was a survey," rejoined the old gentleman; "there is no memorandum of it in my notes."

Ned was almost afraid to contradict him; but at length ventured to say,—

"It was produced, you remember, at the trial, signed by Jeremiah Perkins himself."

Mr. Tracy knitted his brows for a moment, and then said, "It is very strange! I don't think there was a survey. There is some mistake. I wish the thing were to go over again!"

The tenor of all my letters now shows that every thing goes on smoothly on the James River, and that the Old Dominion contains some very happy persons within its bosom.

THE END.

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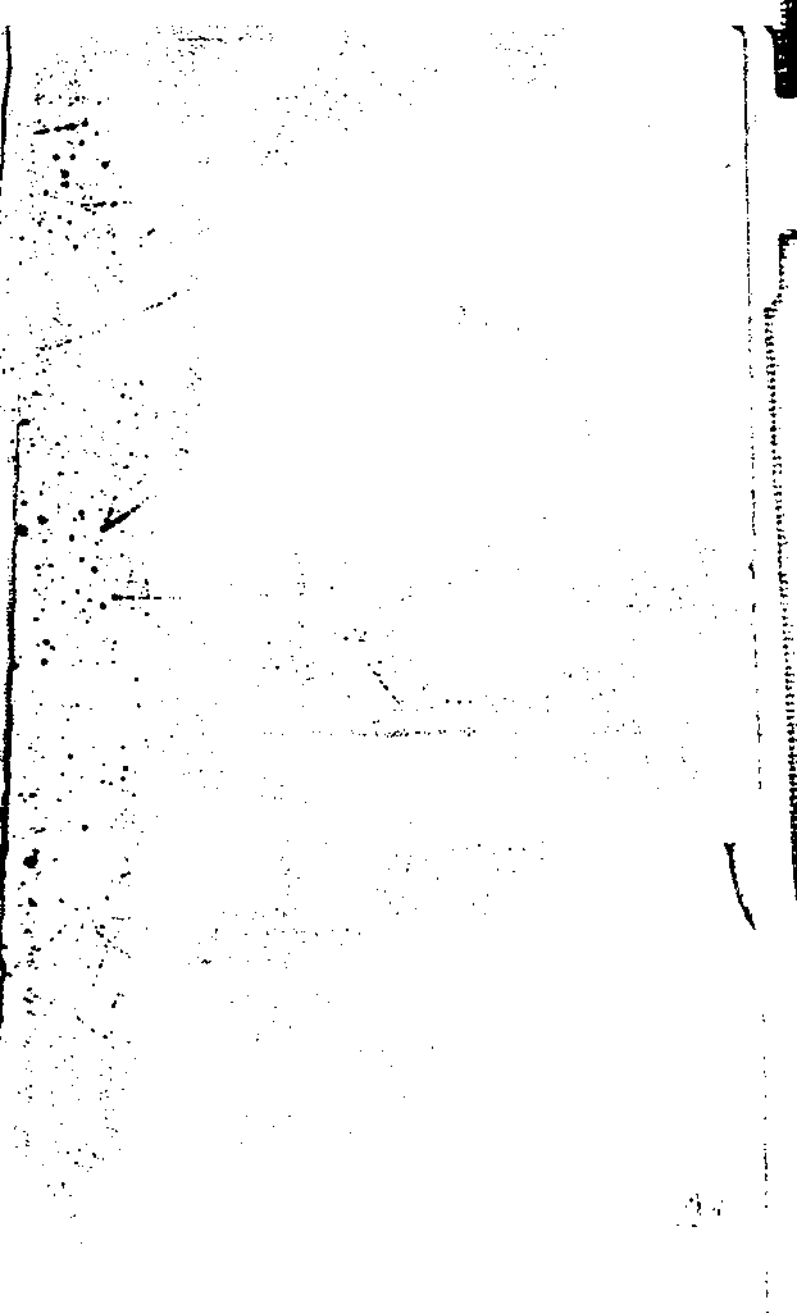
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