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Lewis M. Wilson.

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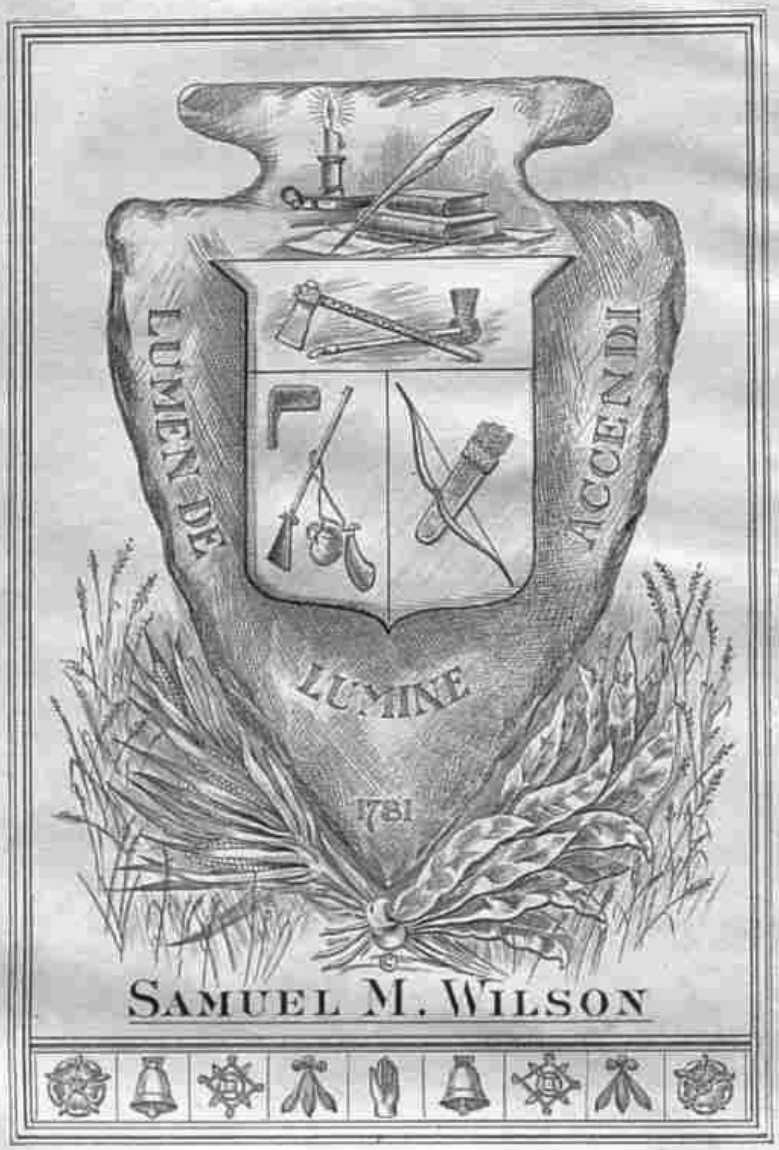
LUMEN DE LUMINE ACCENDI
1781
SAMUEL M. WILSON

THE

# HARPE'S HEAD;

A

LEGEND OF KENTUCKY.

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BY JAMES HALL,
AUTHOR OF "THE SOLDIER'S BRIDE," "LEGENDS OF THE WEST," &c.

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# PREFACE.

The reader of the following pages, should they be so fortunate as to find any, will naturally wish to know whether any of the incidents introduced are founded upon fact, or whether the whole narrative is a fabrication of the author's own brain. Perhaps it would be good policy to evade this question, leaving him to exercise his own judgment upon the probability of the events and the reality of the characters, and by thus awakening curiosity, excite more interest than our unadorned tale will be likely to produce by its own merits. But holding, as we do, that in all cases honesty is the best policy, we have determined to acknowledge candidly our obligations to history, and to avow, in the face of the world, our paternal relation to so much of the work as is the offspring of invention.

Two of the characters introduced are historical. Their deeds are still freshly remembered by many of the early settlers of Kentucky, and their names will be instantly recognized by all who are conversant with the traditions of that state. The real incidents of the lives of those persons have been very sparingly alluded to, as most of them were

of a character too atrocious for recital in a work of this description, and because they could not be used without the introduction of other names, which the writer does not consider himself at liberty to place before the public in this manner. The individuals alluded to, have therefore been merely introduced into a tale wholly fictitious, placed in situations similar to those in which they really appeared, and made to act in conformity with their well known characters.

It has been the intention of the writer in this, as in the other fictions published under his name, to draw from nature. He has invented but little; but professes simply to connect together the traditions of a region in which he has long resided, and to the population of which he is attached, as well by a sincere admiration for them and their institutions, as by many endearing ties.

# HARPE'S HEAD.

## CHAPTER I.

At the close of a pleasant day, in the spring of the year 17—, a solitary horseman might have been seen slowly winding his way along a narrow road, in that part of Virginia which is now called the Valley. It was nearly forty years ago, and the district lying between the Blue Ridge and the Allegheny mountains was but thinly populated, while the country lying to the west, embracing an immense Alpine region, was a savage wilderness, which extended to the new and distant settlements of Kentucky. Our traveller's route led along the foot of the mountains, sometimes crossing the *spurs*, or lateral ridges, which push out their huge promontories from the great chain; and at others winding through deep ravines, or skirting along broad valleys. The Ancient Dominion was never celebrated for the goodness of its highways, and the one whose mazes he was now endeavoring to unravel, was among the worst, being a mere path, worn by the feet of horses, and marked by faint traces of wheels, which showed that the experiment of driving a carriage over its uneven surface had been successfully tried, but not generally practised. The country was fertile, though wild and broken. The season was that in which the

foliage is most luxuriant and splendid to the eye, the leaves being fully expanded, while the rich blossoms decked the scene with a variety of brilliant hues; and our traveller, as he passed ridge after ridge, paused in delight on their elevated summits, to gaze at the beautiful glens that lay between them, and the gorgeous vegetation that climbed even to the tops of the steepest acclivities. The day, however, which had been unusually sultry for the season, was drawing to a close, and both horse and rider began to feel the effects of hunger and fatigue; the former, though strong and spirited, drooped his head, and the latter became wearied with these lonesome though picturesque scenes. During the whole day he had not seen the dwelling of a human being; the clattering of his horse's hoofs upon the rock, the singing of the birds, so numerous in this region, the roaring of the mountain stream, or the crash of timber occasioned by the fall of some great tree, were the only sounds that had met his ear. He was glad, therefore, to find his path descending, at last, into a broad valley, interspersed with farms. He seemed to have surmounted the last hill, and before him was a rich continuous forest, resembling, as he overlooked it from the high ground, a solid plane of verdure. The transition from rocky steeps and precipices, to the smooth soil and sloping surface of the valley, was refreshing; and not less so were the coolness and fragrance of the air, and the deep and varied hues of the forest, occasioned by the rank luxuriance of its vegetation.

It might be proper, as it certainly is customary, before proceeding to narrate the adventures of our hero,

to introduce him to the particular acquaintance of the reader, by a full description of his person, character, and lineage; but this manner of narration, supported as it is by respectable precedent, we must be permitted to decline. As we have no record before us showing that the gentleman in question ever passed under a regimental standard, we are not aware that his exact height could now be ascertained; and as he was neither a deserter from the service of his country, nor a fugitive from the protection of his guardian, we cannot think it necessary to set forth the color of his hair and eyes, or to describe what clothes "he had on when he went away." To enlist the sympathies of our fair readers, whose approbation we would fain propitiate, it is enough to say that he was a young and handsome bachelor, leaving each of them to fancy him the exact image of her favorite admirer; but as we do not admire the practice of peeping into gentlemen's hearts, or pocket-books, without any other warrant than the bare license of authorship, we cannot tell what precious billet-doux may have filled the one, or what treasured image might have occupied the other. These are questions which may be incidentally touched hereafter; and the curious reader will find ample materials in the following pages, for the gratification of a laudable thirst for knowledge on these interesting points.

The sun was about to set, and our traveller, having completely left all the mountain passes behind him, could have enjoyed the serenity of the calm hour, and the bland landscape, had not other thoughts harassed him. He needed rest and refreshment, and knew not where to find the one or the other. While considering this matter,

he reached a spot where two roads crossed, at the same instant when two other persons, advancing from a different direction, arrived at the same point. They were an elderly gentleman and a young lady, both of prepossessing appearance. The former was a portly man, hale and ruddy, with a gay eye and a profusion of gray locks, as if the frost of age had prematurely touched his head, without penetrating so deep as to chill the fountains of life. His dress was that of a country gentleman; it was not expensive, nor yet well assorted, but rather evinced the carelessness of one who, living secluded from the fashionable world, felt independent of its forms, or who adopted with reluctance the changes which seemed every year to depart further and further from certain standards of gracefulness to which he had been accustomed in his youth, as well as from the peculiar notions of comfort that fasten upon the mind with the approaches of old age. He was mounted upon a fine high-bred horse, rather oddly caparisoned; for the bridle, though silver mounted, was broken in several places, and the fractures had been remedied, at one part by a hard knot, at another by a coarse seam, and at a third by a thong of buckskin; while a Spanish saddle, which might once have done honor to the best cavalier at a bull-fight, having lost the stirrup-leather on the near side, was supplied with an accommodation-ladder of rope, and the girth was patched with leather and linsey, until the original material was hardly discoverable. The worthy gentleman wore one spur, either because he was too indolent to put on the other, or from a conviction, founded on a well-established philosophical principle, that the

effect produced on one side of his animal must be followed by a corresponding result on the other, and that consequently one armed heel is as effective as a pair. Indeed, that gentlemanly weapon seemed to be worn more from habit than necessity, for the free-spirited steed needed no prompter; and the rider, who sat with the ease and grace of an experienced horseman, would have esteemed it a breach of the dignity becoming his age and station to have proceeded at any pace faster than a walk. He was evidently a wealthy planter, accustomed to good living and good society, who had arrived at a standing in life which placed him above any merely outward forms that interfered with his comfort, and who felt privileged to think as he pleased, and do as he liked; while the frankness and benevolence of his countenance at once assured the stranger that his heart was alive to the best feelings of kindness and hospitality. His companion was a lovely girl of eighteen, richly and tastefully habited. Careless as were the apparel and furniture of the elder rider, that of the lady was studiously neat and appropriate. Her palfrey had the fine limbs, the delicate form, and the bright eye of the deer, with a gentleness that seemed to savor more of reason than of instinct. His hair was smooth and glossy as silk, his harness elegant and neatly fitted; and as the fair rider sat gracefully erect in her saddle, the proud animal arched his neck as if conscious of the beauty of his burthen.

As the parties met at the junction of the roads, each of the gentlemen reined up his horse to allow the other to pass; the elder bowed and touched his hat, and the other returned the salutation with equal courtesy. There

was a momentary embarrassment, as neither rider seemed disposed to take precedence of the other; which was relieved by the young lady, who, slackening her rein as she touched the neck of her steed with a hazle switch, rode forward, leaving the gentlemen to settle the point of etiquette between them, which they did by silently falling in abreast, the road being just wide enough to admit the passage of two riders in that manner.

In our country, there is none of that churlish policy, or that repulsive pride, which in other regions forbids strangers who thus meet from accosting each other; on the contrary, our hearty old Virginian, on meeting a young, well-mounted, handsome stranger, with the appearance and manners of a gentleman, felt bound to do the honors of the country. He accordingly opened a conversation, and was so well pleased with the stranger's frankness and intelligence, that he determined to take him home, and entertain him, at least for the night, and perhaps for a week or two; and the worthy old man felt no small inward gratification in the idea, that while he was discharging his duty as a true son of the ancient dominion, he should secure a companion, and enlarge for a time his own little circle of enjoyments. But the stranger anticipated his invitation by observing,

"I have business with Major Heyward, who resides somewhere in this neighborhood, and am glad that I have fallen in with you, sir, as you can probably direct me to a tavern near his house, where I may lodge for the night."

"That I cannot; but I will with great pleasure show

you to the house itself," replied the other, who was the identical Major Heyward; "I am going directly there, and will conduct you to the very door."

The stranger civilly declined this offer, under the plea that he was totally unacquainted with the gentleman alluded to, and that his visit was solely on business. He wished, therefore, to lodge for the night at a public house, and to dispatch his business in the morning as early as might be.

"I suspect," replied his companion, "that you will not do the one nor the other. Public house there is none; you are now in Virginia, sir, where hospitality is not an article of trade; therefore you must of necessity lodge with a private gentleman. And you are under a mistake, if you think to dispatch your business to-morrow, or the next day, or under a week at least."

"Why so?"

"Simply because, in this country, we do not turn people out of our houses, nor treat a guest as if he was a sheriff's officer. There is to be a *barbecue* to-morrow, to which you will be invited; then you must hunt one day, and fish another, and after that——but see, there is the house."

The stranger halted: "I really cannot intrude——"

"Intrude, my dear sir! Why, young gentleman, you were certainly not *raised* in Virginia, or you would have learned that one gentleman can never be considered as an intruder in the house of another, especially one who brings so good a letter of introduction as yourself."

"Pardon me, sir, I have no such credentials."

"Oh yes, you have—yes, you have," returned the

planter, laughing at his own wit, and bowing to his companion; "as a late writer hath it, a good appearance is the best letter of introduction; and your modesty, young sir, is an indorsement which gives it double value. Come along, I'll be answerable for your welcome."

"But I am a total stranger."

"True, and so you will remain until you are introduced; then you will be so no longer.

"But it is so awkward to go to a gentleman's house just at nightfall, as if begging for a night's lodging."

"The very best hour in the world, for then you are sure to catch the gentleman at home, and at leisure to entertain you. Virginia, my dear," continued he, calling to the young lady, who rode a few paces before them, "will you not join me in a guarantee that this young gentleman shall be welcome at Walnut-Hill?"

"With great pleasure, if it were necessary," replied the lady, "but your introduction, my dear uncle, will be all-sufficient."

The stranger, who began to suspect the truth, and saw that he could not, without rudeness, decline the proffered kindness of his hospitable guide, now submitted, and the party entered a long lane which led to the mansion. On either side were large fields of corn and tobacco, lately planted, and exhibiting the distinctive characteristics of Virginia agriculture. The scale was extensive, but the manner of cultivation rude. The spacious domain, spreading for more than a mile on either hand, was covered with flourishing crops, which attested the fertility of the soil; and the immense worm-fences surrounding the inclosures, and dividing them

into accurate parallelograms, were as substantial as they were unsightly. The corners and skirts of the fields, and every vacant spot, were grown up with weeds and briars. Stumps of trees blackened with fire, and immense tall trunks, from which the bark and smaller limbs had fallen, showed that not many years had elapsed since the ground had been cleared; but those sylvan remains became fewer and more decayed towards the mansion of the owner, which was in the centre of the opening, as if the occupant, after fixing his dwelling, had been gradually clearing away the forest from around it in every direction. An apple-orchard had been planted so recently as to be now ready for bearing its first crop, and peach-trees were seen scattered in every direction; wherever a kernel had fallen by accident, and the young shoot had escaped the plow, or outlived the nipping of the cattle, was a flourishing tree, promising a luxuriant harvest of this delightful fruit.

The mansion stood on a rising ground, overlooking the whole plantation, and was composed of a cluster of buildings rather inartificially connected. A stone house with two rooms had been first erected; then a framed building was added; and year after year, as the family increased in wealth or numbers, subsequent additions had been made, consisting of single apartments, all on the ground floor, except the original building, which contained an upper story--the whole connected by piazzas, and being, in fact, a number of separate, though contiguous, houses, inconveniently adapted for the residence of a single family. The offices were scattered about in the rear of the main edifice—the kitchen, the

ice-house, the smoke-house, being each a separate building. Still further back were the negro-cabins, and beyond them the stables; so that, altogether, the place had more the appearance of a village than of the residence of a single family. The aspect of the whole was pleasing and respectable. Had it been surrounded by a wall and a ditch, it would have borne no small resemblance to some of the earliest of those old castles in which the barons resided with their followers in patriarchal simplicity. The out-buildings were so disposed as not to intercept the view from the front of the mansion; and the latter, being painted white, looked well in spite of its structure. A beautiful lawn surrounded it, set with fine forest trees, the venerable and gigantic aboriginals of the soil; and on one side was a garden, laid out with taste, and highly embellished with flowers and ornamental plants.

As soon as the party entered the lane, droves of young negroes ran out to gaze at them, hiding behind the trees and fences, or peeping through the bushes; and the worthy host began to exercise his lungs, in speaking alternately to the negro children, to the blacks who were returning in troops from labor, and to his guest.

"Get away, you young rogues! what are you peeping at? There's fine corn, sir. Here, you Cato, tell Cæsar to come to me.—That corn has just been planted six weeks.—Pompey, come and take these horses.—There's the best tobacco in this county.—Luke, where's Peter and John? Primus, tell Adam to get some fresh water, and go you, Finis, and help him. Virgil, you dog, come out of that peach-tree. I'll take you and Milton,

and knock your heads together.—These plagues destroy all my fruit, sir, before it is ripe.—Open that gate, Moses—help him, Aaron. Come here, Cupid, and hold your young mistress's horse. Run, some of you, and tell Venus to get supper.—Come, sir, alight; you are welcome to my house."

The stranger, who throughout this singular colloquy had found no opportunity to address his host, had placed himself beside the young lady, to whom he addressed his conversation during the few minutes that preceded their arrival at the house, where he assisted her to dismount; and the whole party were soon seated in one of Major Heyward's spacious piazzas.

Walnut-Hill was the seat of plenty and hospitality; and in a few minutes servants were dispatched in different directions in pursuit of refreshments. The worthy proprietor himself, in respect of his age, and certain habits of reverence to which his whole household had been long accustomed, received the first attention. His niece placed his great arm-chair, a little negro fetched his pipe, another brought tobacco, a third fire, a fourth a glass of water, a fifth slippers; and in a few minutes he was comfortably seated, enjoying his accustomed luxuries; while his guest retired to arrange his dress.

On the return of the latter, he found his host in the same position in which he had left him; and approaching him, said,

"I have perhaps been to blame in delaying so long to announce my name and business."

"Your name, my young friend, I shall be glad to hear, whenever you please; as for your business, we

will talk of that when we get tired of every other subject."

"I am well aware of your hospitality, and that towards either a friend or a stranger it would be cheerfully exercised; but neither of these characters can be claimed by *Lyttleton Fennimore*."

The old man started as he heard this name; a cloud passed over his features, and his frame seemed agitated with painful recollections. These feelings he endeavored to suppress, as he replied,

"I had rather you had borne another name; but that is not your fault."

He then rose, extended his hand to his guest, and emphatically added, "Mr. Fennimore, pardon an old man, for not being able to forget, in a moment, that which has been a subject of bitter reflection for years. The antipathies of parents should not be entailed on their children. You are cordially welcome to my house —make it your home, and consider me as your friend."

Tea was soon announced; and Major Heyward, as he introduced his guest to his niece, Miss Pendleton, resumed his usual courtesy of manner, but his gaiety had entirely forsaken him, and immediately after this meal he retired to his apartment, leaving the young people to entertain each other. We need hardly add, that, predisposed as the latter were to be pleased with each other, the evening passed agreeably; and that when Mr. Fennimore retired, he could not but acknowledge, that whatever might be the character of the uncle, the niece was one of the most agreeable women that he had ever seen.

## CHAPTER II.

On the following morning, Fennimore rose early, and sallied forth, but found that he had been preceded by Major Heyward, who was bustling about, without his hat or coat, in the sharp morning air, giving orders to his servants. The cloud of the last evening had passed from his brow; the reflections of his pillow had been salutary; and he now met his guest, with his usual cheerfulness of countenance, and kindness of manner. "Mr. Fennimore," said he, "I did not receive you, perhaps, as I ought, and I ask your pardon. I must be frank with you, for I cannot be otherwise. Things have passed between our families which I have not been able to forget. But the ways of Providence are always wise; it was necessary for my peace that you should come here. I am too old to cherish an unsettled feud. Let the past be buried. We are friends."

"I know so little of the particulars of the affair to which you allude," replied Fennimore, "that I can say nothing, except that I desire to stand in no other relation to Major Heyward, than that of a friend. I had not thought of introducing that subject. My business relates to a pecuniary transaction——"

"Well, we'll talk of that another time. Any time will do for business. We can settle that in five minutes. There is to be a *barbecue* to-day, Mr. Fennimore; we are all going—you must go with us."

In vain did Fennimore plead that his engagements

required his attention elsewhere—that he had no time for parties of pleasure—that he had no taste for such amusements, &c.

"No taste for a barbecue!" exclaimed Major Heyward. "You surprise me, Mr. Fennimore; no taste for a barbecue! Well, that shows you were not raised in Virginia. Time you should see a little of the world, sir; there 's nothing in life equal to a barbecue, properly managed—a good old Virginia barbecue. Sir, I would not have you to miss it for the best horse on my plantation!"

"Talking of horses," continued the cheerful old man, "reminds me that I can show you a sight worth seeing;" and without waiting for a reply, he led his guest to his stables, where the grooms were feeding and rubbing down a number of beautiful blooded animals. These were successively paraded, and the proud owner descanted upon the merits of each, with a volubility that excluded every other subject, until breakfast was announced.

"Has Mr. Fennimore consented to join our party today?" inquired Miss Pendleton, after they were seated at the breakfast-table.

"Certainly, my dear," replied the Major; "Mr. Fennimore would be doing injustice to us, and to himself, if he did not improve such an opportunity of witnessing a festivity peculiar to our State. I am sure he would not be deprived of it upon any consideration."

"I cannot resist the temptation," said Fennimore, with a bow which Miss Pendleton took to herself, while her uncle received it as a tribute to his favorite amuse-

ment; and after a hasty meal, the parties separated to prepare for the excursion.

The horses were soon at the door, and the party proceeded, attended by several servants, to the place of meeting. It was a gay and beautiful morning. They passed over a high mountainous ridge, by a winding and rugged path, which at some places seemed impracticable; but the horses, accustomed to these acclivities, stept cautiously from rock to rock, or nimbly leaped the narrow ravines that crossed the road, while the riders scarcely suffered any inconvenience from the irregularities of the surface. Sometimes the path led along the edge of a precipice, and they paused to look down upon the broad-spread valleys, that lay extended in beautiful landscape before them. The song of the mocking-bird arrested their attention, as he sate among the branches of a tall tree, pouring forth his miscellaneous and voluble notes, imitating successfully all the songsters of the grove, and displaying a fullness, strength, and richness of voice, which often astonishes even those who are accustomed to his melody. Upon reaching the highest elevation of the ridge, they wound along its level surface, by a path well beaten and beautifully smooth, but so seldom travelled as to be covered with a growth of short grass. Its width was sufficient only to admit the passage of a single horseman, and its course so winding that the foremost rider was often concealed from the view of the last of the train. Dense thickets grew on either hand, and the branches of the trees interlocking above the riders' heads, formed a thick canopy, giving to this romantic path the appearance of

a narrow, serpentine archway, carved with art out of the tangled forest. Virginia, when she reached this elevated plain, seemed to feel as if in fairy land, and, loosening her rein, bounded away with the lightness of a bird, gracefully bending as she passed under the low boughs, gliding round the short angles, and leaping her beautiful steed over the logs that sometimes lay in the way. Fennimore galloped after, admiring her skill, and equally elated by the inspiring scene; while Major Heyward, who thought it undignified to ride out of a walk, at any time except when following the hounds, followed at his leisure, wondering at the levity of the young people, which made them forget their gentility and ride like dragoons or hired messengers.

Suddenly the path seemed to end at the brink of a tall cliff, and far below them they beheld the majestic Potomac, meandering through its deep valleys, and apparently forcing its way among piles of mountains. The charms of mountain scenery were enhanced by the endless variety of the rich and gorgeous, the placid and beautiful, the grand and terrific, that were here embraced in one view. At one place the tall naked rock rose in perpendicular cliffs to an immense height, terminating in bare spiral peaks; at another, the rounded elevations were covered with pines, cedars, and laurel, always indicating a sterile soil, and a cold exposure. The mountain sides were clothed with verdure, in all the intervals between the parapets of rock; and the clear streams of water that fell from ledge to ledge, enlivened the prospect. Far below, the rich valley spread out its broad bosom, studded with the noblest trees of

the forest, the majestic tulip-tree, the elegant locust, the gum, the sugar-maple, the broad spreading oak, and the hickory. The numberless flowering trees were in full bloom, and their odors filled the air with a rich perfume. The river, with its clear blue waters, was full of attraction, sometimes dashing round rocky points of the mountain, and sometimes flowing calmly through the valley; at one point placidly reposing in a wide basin, at another, rushing over a rocky ledge whitened with foam.

"How beautiful!" exclaimed Virginia, as she reined up her horse, and gazed, with a delighted eye, over the wide-spread landscape.

"How exquisitely beautiful!" re-echoed Fennimore, as his admiring glance rested on the form of his lovely companion. Her deer-like animal, smoking with heat, and just sufficiently excited by exercise to bring every muscle into full action, to expand his nostrils and swell his veins—his fine neck arched, his head raised, his delicate ear thrown forward, and his clear eye sparkling, stood on the very edge of the cliff. The light figure of Virginia was rendered more graceful by an elegant riding-dress, closely fitted to her person, and extending below her feet. She sat with the ease of a practised rider. But her chief attraction, at this moment, was the animated expression of her features. Her bonnet was pushed back from her fine forehead, her eye lighted up with pleasure, her cheek flushed and dimpled, her lips unclosed; and as she extended her whip in the direction indicated by her glance, Fennimore realized the

most exquisite dreams, that his fancy had ever formed, of female loveliness.

She turned towards her companion, as his expression of admiration met her ear, blushed deeply when she discovered that his impassioned glance was directed towards herself, and then, with a little dash of modest coquetry, which is quite natural in a pretty woman of eighteen, laughed, and resumed her descriptions. But her tones softened, and her conversation, without losing its sprightliness, assumed the richness and vividness of poetry, from an involuntary consciousness that all the young and joyous feelings of her heart were responded in kindred emotions from that of her companion.

In a few minutes they were joined by Major Heyward, and the whole party descended the mountain by a precipitous path, which led to a part of the valley bordering on the Potomac.

Arrived at the place of rendezvous, a novel and enchanting scene was presented to the eye of our stranger. A level spot on the shore of the river, had been divested of all its bushes and trees, except a few large poplars, which were left for shade, whose huge trunks had risen to a majestic height, while their spreading branches interlocked, so as to form a canopy impervious to the sunbeams. Having been the scene of these festivities for many years, the ground was trodden hard, and covered with a thick sward of short grass. On three sides the forest was seen in its native wildness, tangled and luxuriant as it came from the hand of nature; on the other flowed the river. At the back part of the area, was a fountain of limpid water—the Virginians always congregate

around a cool spring—issuing from the rock, and filling a large basin, which served as a wine-cooler, and in which a few trout, kept with great care, sported their graceful forms.

The company began to assemble at an early hour; a gay and miscellaneous assemblage, somewhat aristocratic, but by no means exclusive. It was all of the class of freeholders, but included every variety of that class. Some were members of ancient families, well educated, polished and wealthy, proud of their birth and of their estates, simple and hospitable, though somewhat stately, in their manners. Some were decayed gentry, a little prouder than the nature of the case seemed to require, in consequence of their poverty; and others were plain farmers and their families, stout built, well fed, well clad —an intelligent and independent race, who lived on their own farms, and justly considered themselves the peers of the best in the land. In the whole circle there was much of the sturdiness and simplicity of an agricultural people, together with a degree of polish not often found among mere farmers, and resulting here from the hospitable customs of the country, which induced a continual round of social intercourse, and from the fact that the land proprietors, being the owners of servants, had leisure to cultivate their minds, and visit their neighbors. Among them were many gentlemen of liberal education, some professional men of high attainments, and men in public life, or of large fortunes, who, spending a portion of every year in large cities, had acquired all the elegance of manners, and cultivation of intellect, which is found in the best circles. One peculiarity which usual-

ly marks a fashionable, or, more properly speaking, an exclusive society, was wanting here, namely, that uniformity in dress, in manners, in thought, and in phraseology, which results from a servile obedience to the canons of fashion—that dismal monotony of taste which forces every gentleman to furnish his house after a prescribed model, and a whole community to dress as much alike as a body of soldiers in regimentals; reminding one of Pope's description of a garden, where,

> "No pleasing intricacies intervene,
> No artful wildness to perplex the scene,
> Grove nods at grove, each alley has a brother,
> And half the platform just reflects the other."

This neighborhood being secluded, and distant from the sea-board, fashions, coming with a tardy step and from different quarters, were partially adopted, and never generally acquiesced in, nor carried to excess. Manufactures of every kind were at that time at a low ebb, and mechanics were not to be found in country neighborhoods. The southern people, too, are habitually indolent, and while they often exhibit on the one hand great fondness for show, as often betray on the other the most absolute carelessness for appearances; an apparent contradiction which arises from the fact that though lavish in the expenditure of money, they will not endure any personal labor, or discomfort, in the purchase of luxury. If a splendid dress, vehicle, or article of furniture, can be readily procured, it is eagerly bought, without regard to the price; but if it cannot be had, the nearest substitute is cheerfully adopted; and they are too independent, either to value each other

on such adventitious possessions, or to mar their own happiness by repining at the want of them. From these various causes it arose, that while one lady was rolled to the fête in an elegant coach, with four fat horses, and plated harness, another of equal wealth came in a sorry vehicle, which might have been very superb in the days of her grandmother, but was now faded and crazy, drawn by a pair of blooded nags, hitched to it with tackle marvellously resembling plow-gear. An ancient spinster, whose last will and testament was a matter of interest with all kinsfolk, and of curiosity with the rest of her acquaintance, rode in a sorry affair, which had once been a creditable chaise, but was now transformed by repeated mendings into something resembling a hang-man's cart; having undergone the same mutations to which our ships of war are subjected, in which timber after timber is supplied, until none of the original material is left; the only difference being, that in the case of the carriage no care had been taken to preserve the model, or to adapt the last repair to the one which had preceded it. The horses were generally elegant—but such a heterogeneous assortment of equipments! How could it be otherwise? There was not a saddler within fifty miles, and a gentleman who had the misfortune to break a rein, or carry away a buckle, not being able to procure a new article, must necessarily submit the old one to a negro cobbler, or leave it to the ingenuity of his own groom. The most usual plan was to supply the rent with the nearest string. Thus it happened that many of the animals were nobly caparisoned; elegant saddles, dashing saddle-cloths, martingales, and double-

reined bridles, were abundant; but when one of these spruce affairs had chanced to be broken, a knot or a splice, with a thong of rein-deer skin, not unfrequently united the several parts, while a rope or a strap of leather was sometimes substituted for a girth. Some gentlemen rode saddles without girths, and some rode with blind-bridles; for among this equestrian order, any thing that could be ridden with, or ridden upon, was better than walking, and any thing at all was far better than staying away from the barbecue!

However odd all this might seem at first sight, to a stranger, there was something in it that was remarkably pleasant—a something which showed that the most detestable of all pride, that which estimates an individual by his external appearance, was totally wanting. There was a cordiality, a confidence in being kindly received for one's own sake, which was cheering to the heart. The girls, too, looked charmingly; and it was marvellous to see them coming in pairs, two on a horse, or mounted behind their fathers and brothers, laughing and chatting, and just as happy as if they had ridden in coaches. And then the greetings! one would have thought that a single clan had peopled the whole neighborhood; the stately old gentlemen as they shook hands saluted each other as cousin Jones, cousin Lee, and cousin Thompson, with here and there an occasional Mr. or Sir; but the girls were all cousins, and the old ladies were aunts to all the world—that is, to all that part of the world which was paraded at the *barbecue*.

It was a gay scene: the horses hitched to the surrounding trees, the ladies sitting in groups or parading

about, and the gentlemen preparing for the diversions of the day. Some dispersed into the woods with their fowling-pieces, some distributed themselves along the rocks that overhung the river, and threw out their fishing-lines, and others launched their canoes in the stream, and sought the finny tribes in the eddies of the rapid current. A few of the ladies participated in the amusement of angling, whether to show their skill in throwing out a bait, or to prove that they possessed the virtue of patience, is not known; but it is certain that they broke quite as many rods and lines as hearts.

## CHAPTER III.

IMMEDIATELY opposite the spot at which our party was assembled, the river rushed over a series of rocky ledges intersected by numberless fissures, affording channels to the water, which at the same time foamed and dashed over the rocks. A number of the youth were amusing themselves in navigating these ripples with canoes. By keeping the channels, they could pass in safety down the rapids, but it required the greatest skill to avoid the rocks, and to steer the boat along the serpentine and sometimes angular passes, by which alone it could be brought in safety through the ripples. Sometimes a canoe, missing its course, shot off into a pool or eddy, where the still water afforded a secure harbor; but if it happened to touch a rock, in the rapid descent, inevita-

ble shipwreck was the consequence. The competitors in this adventurous entertainment soon became numerous; several of the young ladies, who loved sport too well, or feared the water too little, to be deterred by the danger of a wetting, engaged in it; so that some of the canoes were seen to contain, besides the steersman, a single female, for these frail vessels were only intended for two persons.

They first pushed their canoes up the stream with poles, keeping close to the shore, where the current flowed with little rapidity, until they reached the head of the ripple; then taking their paddles they shot out into the stream, guided their boats into the channels, darting down with the velocity of an arrow, sometimes concealed among the rocks, and sometimes hidden by the foam, and in a few minutes were seen gliding out over the smooth water below, having passed for nearly a mile through this dangerous navigation. Sometimes they purposely forsook the channel, and showed their skill by turning suddenly into the eddies on either side, where they would wait until the next boat passed, and dart after it in eager chase. Dangerous as this amusement appeared, there was in fact little to be apprehended; for the upsetting of a canoe, which seldom occurred, would throw the passengers into shallow water or lodge them against a rock, with no other injury than a wetting, or perhaps a slight bruise.

Fennimore, who had walked with Miss Pendleton to the shore, and watched the canoes for some time, proposed to her to join the party.

"Can you manage a canoe?" inquired she, hesitating.

"Try me," said he, gaily. "I would surely not venture to take so precious a charge, without some confidence in my skill. I have been a western ranger for several years, and am quite familiar with the use of the paddle."

Virginia stepped into the canoe, and having seated herself in the prow, while Fennimore took possession of the stern, exclaimed,

"A ranger! I am surprised, Mr. Fennimore; why, you do not look like a ranger!"

"Am I at liberty to consider that doubt as a compliment?"

"Oh no—I do not pay compliments. But I always thought that a ranger was a great rough man, with a blanket round his shoulders, a tomahawk at his belt, and a rifle in his hand."

"Such indeed is a part of the equipment of the backwoods soldier; and believe me, Miss Pendleton, many of the most gallant men of this day have earned their laurels in such a dress."

"Oh, terrible! you will destroy some of my finest associations. I never think of a hero, without fancying him a tall elegant man in dashing regimentals, with a rich sword-knot, and a pair of remarkably handsome epaulets."

"Add to your picture a powdered head, a long queue, a stiff form, and measured tread, and you have the beau-ideal of a soldier of the school of Baron Steuben."

"Say not a word against that school, Mr. Fennimore:

it has produced a noble race of heroes. What would have become of our country, had it not been for those fine old generals, who trained our soldiers to war in the late revolution, and who were models of that neatness and military etiquette, which I am afraid you undervalue. We have a dear old gentleman here, whom you will see at dinner, and who is an excellent specimen of by-gone times."

"Who is he?"

"General Armour, one of our revolutionary veterans, a most excellent man, but one who seems to think that the highest degree of human excellence consists in looking and acting like a soldier. He continues to wear his three-cornered hat, his buff waistcoat, and his blue regimental coat turned up with red, and would rather part with his estate than with his black cockade."

"I honor such men," said Fennimore, "but see, here we are at the head of the rapids."

Fennimore paddled his light canoe over the smooth water above the rapids, advancing towards the reefs and then retiring, describing circles with his little vessel, as if to try his skill before he ventured among the breakers. He was evidently quite familiar with this exercise; and Virginia, as she beheld with admiration the strength and dexterity with which he handled the paddle, felt no longer the slightest timidity, but enjoyed the exciting sport.

"Let me now acknowledge freely," said Fennimore as he cast his eye over the ripple, "that I am unwilling to attempt a dangerous navigation, which is new to me, with so valuable a charge."

Virginia smiled; "I have often passed these rocks," said she, "and feel no fear; but if you have the slightest desire to return, let us do so."

The stranger hesitated; his prudence restraining him, while the natural ambition which a young man feels in the presence of a lady, urged him on, until Miss Pendleton relieved him by saying, "Let us run no risks, Mr. Fennimore. I should not relish a wetting; and I am in fault for not telling you sooner, that it would be difficult, if not impossible, for you to pass through the rapids without knowing the channel."

At this moment a canoe darted past them, containing a young lady and a gentleman. Both were laughing; and the young man, proud of his skill, in attempting to flourish his paddle round his head, as a kind of salute to Miss Pendleton, unluckily threw it from his hand. An exclamation of affright arose from both parties; for the canoe was rapidly approaching the breakers, while the steersman had no means of directing its course.

"Shall I follow?" cried Fennimore.

"By all means," exclaimed his companion; and in a moment he was rapidly pursuing the drifting canoe. The latter kept its course for a little while, then swinging round, floated with the broadside to the current, rising and sinking with an unsteady motion, now striking one end against a rock, and whirling round, and now the other, and sometimes darting head-foremost through the spray. Fennimore pressed on with admirable skill, urging his canoe forward with all his strength, to overtake them, and guiding it with unerring sagacity. He had nearly reached the object of his pursuit, when it struck a

rock, and upset, throwing the lady and gentleman into the deepest part of the channel.

"Keep your seat, Mr. Fennimore! guide the canoe!" exclaimed Virginia rapidly, as with admirable presence of mind, she rose from her seat, kneeled in the boat, and leaning forward caught the floating lady by the arm, while Fennimore at the same instant, by a powerful exertion, threw the canoe into an eddy where the waters were still. The whole was the work of an instant; but it was witnessed from the shore, and a burst of applause excited by the presence of mind shown by Fennimore and Miss Pendleton. The dripping lady was drawn into the boat; the drooping gentleman, who had crawled on a rock, was taken in as a passenger; and, when they reached the shore, it would have been difficult to guess that any of the laughing party had met with a disaster. They were greeted with a hundred merry voices as they ascended the bank, and Mr. Fennimore forgot, in the lively scene, that he was a stranger.

It was now nearly noon, when the arrival of a hunting party that had gone out at day-break, attracted universal attention. At its head rode an elderly man of large frame, whose face was browned by many a summer's sun. He wore a suit of plain home-spun, a handkerchief was bound closely round his head instead of a hat, and his legs from a little above the knee downward were wrapped in buck-skin, to protect them from the briers, in riding rapidly through the forest. Under one arm hung a large powder-horn, on the other side was suspended a square pouch; and a broad leathern belt, buckled closely round him, kept his dress and accoutre-

ments confined to his body. A large buck, the noblest trophy of the morning's chase, was thrown across the horse, behind the saddle, and bound to the rider's back, with the head and feet dangling on either side against the flanks of the steed. After him came a dozen hunters, mostly young men, variously equipped, some in gay hunting-shirts, with elegant rifles, and others in the plainer garb of ordinary woodsmen. Among them, they brought several deer of a smaller size, and a variety of wild-turkeys, and smaller game.

"What a fine buck!" exclaimed several voices. "Ah, Colonel Antler, you always carry the day!"

"And so he should," said General Armour, "the veterans should set good examples to the new recruits. I congratulate you, my old friend."

"True enough," replied the hunter, "we ought to lead the young fellows; but, to tell the truth, I have trained these lads until some of them know almost as much as myself."

A loud laugh from the hunters followed this speech.

"Come," said General Armour, "do us the favor to make your report; tell us how the buck was taken, before you alight."

"Hard duty, that," replied the leading hunter, "for I am as dry as a powder-horn. But the story is very short. We had agreed to *drive*. I had seen large tracks about the Cold Spring, up in the North Hollow, lately, for several mornings in succession, and I knew that a big buck *haunted* about there. We determined to surround him, and accordingly stationed ourselves at different points. I placed myself behind a large tree on

a path leading across the hollow. A driver was sent in to start the game, and presently I saw this fine fellow stealing along at an easy gallop, treading as gently as a cat, and leaping over the logs so lightly as hardly to crush a leaf. There was a light breeze from the south, and some of the young men had gone up in that direction, expecting that he would run with his nose to the wind—and so he did, until he scented them, when he suddenly turned towards the place where I stood. I knew exactly where he would stop, and remained perfectly still. On he came at an easy *lope*, until he reached the top of a little knoll about sixty yards from me. There he halted, wheeled round, and stood perfectly still, with one fore-foot raised, the ear thrown forward, and his eye flashing—listening and snuffing the breeze. I fired, and down he fell. In a moment he rose and dashed off; but I knew I had *saved* him, dropped the but of my rifle, and began to load. A hunter, general, should never quit the spot from which he fires, until he loads up again."

"That's right, Colonel, on military principles."

"I know it to be right, on hunting principles."

"It is mathematically and morally right," replied the veteran; "military rules are all founded on the immutable basis of truth—but I beg pardon; proceed, sir."

"The company all knew the crack of my rifle, and came galloping up, the dogs took the trail of the blood, and away they all went in chase, as hard as their horses could carry them. I mounted, rode quietly over the hill, and fell in ahead of them, just as the buck had

turned to bay. Up came the young gentlemen, and slipped in between me and the game, but without seeing me. Charles Cleaveland had raised his gun to his face, and my nephew Will, the rogue, was taking aim, when I said, 'boys!' They both looked round, and at the same moment my bullet whistled between them, and knocked over the buck."

"Bravo!" cried several voices.

"That was not fair, uncle," cried Miss Pendleton; "you outwitted the other gentlemen by your superior knowledge of the woods."

"Hey? Cousin Virginia; not fair! Why what's the use of an old hunter's experience, but to outwit the bucks—the old bucks of the woods, and the young bucks of the settlements."

"I have done, uncle," replied Virginia, laughing.

"Well, here's one who has nothing to complain of—George Lee; he found a fat yearling doe on the pine ridge, and brought her off. Henry Mountfort has another, and the rest of them have shot small game."

The party now alighted, and the servants were soon employed in preparing the game for dinner.

A long table was now spread under the trees, and loaded with an abundant, and not inelegant repast. Venison, poultry, hams, and rounds of beef, cooked on the ground, sent up their savory vapors, while numberless huge baskets of cold viands, consisting of pullets, tongues, bread, cakes, and pastry, supplied that variety and profusion of eatables, which are supposed to have characterized the hospitality of our worthy grandmothers. The company took their seats with great deco-

rum, and no small parade of etiquette; and the preparations for a general onset, like the breaking ground of a besieging army, advanced with system, and with a due attention to all the little details customarily observed on such solemn occasions. But as the scene became more lively, good things were said, and eaten, with a rapidity that would have defied the skill of even a modern reporter; and amidst the Babel of voices, a few only of the most prominent speakers could be occasionally heard.

"I'll trouble you, General Armour, for a slice of that venison,—take it rare, if you please,—pardon me for interrupting you——"

"I was about to remark, that when General Washington determined to cut off the supply of provisions from Philadelphia——"

"Bad business that—cutting off provisions," remarked the venison-eater.

"General, a morsel of the fat, if you please."

"—When General Washington in '77 determined——"

"Allow me to recommend this fish, General."

"I am very well helped——determined to cut off——"

"Did you say fish, madam? With great pleasure. Let me add some of this butter, and a glass of wine. My father, madam, who was a very facetious old gentleman——"

"He detached six hundred militia over the Schuylkill, under General Potter——"

"Quite a wit; I knew him well."

"He intercepted their foraging parties, as directed by the commander-in-chief——"

"—Was very fond of fish, madam."

"Who, General Washington?"

"No, sir, my late father. He used to say that fish should swim three times——"

"On the roads leading to Chester, Lancaster, and——"

"Three times, madam; first in the water, then in butter, and then in wine."

"General Washington remarking that——"

"—Dancing was a popular amusement——"

"—Gave strict orders——"

"The fiddlers should be kept sober."

"What did you say about the tender passion, madam?"

"General Knox——"

"—Who played the first fiddle——"

"—Wrote the Essay on Man——"

"—Between sun-set and roll-call——"

"—So the leather affairs were sent to General Lee——"

"—A very pathetic story——"

"—Told in Hume's England."

"—For my father, you know, ma'am, was a witty man."

Buzz! buzz! buzz! all became a confused clatter, which continued until the cloth was removed, and the ladies retired. A separation of the three estates now took place;—the elder gentlemen remained at the table, the matronly portion of the females betook themselves to the surrounding seats, and the youthful part of the assembly arranged themselves in sets for dancing. Mr.

Fennimore had already discovered that Miss Pendleton was emphatically *the Belle;* and her title to this distinction became more evident, when the younger part of the company, relieved from the presence of their seniors, were enabled to act out their own characters more freely. The young ladies evidently yielded to her the precedence, and the gentlemen were emulous in paying her attention. As the acknowledged heiress of Major Heyward, her expectations, in point of fortune, were of the brightest character, and in beauty she had no superior; while her vigorous understanding, the decision of her mind, and the playfulness of her conversation, threw an air of freshness and originality around her, as rare as it was captivating. Among her constant admirers, the most devoted was George Lee, a young gentleman, whose fine person was only equalled by the utter imbecility of his mind. He was tall, stout, well built, and easy in his deportment. His features, taken singly, were manly and handsome; but his face, as a whole, had not the slightest expression of any thing but good-nature. Amiable, kind, generous to prodigality, and simple as a child, there never lived a more artless, a better tempered, or a weaker man. His fine appearance, and gentlemanly deportment, never failed to earn him respect, on a first acquaintance; and the goodness of his heart rendered him a general favorite among those who had known him long.

"Will you dance with me, cousin Virginia?" said he, as soon as he could plant himself at her side.

"I have almost promised not to dance to-day."

"But with *me:* I know you will dance with *me.* I have been trying all day to get to speak to you."

"I am glad you were so much better employed."

"No, that was not the reason; but you are always so surrounded. You know that I would rather talk to you than do any thing else in the world."

"Do not talk so, cousin George."

"Why not? You know I think so. I am not ashamed of it. You know that I have always told you so. But you do not know the half that I feel——"

"I will dance with you, Mr. Lee," said Miss Pendleton, willing to interrupt his silly courtship.

"Thank you, but don't call me *Mr. Lee*—you know I can't bear that;" and away they tripped.

The company separated at an early hour; and Mr. Fennimore was not displeased at having shared the festivities of this agreeable day, or at being destined to pass another night under the hospitable roof of Major Heyward.

## CHAPTER IV.

As Mr. George Lee will come occasionally under the notice of the reader, during the progress of this history, we think it advisable to devote a few pages to some special details, relating to his parentage and character. This interesting young gentleman, the descendant of an ancient family, was the only son of a respectable planter, who lived and died upon his own estate, adjoining to that of Major Heyward, to whom he was distantly related. The elder Mr. Lee was only distinguished among his neighbors as an industrious man, who superintended his laborers faithfully during the day, and smoked his pipe contentedly at night. He pursued this life so evenly, for many years, that the only vicissitudes which marked his days, were those produced by the revolutions of the seasons, or the changes of the atmosphere—except, indeed, that he was occasionally induced to join a hunting expedition in the mountains, or allured to the lowlands, to participate in a feast of oysters. Having been reared on the borders of the Blue Ridge, he had been early instructed in the use of the gun; and long before he reached the age of manhood, could track the timorous deer through all the labyrinths of the forest. He had even ventured upon more dangerous enterprises, and on more than one occasion had joined the gallant volunteers of his native state in repelling the incursions of the savage tribe. When he married, he hung up his rifle and laid aside his mocasins, but still cherished them as old acquaintances, and

could be prevailed upon at any time, by slight entreaty, to resume them both. He had many acquaintances among the lowland gentry, who loved his society because he had a good appetite and a hard head, was fond of oysters and apple-toddy, and was an excellent listener; and, what was perhaps not the least of his good qualities, he seldom made them a visit without carrying with him a fat mountain-deer, as a present. He was, therefore, an occasional, and always a welcome visitor, at those glorious fish-feasts at which the gentlemen of Virginia display such consummate skill, in catching, cooking, and consuming, the inhabitants of the deep. He was so well pleased upon such occasions, that he might have become a punctual participant in these festivities, had it not been for the frequent admonitions of Mrs. Lee, who observed that her husband, though rigidly temperate at home, never returned from such merry-meetings without exhibiting a certain unnatural exhilaration of spirits, not exactly conforming with this good lady's notions of propriety. She therefore more than once hinted that oysters and toddy did not agree with Mr. Lee; and that gentleman, who had implicit faith in the penetration of his helpmate, as readily promised to eat fewer oysters and more trout, and to substitute brandy and water for toddy. But as this arrangement neither produced the desired effect, nor satisfied the lady, he at last compounded matters, like a good husband, by agreeing to go to the lowlands but twice a year. Under this convention, which was kept inviolate, matters went on like clock-work; the plough and the loom were plied incessantly; the fields grew wider, and the tobacco-

crops more abundant; the negroes were fat and well clad; and Mr. Lee, as he ripened in years, increased in substance. The lady, who was the moving cause of this prosperity, may be sketched off in a few words. Like her husband, she came of an aristocratic stock; but, unlike him, she was shrewd, sensible, active, and gifted with an uncommon knack for managing every thing and every body around her. She managed the plantation, the dairy, the poultry, the household, the negroes; she managed her husband; and what was better than all, she regulated her own temper and conduct with great decorum, and managed to be the most popular woman in the neighborhood. Of book-learning she had not much, for ladies, in that dark age, were not taught the sciences, did not visit lyceums, and had no souvenirs. But then Mrs. Lee had a mind of her own; her sensibilities were acute, and her ambition great; and as she carefully improved every opportunity for gaining information, she became as intelligent as a lady could well be without the interesting aids above mentioned.

Such had been the prosperous condition of this family for several years, when the oppressions of Great Britain began to awaken her colonies to a sense of their rights. Mr. Lee, for a long time, turned a deaf ear to the murmurs which surrounded him. Having been in the habit of waiting on all occasions for Mrs. Lee to go foremost, it never occurred to him to be discontented, while she seemed to be satisfied. He was as happy as a clam. His horses thrived, and his corn yielded famously; and when his neighbors indignantly repeated their long cata-

logue of grievances, he quietly responded that King George had never done *him* any harm. But no sooner did that good lady take the patriot side, and incautiously drop a rebellious expression in his hearing, than he began to examine the case with different eyes. By degrees, as the wrongs of his country were more clearly developed, a radical change was operated in his feelings and habits. He became a frequent attendant at public meetings, employed an overseer to conduct his business, and took to reading the newspapers; he lighted his pipe more frequently than usual, and walked to and fro, for hours, on the lawn before his door, with the air of a person in great perplexity. His wife observed all this with silent anxiety, for she was not in the habit of crossing his humors, but rather of directing them skilfully to the accomplishment of her own purposes; and after some days she ventured to ask her husband what engaged his thoughts so busily. Mr. Lee, like a boy who is about to ask a boon which he expects will not be granted, had not courage to face the question when thus suddenly presented; and hastily replying that he hardly knew what he was thinking about, put on his hat and sallied forth to his accustomed promenade. After marching about for several hours with unusual agility, he returned with the air of a man who has made up his mind, and sitting down by his good lady, said, "I'll tell you, Mrs. Lee, what I have been considering about. I think that King George is neither an honest man nor a gentleman; and if he sends any more of his soldiers to murder their fellow-subjects in these colonies, I'll be the first man to shoulder a musket against them." To

his surprise, his excellent better half not only applauded this spirited resolution, but complimented his patriotism in the most flattering terms.

As we design to write the history of the father only as introductory to that of the son, we shall not ask the reader to accompany the former through all his campaigns. Suffice it to say, that he was a brave, though not an active officer; and that after serving his country faithfully during the whole war, and attaining the rank of captain, he retired, when the struggle was over, to his beloved retreat among the Blue mountains. Besides some honorable scars, he brought back with him several new propensities. He rose at day-break, and having swallowed a mint-julep, sallied forth bareheaded, in his slippers, and without his coat; and having cooled himself in the open air, repaired to his station in the chimney-corner. This, which he called "turning out at reveillè," he practised at all seasons. He had, moreover, learned several military and political maxims, which, as a soldier and a revolutionary patriot, he felt bound to live up to. One of these was, that a captain should command his own company, a proposition which he failed not to repeat to Mrs. Lee, whenever he suspected her of intruding upon his authority; and another referred to the "indefeasible" right of *pursuing happiness*, as laid down in the Declaration of Independence, which guarantied to him, as he supposed, the privilege of entertaining as much company as he pleased, and of eating as many oysters, and drinking as much brandy, as he found pleasant and palatable. His pipe became his inseparable companion, and the management of all

his affairs devolved on his wife. He was a diligent reader of the newspapers, and pored incessantly over the numerous political tracts which issued from the presses of that day. He became a great talker; and described the various scenes of the war in which he had been engaged, with a minuteness which nothing but their intense interest could have rendered tolerable. Of his own personal adventures, he spoke sparingly, and with great modesty, though his merits had been great. Once or twice only, he informed a confidential friend, that he deserved to have been made a general for his exploits, and would undoubtedly have attained that rank, had it not been for his want of talents and education; but he ventured such remarks with great caution, and never until after dinner.

It will be readily imagined, that Mr. George Lee, junior, was an apt pupil in the school of so meritorious a parent. The heir of a large estate, he early learned that he lived only to enjoy it, and to spend it like a gentleman. The descendant of a revolutionary hero, he felt it incumbent on him to support the dignity of his family. Accustomed to see his father's table loaded with a profusion of the bounties of nature, and surrounded by crowds of welcome guests, hospitality became, in his eyes, the chief of the cardinal virtues. His father, doating upon the beautiful boy, who was said to be the exact image of himself, carried him with him, not only in his daily walks and rides around his own plantation, but to the numerous parties and carousals upon which he was now a regular attendant. Before he was twelve years old, this precious youth could follow

the hounds at full speed through the woods, with the dexterity of a practised fox-hunter; at fourteen, he was a member of a fishing-club, and an excellent judge of cookery and Madeira; and at sixteen, when his worthy progenitor was gathered to his fathers, the accomplished heir took his place in society, qualified in all respects to fill the void occasioned by this melancholy event.

To be brief—George Lee was a good fellow, a thorough sportsman, and a most hospitable man. His purse, his horses, and his wine, were always at the service of his friends. Too good-humored to make an enemy, too generous to envy others, and too feeble of intellect to lay any plan beyond the enjoyment of the present moment, he had no desires which extended farther than the next meal, nor any anxieties which a bumper of Madeira could not dispel. His mother had long since abandoned the hopeless task of training his mind to any serious pursuit, or any solid excellence, because it was impossible to cultivate that which did not exist. But he had affections, which were easily moulded, and through these she obtained all that in such a case was practicable: the entire management of his estate, and the accomplishment of any temporary purpose on which she set her heart.

It was in consequence of a plan early matured by this politic lady, that George Lee attached himself to Virginia Pendleton. The latter was an orphan, the niece, not of Major Heyward, but of his wife. She was adopted by them in her infancy, and as they had no children of their own, became the idol of their hearts, and the acknowledged heiress of Major Heyward's fortune

When Mrs. Heyward died, Virginia was quite young, and Mrs. Lee supplied, to some extent, the place of a mother to the orphan girl, by giving her advice from time to time, and directing her inquisitive mind to proper studies, and correct sources of information; and often did she wish that she had found in her son a pupil of equal docility and intelligence. It therefore very naturally occurred to her, that if George was deficient in intellect, it was the more necessary that he should have a highly-gifted wife, who could manage his affairs, and by her talents and personal charms acquire a decided influence over himself. For this office, Virginia was eminently qualified; and to this important station, Mrs. Lee had the kindness to devote her, even in her childhood. They were thrown together continually; the affectionate appellation of *cousin* was used between them, and their intercourse was that of brother and sister. Virginia, grateful for the kindness of Mrs. Lee, the full value of whose friendship she had the discernment to see, and the sensibility to feel, became sincerely attached to George—but with an affection precisely similar to that which she felt for his mother and Major Heyward. They stood to her in the place of relatives. And such also were the feelings of George Lee, until he was nearly grown to manhood, when the judicious hints of his mother, pointing out the eminent attractions of Virginia, the suitableness of their ages, tastes, and tempers, and the contiguity of their estates, opened his eyes to a new idea, which, once indulged, remained for ever implanted in his heart. Not that he, for a moment, entered into the spirit of his mother's calculating policy; he was too

careless of wealth, too improvident, and too generous, to form a sordid wish; but when the possibility of a marriage with Virginia was suggested to his fancy, her own matchless charms warmed in his heart a love as fervent as it was disinterested.

Virginia discovered this passion, in the altered manners of her young friend, with unaffected regret, and with a determination to discourage it by every means in her power. She continued to treat him with the same kindness and confidence which had always characterized their intercourse; while she endeavored to withdraw herself from his society, as much as was practicable, without exciting observation. With Mrs. Lee, she was more explicit; and when that lady, at first to feel her way, and afterwards to advance a project which seemed feasible, threw out repeated hints, which at length became so broad as not to be misunderstood; she replied to them with a frankness, an earnestness, and a spirit, which convinced the female politician that she understood, deplored, and disrelished, the whole plan.

But Mr. Lee was not so easily repulsed. He was not sufficiently keen-sighted to discover the bearing of a gentle hint; nor were his sensibilities delicate enough to be wounded by a slight repulse. He remained true to his first love, following the idol of his affections into every company, besieging her at home, and urging his suit with pressing importunity, whenever a favorable opportunity—or an unfavorable one, for he was not very particular—occurred. More than once was his suit kindly and respectfully, but decidedly, rejected. After a repulse, George betook himself to his horses, his dogs,

his gun, and his wine, with unwonted assiduity. No one discovered any evidence of despair in his voice or look; his laugh was as loud as ever, and his song as joyous—but the number of foxes that he took, and the bottles that he cracked, after each refusal, was marvellous. A few weeks, or at most a few months, brought him back to Virginia's feet. Such was the state of affairs, at the period which we have chosen for the commencement of this history.

## CHAPTER V.

It was sunset when Major Heyward and his party reached home. Never had Fennimore passed so delightful a day. The hospitality and politeness of his entertainment, had taught him to forget that he was a stranger. Their free and joyous hilarity had excited his feelings, and given a fresh impulse to his heart. His conversational powers were naturally fine, and were rendered peculiarly agreeable by a simplicity and frankness peculiar to himself. But, under the influence of a high flow of spirits, his manner acquired a more than ordinary vivacity, his language became copious and brilliant, and the rich stores of his mind began to exhibit their exuberance. Two hours passed rapidly away; the parties, pleased with each other, conversed with that freedom which is the result of perfect confidence, and with a degree of wit and animation, which showed

how highly they all enjoyed the intellectual repast. It was one of those happy moments, which seldom occur, when persons, pleased with each other, and surrounded by propitious circumstances, are happy without effort, and agreeable without design.

Major Heyward was in the habit of retiring early to bed, and when his servant appeared to attend him to his chamber, Mr. Fennimore desired an audience of a few minutes, with so much earnestness, that he was invited to accompany the worthy old man to his sleeping apartment. Here they remained some time engaged in business, and then all the parties separated for the night.

Mr. Fennimore, finding that it was still early, sat down to write a letter to his friend Charles Wallace, a young attorney in Philadelphia, in which the events of the day were alluded to, and certain characters described, in language which, the reader may well suppose, was quite as sentimental as the occasion required. We shall not copy this epistle, but will content ourselves with treating the reader to one or two of the concluding paragraphs.

"—— So much for Virginia Pendleton, the belle of the Blue Mountains, the fairest and brightest vision that has ever warmed my fancy! How faint until now were all my conceptions of female loveliness! How little did I dream of that concentration of attractions, that intensity of excellence, that combination of charms, which I have now witnessed! How many excellent qualities have I this day seen combined in the character of this extraordinary female—exquisite beauty, superior intelligence, elegant wit, and the utmost sweetness of dis-

position! Of the other attributes of her mind and heart, I am ignorant; but with respect to those that I have enumerated, I cannot be mistaken."

If the reader will pardon us for the interruption, we suggest that the last averment savors of what the lawyers call *surplusage*. It is certainly an unnecessary averment; for how *could* a young gentleman be mistaken in such plain matters? We admire the argument of a love-letter, or of any letter treating of the mysteries of this all-pervading passion. Let us proceed:

"You will no doubt, now, take it into your wise head, that I am in love, or, at least, that I am rapidly imbibing the delightful, the dangerous poison. Let me assure you seriously, that nothing is farther from my intentions. I have already wooed a mistress, under whose banner I am enlisted. Plighted to the service of my country, with the path of fame bright before me, I may not linger in the bowers of pleasure. Even Miss Pendleton has no charms, when weighed in the balance against my duty. But why should I speak of her? I, a penniless man, unknown to fame—a needy soldier, depending on my sword, with an aged mother to support? And she, the 'observed of all observers,' the darling of her friends, the heiress of a noble fortune! It is painful to reflect on the disparity between us, yet dangerous to think of her in any other light. * * * * *

"To-morrow morning, I must bid adieu to Walnut-Hill, to Miss Pendleton, and to the generous-hearted Major Heyward. When I left Philadelphia, to rejoin the army now encamped in the wilderness bordering on the Ohio, I was intrusted with dispatches for Gen-

eral Wayne. At my earnest request, I was permitted to take this place in my route, and to halt one day, to attend to my own personal affairs, but was admonished at the same time, that as the letters committed to my care were important, any further delay would not be allowed. I have, therefore, no choice; and perhaps it is well for me that I have none. Virginia Pendleton is not a common woman, and it would be madness for me to remain within the magic circle of her attractions."

At the very moment that Mr. Fennimore was inditing these amorous and heroic sentiments, Miss Pendleton was seated at her writing-desk, penning a note to her bosom friend, Mrs. Mountford, a young lady recently married. The ideas of the fair writer ran off in the following train:

"I am sorry, my dear Caroline, that you were not with us to-day—we had such a delightful party! You cannot think how much I regretted your absence, nor how much you lost by it. The weather was very agreeable, and the scenery of the river-shore, and the mountains, was never more beautiful than at this moment. The arrangements were charming. I think I never saw a Barbecue pass off so happily. There was no shower, nor any disastrous accident—except the upsetting of a canoe, by which nobody was hurt. Mrs Lee superintended the preparation of the dinner, with her usual taste. General Armour had a new story for the occasion; the Peytons had new bonnets, and we had a new beau. The latter made quite a sensation among the girls, and I have no doubt I shall have a dozen morning visitors to-morrow—for he is staying with us.

Can you guess who it is? If you cannot, you must remain in the dark, for I can give you little assistance. He is a young officer, just dropped into our neighborhood, from the moon, or from the frontier, or from some other parts unknown. He is at our house, so that I have the honor of entertaining him. He is not at all handsome, though I think him clever.

"I shall not be able, dear Caroline, to spend to-morrow evening with you, as I proposed, for my uncle cannot accompany me, and you know I am unwilling to leave him alone. Mr. Fennimore, our guest, will remain, I suppose, some days with us, and although his visit is entirely to my uncle, and on business, I must, as in duty bound, make my appearance as lady of the mansion, and do the honors to the best of my poor ability. Mr. Fennimore has travelled a good deal, and is quite intelligent; I think you would be pleased with him.

"Do come and dine with me to-morrow—you and Mr. B——. If you are still determined on taking that dreadful journey over the mountains, it may be useful to you to see Mr. Fennimore, who is just from that country, and can tell you all about it. He is remarkably agreeable in conversation: I am very sure you will like him."

Having sealed this note, Virginia retired to repose, and was soon wrapped in that calm forgetfulness which attends the slumbers of the young and innocent. About midnight she was awakened by the terrific cry of "fire!" Springing to the floor, she hastily threw a cloak around her, and rushed to the chamber-door; but

as she opened it, a thick volume of smoke burst in, and she beheld with affright a sheet of flame enveloping the whole stair-case. Retreat in that direction was impossible. She had the presence of mind to close the door, and recollecting that the roof of a piazza extended under her window, she determined to make her escape that way. But here an object met her view, more terrific than the devouring element: the shoulders and head of a man of most hideous appearance, occupied the window to which she was approaching. The face was larger than common, and, to her excited imagination, seemed of superhuman dimensions. The complexion was sanguine, and its redness heightened by the glare of the fire; the features were harsh and savage; a beard of several weeks' growth covered the lower part of the face, while the uncovered head displayed an immense mass of tangled coarse red hair. The malignant eye that scowled upon her, was full of savage ferocity; and a demoniac laugh which distended the mouth of this human monster, conveyed to the affrighted girl a sensation of horror, such as she had never before experienced. A single glance told her that the apparition was not imaginary, that the form was that of a stranger, and that the purpose of his visit was sinister. But Virginia was of an heroic mould; she neither screamed nor fainted; but, summoning all her resolution, turned towards a window in the opposite direction, and was retreating, when Fennimore entered the chamber, having clambered up the blazing stair-case at the risk of his life.

"Fly, fly! Miss Pendleton!" he exclaimed as he

caught her hands, and drew her towards the same window at which she had seen the object of her terror.

"Oh, not there! not there!" she cried; "stop, for mercy's sake, we shall all be murdered!"

Fennimore, attributing her incoherent expressions to an excess of terror caused by the fire, delayed not; but catching her up in his arms, proceeded towards the window.

Virginia uttered a piercing shriek, and struggled to release herself.

"Pardon me," said Fennimore—"excuse my rudeness," as he threw up the window, and passed through it with his lovely burthen. In a moment he stood on the roof of the piazza.

"See there!" screamed Virginia, as her eye caught a glimpse of the figure of a man stealing behind a distant chimney. "Oh fly, Mr. Fennimore! hasten from this dreadful spot."

Fennimore involuntarily turned his head in the direction indicated, and saw a man leaning against the chimney. He looked again, and the figure had disappeared.

The servants, who were filled with consternation, and crowded round the blazing pile, running to and fro without order, or definite purpose, now beheld them, and hastened to their assistance. One of the stoutest negroes mounting on a table under the eaves of the low roof, was enabled to receive his young mistress in his arms, while Fennimore leaped nimbly to the ground.

No sooner was Virginia in safety than she looked round for her uncle, and not perceiving him in the

crowd that pressed round to congratulate her on her escape, eagerly inquired for him. The negroes, habitually indolent, timid, and thoughtless, stood gazing in terror on the conflagration, without thinking on the possibility of extinguishing the flames, or of rescuing either life or property. But they loved their master, and when his name was mentioned, made a general movement towards his apartment. In a moment the voice of Fennimore was heard, like that of one accustomed to command, leading and directing them. The passive blacks, used to implicit obedience, followed him with alacrity. But it was all in vain. The fire seemed to have originated in Major Heyward's chamber, and the flames were bursting from every window. Fennimore burst open a door and rushed in, but was speedily driven out by a volume of smoke and flame. "Follow me," he exclaimed impatiently to the blacks; "rush in, and save your master!" and again he entered the apartment with some of the most intrepid of the negroes. Their efforts were herculean. Several times they had nearly reached the bed, and as often were driven back by the flames; and the negroes at last returned, dragging out Mr. Fennimore, who was struck down by a falling rafter. Exposure to the cool air revived him instantly, and he returned with desperate courage to the room, exclaiming, "Follow me! in there! in! my brave boys!" It was a forlorn hope; but the effort was gigantic. The negroes, attached to their master, and excited by the heroic bearing of their young leader, now worked as if in their native element. The side of the house, which was of frame, was torn away, and in a few min-

utes the lifeless body of Major Heyward was dragged out of the ruins.

By this time the whole pile was in flames. There was no longer any occasion for exertions, except in removing the furniture from some of the apartments. The neighbors, who began to arrive, and the domestics, stood round in silence. Virginia hung in mute agony over the body of Major Heyward, who had been to her more than a father. Nor was she alone in her sorrow. Though none of those around her were possessed of sensibilities as keen as her own, or had the same personal cause for grief, yet the respect and affection entertained by all for the worthy old man, and the awful manner of his death, caused universal sorrow. At length the flames began to sink; Virginia was torn almost by force from the spot, and carried to the house of her friend Mrs. Mountford; the neighbors dispersed; darkness and silence settled over the spot, and a heap of smoking ruins occupied the place which was so lately the seat of hospitality and cheerfulness.

## CHAPTER VI.

The whole neighborhood assembled at the funeral of Major Heyward, and it was a melancholy sight to behold the same individuals, who but two days before had mingled together on a festive occasion, now collected to pay the last sad duties to one of the most conspicuous of the number. The feelings excited by this reflection, were rendered the more vivid, by the awful nature of the catastrophe which had occurred; and as the sad procession moved silently away to the family burial-place, an uninterrupted silence pervaded the company. The deceased had been universally loved and respected. His age, his wealth, and his standing in society, had given him an influence over those around him, which had been honestly and kindly exercised, and although he held no official station, it was felt that his decease was a public loss. Another must inherit his wealth, and sway its influence; but would his conciliatory spirit descend to his heir, and his virtues be practised by the inheritor of his estate? Such were the mingled sensations of those who followed the remains of this excellent man to their last earthly receptacle.

But that intensity of feeling, which, on the occurrence of an unexpected and strikingly melancholy event, absorbs for a while all other subjects, and employs every faculty of the mind, is of brief continuance. The practice observed at military funerals, of marching to the

grave with solemn music, and returning from it with cheerful, inspiring notes, is natural, and beautifully expressive of human character; for it is thus that the heart of man throws off the burthen of sorrow, and though bowed low for the moment, regains its cheerfulness, as the flower, weighed down by the morning dew, erects itself as the sun exhales the incumbent moisture. As the mourners retired from the grave, the silence which had prevailed among them began to be broken, and curiosity, which had heretofore been suppressed by grief and astonishment, became audible. A thousand surmises and reports, touching the fatal accident, were repeated and canvassed. Every one had his own version of the catastrophe, and its attendant circumstances.

"Have you heard the particulars?" inquired an old lady, in a tremulous tone, and conveying the remainder of the inquiry by a mysterious shake of the head.

The person addressed applied her handkerchief to her eyes, and only ejaculated the words, "too shocking!"

"One hardly knows what to believe, there are so many stories," said an old maid.

"I am told," said a gentleman, "that our lamented friend has lately been in the habit of reading in bed, and it is supposed, that, having received some letters, which he had not had time to examine sooner, he had caused a light to be placed by his bed-side——"

"All a mistake," cried colonel Antler, "no man of sense ever went to bed to read letters; my worthy friend rose at day-break, and retired early to his pillow for repose."

"He was a man of plethoric habit," said a consump-

tive gentleman, who now intruded his ghostly form between the last two speakers, "very plethoric—and you know, gentlemen, that such persons hold their lives by a very uncertain tenure. Your full-fed, lusty, corpulent men, are short-lived at best, and subject to very sudden attacks. There is very little doubt that this was a case of apoplexy, and that, in his struggles, a candle, that happened to be within reach, was thrown over——"

"That is all surmise," said another speaker.

"Mere surmise," rejoined yet another; "the truth seems to be, that when Major Heyward was last seen by his servants, he was sitting at a table covered with papers, in his arm chair, with his spectacles on——"

"I am sure that you must be misinformed," cried a lady, "for Mrs. Lee, who is very intimate with the family, assured me that he had gone to bed fully two hours before the alarm took place."

"I spoke to the Major's body-servant, this morning," said colonel Antler.

"Oh! did you?"

"Then you know all about it!"

"Major Heyward, and Mr. Fennimore, the young gentleman who was on a visit there, had some private business, and retired to the Major's chamber, after tea——"

"There!" cried a lady, "that is just what I heard. The business was of a very mysterious character, was it not, colonel."

"I cannot say as to that."

"But did you not hear that both the gentlemen became very much irritated, and got to such high words that Virginia Pendleton, becoming very much alarmed, rushed into the room just as Major Heyward ordered the young man to leave his house instantly."

"No, madam, I did not hear that; and I am very certain that Major Heyward never ordered a stranger to leave his house in the night."

"But, my dear sir, if he suspected the stranger of a design to rob and murder him?"

"That, indeed, would alter the case."

"Well, I assure you, sir, I had it from a lady who heard it from a particular friend of the Walnut-Hill family, that when this Mr. Fennimore arrived, Major Heyward received him with great coldness, and was very unwilling to permit him to stay all night."

"Yet he introduced him to us the next day as his friend."

"*That* was very singular," said the old maid.

"An act of wonderful imprudence in our benevolent friend who is gone," said the consumptive gentleman.

"It is quite mysterious, I declare," continued the lady, "but I am sure I cannot be mistaken—Major Heyward and Miss Pendleton were sitting at tea, in the front piazza, when the stranger rode up: 'Is your name Heyward?' said he. 'That is my name,' said the Major. 'I have some business with you,' said the stranger. 'We will talk of business when I have nothing else to do—you must call again,'—replied the Major."

"I heard it a little differently," interrupted another lady—Major Heyward was walking on the lawn, and

Miss Pendleton was sitting in the piazza, talking with George Lee, (you know they are to be married soon,) when the stranger rode up, and inquired where Major Heyward lived; the old gentleman replied, 'That is the house, and I am the man;' on which the stranger remarked, 'Not a bad-looking house, and quite a pleasant landlord;—I believe I'll stay all night.'"

"The impudent rascal!" exclaimed the consumptive gentleman.

"He has a forward look," responded the old maid.

"I am sure *you* are mistaken," said one of the former speakers; for Mr. Lee does not go there now; there is quite a serious coolness between the families."

"Dear me, cousin! I'm sure you are altogether wrong there—if you had seen them at the barbecue, you would not have said *that*. Virginia refused to dance with any one else; she refused several others, but danced with him as soon as he asked her."

"Straws show how the wind blows."

"I believe you are right there; there has always been a strong attachment between them."

"Say rather a powerful attraction between Walnut-Hill and Locust Grove. The estates are large, and we all know what an excellent manager Mrs. Lee is."

"Did you not hear it surmised that Major Heyward has latterly entertained different views for Virginia, and that Mr. Fennimore is the son of a wealthy merchant in Philadelphia, and came by express invitation to see Miss Pendleton?"

"La! no!"

"Yes, indeed, it is more than suspected."

"Well, who would have thought it?"

"Then it was to marry Miss Pendleton, and not to murder and rob the family, that this young gentleman came?" said Colonel Antler.

"Oh—I had forgotten that. I am sure that this Fennimore is nothing more nor less than an incendiary—for I am told that Virginia, who was in a high fever, and delirious all the next day, continually exclaimed, 'Take away that dreadful man! protect me from that horrid wretch! He has murdered my uncle—he would destroy us all!' and similar expressions."

"Very strange, that! she certainly must know something."

"The evidence of a young lady in a state of delirium, is quite conclusive," remarked Colonel Antler, drily.

"It is certainly a curious fact," said one of the gentlemen, "that this Mr. Fennimore has entirely disappeared since the fire, and that no one can give any account of him."

Colonel Antler seemed puzzled, while the rest of the company united in considering this circumstance as one of a most suspicious character.

"The young man is a stranger to me," said the colonel; "he may be a terrible fellow, for any thing I know—but at the same time, I don't believe a word of it. He looks like a gentleman, and no one ever heard of a gentleman committing arson."

"Then you do not believe that he fired the house purposely?"

"Believe it! no: why should I believe it? what object could the young man have?"

"His purpose undoubtedly was to run off with Virginia. Incendiaries often set fire to houses, in order to plunder them during the confusion. They say that as soon as the alarm was given he rushed into Virginia's apartment, caught her in his arms, and although she screamed dreadfully, attempted to carry her off."

"And what prevented him?"

"They say he forced her through a window, and succeeded in reaching the roof of the piazza, where one of his confederates was waiting to assist him in his villanous design, when the screams of Virginia drew the negroes to her relief, and they rescued her."

"Poor Virginia, screaming bloody murder all the while," continued the consumptive gentleman.

"Poor Virginia!" echoed all the ladies.

"I am told, Colonel Antler, that no will can be found."

"All exertions to discover any trace of a will, have, unhappily, been fruitless. Every gentleman who has been on such terms of intimacy with Major Heyward, as to render it likely that a document of that kind might have been deposited with him, has been applied to in vain. Mr. R., who has been his legal adviser for many years, declares that a will was executed long since, which he is sure remained in the possession of our lamented friend, but declines giving any information as to the contents."

"Then Miss Pendleton will not be a great fortune, after all."

"Oh dear, what a pity!"

"Such a belle as she was!" exclaimed one of the old

maids; "I wonder if she will be as much admired now."

"Poor cousin Virginia!"

"Dear Virginia! how I feel for her! But you know, Colonel, she had no right to expect any thing else. She is not related to the Heywards, and there are a number of heirs at law."

"She *had* a right, madam!" replied Colonel Antler, warmly; "if not related to Major Heyward, she is niece to the late Mrs. Heyward, and their adopted daughter. Major Heyward's intention of leaving his whole fortune to her, has been declared so frequently, and is so well understood, that no man of honor will dispute her claim."

"There will be claimants, I suppose, nevertheless."

"Then they ought all to be——"

"Speak lower, Colonel: there are some of them within hearing."

"I care not who hears me. The girl was raised under Heyward's roof, and is entitled to the estate; and no true son of the Old Dominion would take it from her."

The conversation was here interrupted by the approach of Mrs. Lee's carriage, containing that lady and the unhappy Virginia. As the beautiful mourner passed slowly along, a common feeling of sympathy for the sudden and melancholy stroke of fortune, which had in a single moment blighted her brilliant prospects, and reduced her to sorrow and dependence, pervaded the whole party; and dropping off, one by one, they repaired silently to their respective dwellings.

## CHAPTER VII.

On the following morning, at an early hour, Mrs. Lee visited the distressed Virginia, who was now more composed; and the worthy lady successfully exerted her talents in endeavoring to calm the mind, and fortify the courage, of her young friend. Although artful and politic, she was really a benevolent woman, in all cases where the interests of others did not interfere with her own; and being sincerely attached to Virginia, she now devoted herself assiduously to the task of administering comfort to the mourner. Her common sense, her practical business habits, and that delicate perception of propriety in matters of feeling, which all women possess in a greater or less degree, enabled her to do this with much effect; and, after leading Miss Pendleton into the garden, where they could converse without interruption, she began to speak in a kind and rational manner of that young lady's prospects, and, carefully avoiding those topics which would be merely calculated to awaken sensibility, soon engaged her in earnest consultation. Virginia acknowledged that Major Heyward had more than once assured her, that, on his death, she would inherit his estate, but he had never mentioned his will in her presence, nor did she know whether he had ever executed such an instrument.

"On that subject," said Mrs. Lee, "my own information is more accurate. Knowing the determination of my excellent friend, to make you the sole heiress of his

property, I repeatedly hinted to him the necessity of making a will, and the propriety of performing this duty without delay, and in the most careful manner. He afterwards informed me that it was duly executed. I have no doubt, my dear Virginia, that my evidence, with that of the gentleman who wrote the will, and of the witnesses to its execution, will restore you to your rights."

"Do not speak of that," replied Virginia firmly; "owing every thing, as I do, to the benevolence of my uncle, I should be most ungrateful, to appear in a court of justice, engaged in a contest with his legal heirs."

"My dear Virginia, how often have I reminded you, that feeling is a deceitful guide in the serious concerns of life! You are no longer a young girl, protected by a fond guardian, and sporting in the beams of affluence, without any other care than that of imparting to others a share of the happiness which you enjoyed yourself. You are now a woman, your own mistress, having duties to perform, and rights to assert; and you cannot, my dear, testify your respect for the memory of Major Heyward more suitably, than by insisting upon the exact execution of his own views in relation to his estate. Besides, are you aware who your opponents would be?"

"Indeed, I do not know exactly—my uncle had no very near relations."

"He had not, but a great many who are very distant; and the embers will hardly be cold on his ruined hearthstone, before a number of claimants will be fiercely engaged in litigation for this noble estate."

Virginia melted to tears. Contending emotions of pride, and affection for the dead, swelled her heart. A number of affecting associations arose in her memory, and the thought that the spot which had so long been the abode of peace, happiness, and hospitality, was about to become the scene of bitter contention, filled her mind with sorrow. "Dear Mrs. Lee!" she exclaimed, "I shall never be a party to so disgraceful a contest. Oh, no! never, never!"

"I venerate your affection for the memory of Major Heyward," replied her friend, calmly: "it is natural, and perfectly right. But, my dear, what obligations do you owe to his relations?"

"None, particularly. They have always treated me with respect and cordiality."

"Except in a few instances," urged the politic Mrs. Lee, in an insinuating manner. "Openly they could not do otherwise, for the very stones would have cried out, at the slightest incivility to the dear girl that we all loved and admired so much. Besides, you were the presumptive heiress of a fine estate, and, as mistress of your uncle's mansion, dispensed its hospitalities. But you forget that you have sometimes been charged with holding your head higher than became you, and with having used some address in procuring the execution of this very will. Even I have been accused of interested motives in my exertions on your behalf."

Virginia turned pale with emotion, and that spirit, which, on some occasions animated her heart, and gave a surprising degree of decision and vigor to the conceptions of her mind, flashed for a moment in her eye. But

the sensibility of a delicate mind overcame all other feelings. Unconscious of a sordid motive, she shrunk with indescribable repugnance from the thought of encountering a suspicion of that description, and begged Mrs. Lee to change the subject.

"You have now," said she, "given the strongest reason why I should not set up any claim to this property. The bare idea of having ever been suspected of entertaining the interested views at which you hint, is too shocking. Not for worlds, would I do an act, or give the sanction of my name to any proceeding, which might bring the disinterestedness of my conduct into question, or throw the slightest shade upon the purity of my affection for my dear uncle. Let his relatives take the estate. It will be happiness enough for me, to be grateful for his goodness, and to love his memory."

Mrs. Lee knew well the decision of her young friend's character, and, aware of her inflexibility on points which involved principle, or touched her feelings of delicacy, determined, like an able politician, to change her mode of attack, and to resort to arguments which she had before resolved studiously to conceal. And the manner in which she opened her batteries anew, was after the following fashion:

"There are two claimants to this property, of whose pretensions you are probably not aware, and it is right that you should be informed in relation to them. The first of these is, my son George."

"Indeed! I heartily wish my cousin George success."

"Your wishes, my dear, are not his own. He has not the slightest disposition, or the most remote intention, to

set up any claim, unless it may become necessary for your interest. With the exception of one person, whom I will presently name, my son is undoubtedly the nearest relative of our deceased friend. There are several others, however, who claim to stand in the same degree of consanguinity. Now, what I would suggest is, that as my son has never for a moment thought of placing his claim in competition with yours, you might, should your own right to the property be thought doubtful, or should you persist in refusing to assert it, avail yourself of his. Understand me, my dear—do not get impatient—all that I propose is the use of his name, agency, and friendship, to procure that which is undoubtedly your own; and when the intimacy between our families is considered—when you recollect that from infancy you have shared my affection with him, there can be no impropriety in his assuming towards you the place of a brother. I have surely some claim, my dear Virginia, to the privilege of discharging towards you the duties of a mother; and if George can never call you by a dearer title, you may, you ought, to give him the confidence and affection of a sister. Confide to us the management of your affairs, and rest assured that your name shall never be used in a manner that shall implicate your delicacy."

Virginia was affected and embarrassed. There was a mixture of policy, and of genuine affection, in the whole conversation of her friend, so characteristic of the woman, that it touched while it perplexed her. But she remained firm to her purpose, and decidedly, though with delicacy and feeling, declined the proposal. Mrs.

Lee was puzzled, but not defeated. She now artfully alluded to the magnitude of the estate, and to the almost unbounded influence which the possession of great wealth would give to a young lady, who was so eminently endowed with beauty, intellect, and accomplishments, as her young friend. Failing in all her appeals to the affections and the ambition of our heroine, she now determined to awaken, if possible, her resentment.

"The other name, which I have withheld out of respect for your feelings, is that of this Mr. Fennimore."

Virginia turned upon her friend a mingled look of surprise and curiosity, but made no reply.

"He is more nearly related to the late Major Heyward, than either of the other would-be heirs; supposing it to be possible for him to establish his identity with the person whose name he bears, which I suspect is rather doubtful."

"Can you suppose it possible, that Mr. Fennimore would be guilty of an imposture?"

"I suppose nothing, my dear; the law will require him to prove that he is really the person he pretends to be; and this, I imagine, will not be in his power. It is hinted, moreover, that being aware of the disposition which your uncle had made of his property, the object of his visit at Walnut-Hill was to induce Major Heyward to revoke his will, and that, failing in this, he has possessed himself of that instrument, by means, of which we have all witnessed the dreadful effects."

Miss Pendleton became deadly pale, on hearing this insinuation. The allusion to the melancholy event, which had deprived her of a home and a protector,

was in itself sufficiently distressing; but the foul accusation against the handsome stranger, whose image was associated in her mind with the recollection of a few of the most happy hours of her life, shocked and sickened her heart. Determined to listen no longer to what she could not consider as any thing but slander, unwilling to offend one whose schemes in relation to herself had been mingled with a long series of valuable kindnesses, and dispirited by the afflicting troubles which seemed to thicken in her path, and to add new embarrassments to her situation, she now enjoined her friend to change the subject, in tones of such pathetic supplication, as left no room for denial. They returned to the house, and Mrs. Lee soon after took her leave.

To prevent further importunity on the subject which had so greatly distressed her feelings, Miss Pendleton addressed a note to Mrs. Lee on the following morning, informing that lady of her intention to accompany her friends, the Mountfords, in their proposed journey to Kentucky, to which country they were about to remove, and where Virginia had an uncle, who had more than once invited her to accept a home under his roof.

## CHAPTER VIII.

A FEW weeks subsequent to the transactions narrated in the last chapter, a heavy travelling-carriage was seen slowly winding its way among the mountains of the Allegheny chain, drawn by a pair of tall horses, whose fine eyes and muscular limbs bore testimony, to an experienced observer, of excellent blood and gentle breeding, but who now tottered along, galled, raw-boned, and dispirited, from the effects of a long journey. The heavily-laden vehicle bore also incontestible marks of rough usage, and resembled, in its appearance, a noble ship, which, having been dismantled in a storm, is brought with difficulty into port. It had once been both strong and costly, and was, in truth, one of the most elegant of those cumbrous machines which were used by such of our ancestors as were sufficiently wealthy to indulge in such luxuries; bearing a coat-of-arms upon its panels, and being amply decorated in the patrician taste of that day.

A journey over the Allegheny mountains, then inhabited only at distant intervals, and whose best roads were mere bridle-paths, beaten by the feet of pack-horses, and occasionally travelled with difficulty by wagons carrying merchandise, had left to the shattered coach but few vestiges of its former splendor. The tongue, which had been broken, was replaced by the green stem of a young tree, hastily hewed out of the forest for the purpose; a

dislocation of one of the springs, had been remedied by passing a long stout pole underneath the body of the carriage; and a shattered axletree, which had been spliced repeatedly, bent and creaked under its load, as if every revolution of the wheels would be the last. In matters of less moment, the havoc had been even greater. The curtains, by frequent and rather violent collision with the overhanging branches of the forest, had been rent and perforated in many places, and the straps within which they were usually furled, having been torn away, they now floated in the breeze in tattered fragments, or flapped against the sides of the carriage, like the sails of a vessel in a calm; while a bough had occasionally penetrated so far as to tear away the velvet lining and its gaudy fringe.

Two ladies, both of whom were young, and a female negro servant, occupied this weatherbeaten conveyance; accompanied, as every experienced reader will readily imagine, by a voluminous store of trunks, band-boxes, baskets, bags, and bundles. The husband of one of these ladies, a plain, gentlemanly-looking man, of five-and-twenty years of age, rode in advance of the cavalcade, on horseback, encumbered with no other appendage than a brace of large pistols, suspended across his saddle in a pair of holsters.

Then came a train of wagons, some drawn by horses, and others by oxen, carrying household furniture, farming implements, and provisions. Behind these, a drove of horses and cattle, stretched along the mountain-path, strolled lazily forward, halting frequently to drink at the clear rivulets which crossed the road, or straying off to

graze, wherever an inviting spot of green offered a few refreshing mouthfuls of herbage to the wearied animals. Mingled with the cavalcade, or lagging in its rear, was a large company of negro servants, men, women, and children, of every age, from helpless infancy to hoary decrepitude; whistling and singing and laughing as they went, inhaling with joy the mountain air, and luxuriating in the happy exchange of daily labor for the lighter toils of the road.

Such were the retinue and appearance of a wealthy planter from Virginia, who was emigrating, with all his family and movable property, to the newly settled wilds of Kentucky; and who bore no small resemblance to some ancient patriarch, travelling at the head of his dependants and herds, in search of wider plains and fresher pastures than were afforded in the land of his fathers. Mr. and Mrs. Mountford, and the unfortunate Miss Pendleton, were the principal persons of the party which we have attempted to describe, and whose adventures will occupy the remainder of this chapter.

They had passed nearly all the ridges of those formidable mountains, and were now looking eagerly forward towards the land of promise, and imagining every cliff that rose before them to be the last. The day was drawing to a close, when they reached the summit of one of those numerous ridges which compose the Allegheny chain, and halted for a few moments to rest the animals, who were panting and wearied with the toilsome ascent. Looking forward, they beheld before them a deep valley, bounded on the opposite side by a range of mountains as steep and as high as the one on whose crest they

were now reposing. Its sides were composed of a series of perpendicular precipices of solid rock, clothed with stinted pines, laurel, and other evergreens, and which, at this distance, seemed to oppose an impassable barrier to the farther advance of the travellers. On more minute examination, parts of the road could be seen winding along the edge of the cliffs, and surmounting the ascent by a variety of sharp angles. A troop of pack-horses, with their large panniers, were seen descending by this path, at a distance so great as to render it barely possible to distinguish their forms, and ascertain their character—sometimes stretched in an extended line along the summits of the elevated parapets of rock, then disappearing behind a projecting cliff, or a copse of evergreen, and again turning an abrupt angle, as if counter-marching to retrace their footsteps. The sun was now sinking behind the western hills, and though still visible to our travellers, no longer shone upon the eastern exposure of the mountain which they were contemplating—a circumstance which gave a still more shadowy appearance to the descending troop, whose regular array of slow-moving figures, impressed upon the perpendicular sides of the cliffs, resembled the airy creations of a magic lantern, rather than the forms of living beings. Now they were seen traversing the extreme verge of some bold promontory, where the sunbeams flashed from the shining harness, and afforded a momentary disclosure of a variety of different colors, which again were blended into one dark mass, as the cavalcade passed on into the deeper shades of the mountain-glens. As they gazed, the silence was agreeably broken by the

inspiring notes of the bugle, with which the drivers cheered their lonesome way, and whose sprightly sounds, echoed from hill to hill, sometimes faintly heard, and sometimes bursting upon the ear in full chorus, gave a tinge of wild romance to the scene.

From the contemplation of this prospect, their attention was drawn to the western side of the mountain on whose summit they stood, and whose declivities they were about to descend. Looking downward, they saw from their dizzy height a series of precipices, with bald sides, and turreted and spiral crests, terminating in a dark valley, which seemed to be almost directly below their feet, although the distance was so great as to render it impossible to distinguish objects in the deep abyss. Here, as on the opposite side of the valley, the path wound from cliff to cliff, and from one natural terrace to another, like the angles of a winding staircase; but little of it was visible from the spot occupied by our travellers. In this direction the sound of voices was heard ascending, and approaching nearer and nearer; and presently a large drove of cattle, conducted by several men, was seen winding along the base of the precipice on which the party stood, at a short distance from them, and where the terrace traversed by the road widened into a plain surface containing several acres. Here a sudden terror seized the cattle. The foremost of the animals halted and began to smell the ground with manifestations of violent agitation, and then uttered a low terrific yell. At this signal the whole herd, which had been loitering drowsily along, urged slowly forward by the voices of the drovers, rushed madly towards the

spot, bellowing with every appearance of rage and affright. In vain the drivers attempted to force them onward. The largest and fiercest of the herd surrounded the place where the first had halted, roaring, pawing the ground, and driving their horns into the earth, while the others approached and retreated, bellowing in concert as if suddenly possessed by a legion of demons. Foaming at the mouth, their eyes gleaming with fury, and all their muscles strained into action, they seemed a different race from the quiet, inoffensive animals, who but a few minutes before had been seen lazily toiling up the mountain-path. Those who were intimately acquainted with their habits at once pronounced that blood had recently been spilt in the road. With the assistance of Mr. Mountford's negroes, the alarmed herd was at length driven forward, but not until one of the drovers, in leaping his horse over a log, at some distance from the road, discovered the corpse of a man concealed behind it, and partly covered with leaves. An exclamation of surprise and horror announced this discovery, and drew the other drovers to the spot, where Mr. Mountford soon joined them. The body, which was that of a young gentleman, was marked with several wounds, which left little doubt that a murder had been committed. However men may have been accustomed to danger, or to scenes of violence, there is something in the crime of murder which never fails to alarm and shock them. Even where the injured party is a stranger, and no particular circumstances occur, to awaken special sympathy for him, or for those who may survive to mourn his fate, the dreadful act itself, stripped of all

adventitious horrors, strikes a chill into the heart. When such a scene is presented in the solitary wild, where the gloom of the forest and the silence of the desert are all around, and the quick breathing of the terrified spectator is whispered back by the woodland echo, a deeper shade of solemnity is thrown about the melancholy catastrophe. The busy crowds, the cares and levities of life, are not there, to call away the heart from the indulgence of natural emotions; it has leisure to contemplate undisturbed the cold image of death, and to reflect on the atrocities of man. Fancy spreads her wings, and looks abroad in search of the perpetrator and the motive of the crime, and the absence of every trace which might lead to discovery or explanation, involves the dark transaction in the shadows of mystery. The deceased seems to have been struck by some invisible hand, and a similar blow may be impending over the spectator, on whom the eye of the homicide may even now rest, as he meditates some new violence in the concealment of an adjacent thicket, or the gloom of a neighboring cavern.

Such were the meditations of some of the party who were collected around the body of the murdered stranger. A consultation was immediately held, as to the course which ought to be pursued, when it was arranged that a party should remain with the corpse, while an express was sent to the nearest settlement to apprize the legal authorities of the outrage. Both these duties were cheerfully undertaken by the drovers, with the assistance of Mr. Mountford's servants. The latter gentleman resumed his journey, and on reaching the bosom

of the valley, and learning that his road still lay through an uninhabited wilderness for many miles, determined to encamp here for the night. It was an inviting spot. Though surrounded by mountains as savage and sterile as the imagination can well conceive, the glen in which the party rested was beautiful and fertile. The rich soil was covered with a luxuriant growth of forest trees and shrubbery. The sun-beams, which during the day had been reflected from the bare rocks and silicious sands of the mountain, afflicting the eye-sight of the travellers by their intense brilliancy, or overcoming them with excessive heat, were now intercepted by the tall summits of the ridges lying towards the west. The foliage was fresh and green, and a delightful coolness pervaded the atmosphere. A wide clear rivulet, meandering through the valley, imparted an agreeable moisture to the air, and invited the thirsty herds to its brink, while it afforded more than one luxury and convenience to the travellers. By the margin of the stream, on a spot trodden hard by the feet of successive travellers, who had been accustomed to encamp here, and covered with a short green sward, the cavalcade of carriers had halted, and were unlading their pack-horses; and Mr. Mountford, passing on, chose a similar place on the farther side of the rivulet. The arrangements for encamping were soon made. Two large tents were taken from the wagons and pitched for the accommodation of Miss Pendleton and her friends, on a plain of table-land near the brink of the water-course. In the rear of these, smaller tents, composed of coarser materials, were arranged for the sable troop of dependants. A large

fire was kindled upon the ground, and the servants began to prepare a substantial meal for the hungry party.

## CHAPTER IX.

HAVING seen the tents pitched, the horses and cattle turned out to graze, and every necessary arrangement made for spending the night in as much comfort as circumstances would admit, Mr. Mountford, invited by the refreshing coolness of the evening, and the beauty of the scenery, proposed to the ladies a stroll upon the bank of the stream. They wandered slowly along, following its meanders for a short time, until its serpentine course brought them nearly opposite to the point from which they had set out; and they found themselves on a projecting point which overlooked the pack-horse camp, and placed them within a few yards of its noisy inmates, from whom they were concealed by a clump of underbrush. The horses had been unharnessed, and were now grazing at large; the packs of merchandise which formed their lading, were piled up together, and covered with canvas. The men had thrown themselves lazily on the grass, except two or three, who were wrestling and playing with a degree of hilarity which showed how little they were affected by the toils of the journey. At this moment the party was joined by a horseman, who addressed them with the frankness of an acquaintance, though he was obviously a stranger to them all. He was a young man, dressed in a hunting-shirt, carrying a

rifle on his shoulder, and having all the equipments of a western hunter. His limbs were as stout, and his face as sun-burnt, as those of the rough men around him, but neither his appearance nor carriage indicated a person accustomed to coarse labor. He had the plainness of speech and manner which showed that his breeding had not been in the polished circle, mingled with the freedom and ease of one accustomed to hunting and martial exercises. He threw himself from his horse, leaving the bridle dangling on the neck of the animal, who quietly awaited his pleasure, and seated himself among the carriers with the air of one who felt that he was welcome, or who cared but little whether he was welcome or not. His dress, though coarse and soiled, was neatly fitted, and adapted to show off his person to the best advantage, and all his appendages were those of a young man who had some pride in his appearance. His features, though not handsome, were lively and intelligent; indicating a cheerful disposition, a good opinion of his fellow-men, and an equally good opinion of himself, arising, no doubt, out of his republican principles, which would not allow him to place himself below the level of others. There was a boldness in his eye, a fluency of speech, and a forwardness in his whole deportment, which, without approaching to impudence, gave a dashing air to his conduct, and a freshness to his conversation. His horse seemed much fatigued, and from his saddle hung the hinder quarter of a deer recently killed.

"Gentlemen, good evening," said he, as he dismounted, "this has been a powerful hot day."

"Very sultry," replied one of the carriers.

"No two ways about that," said the hunter; "there's as good a piece of horse-flesh, to his size, as ever crooked a pastern, and as fast a nag as can be started, for any distance from a quarter up to four miles; but this day has pretty nearly used him up."

"You seem to have been hunting."

"Why, yes; I have been taking a little tower among the mountains here. I have just killed a fine deer, and as I felt sort o' lonesome, I turned into the big road, in hopes of meeting with a traveller to help me eat it."

This offer was, of course, well received; the venison was sent to the fire, and the stranger prepared to encamp with his new acquaintances.

The quick eye of the hunter was now attracted to two of the youngest of the company, who were engaged in a *tussle*, an exercise common among our western youth, and far superior to wrestling or boxing, as it requires greater skill and activity, and is far less savage, than either of those ancient games. The object of each party is to throw his adversary to the ground, and to retain his advantage by holding him down until the victory shall be decided; and as there are no rules to regulate the game, each exerts his strength and skill in any manner which his judgment may dictate, using force or artifice according to circumstances. The two persons who now approached each other, seemed each to be intent on grappling with his adversary in such a manner as to gain an advantage at the outset. At first, each eluded the grasp of the other, advancing, retreating, seizing, or shaking each other off, and each using every

artifice in his power to secure an advantage in the manner of grappling with his opponent. Then they grasped at arm's-length, and tried each other's strength by pushing, pulling, and whirling round, testing the muscular powers of the arm, and the nimbleness of the foot, to the utmost. Finally they became closely interlocked, their bodies in contact, and their limbs twined, wrestling with all their powers, and after an arduous struggle came together to the ground, amidst the shouts and laughter of the spectators. But the contest was not over; for now a fierce contest ensued, in which each endeavored to get uppermost, or to hold his antagonist to the ground. Their muscular strength and flexibility of limb seemed now almost miraculous. Sometimes the person who was undermost, fairly rolled his adversary over, and sometimes he raised himself by main strength, with his opponent still clinging to him, and renewed the struggle on foot; and often their bodies were twisted together, and their limbs interlocked, until every muscle and sinew were strained, and it was difficult to tell which was uppermost. At last their breathing grew short, the violence of the exercise produced exhaustion, and one of the parties relaxing his efforts, enabled the other to claim the victory. The tired parties, dripping with perspiration, ceased the contest in perfect good-humor.

"You must not tussle with me no more, Bill," said the victor; "you see you aint no part of a priming to me."

"That 's very well," cried the other, eyeing his comrade with perfect complacency; "I like to see you have a good opinion of yourself. If I did n't let you win once

in a while to encourage you, I could never get a chance to have no fun out of you."

It was now perceived that while the attention of the company was fixed upon the sport, another stranger had joined them. He cautiously pushed aside the thick brushwood behind the merry circle, threw a quick jealous glance upon the party, and then advancing with circumspection, halted in the rear, and remained for a while unnoticed. When the contest which we have described was over, the eyes of the whole party fell on the intruder. His appearance was too striking not to rivet attention. In size he towered above the ordinary stature, his frame was bony and muscular, his breast broad, his limbs gigantic. His clothing was uncouth and shabby, his exterior weatherbeaten and dirty, indicating continual exposure to the elements, and pointing out this singular person as one who dwelt far from the habitations of men, and who mingled not in the courtesies of civilized life. He was completely armed, with the exception of a rifle, which seemed to have only been laid aside for a moment, for he carried the usual powder-horn and pouch of the backwoodsman. A broad leathern belt, drawn closely round his waist, supported a large and a smaller knife, and a tomahawk. But that which attracted the gaze of all the company into which he had intruded, was the bold and ferocious countenance of the new comer, and its strongly marked expression of villany. His face, which was larger than ordinary, exhibited the lines of ungovernable passion, but the complexion announced that the ordinary feelings of the human breast were extinguished, and instead of the

healthy hue which indicates the social emotions, there was a livid, unnatural redness, resembling that of a dried and lifeless skin. The eye was fearless and steady, but it was also artful and audacious, glaring upon the beholder with an unpleasant fixedness and brilliancy, like that of a ravenous animal gloating upon its prey, and concentrating all its malignity into one fearful glance. He wore no covering on his head, and the natural protection of thick coarse hair, of a fiery redness, uncombed and matted, gave evidence of long exposure to the rudest visitations of the sunbeam and the tempest. He seemed some desperate outlaw, an unnatural enemy of his species, destitute of the nobler sympathies of human nature, and prepared at all points for assault or defence, who in some freak of daring insolence had intruded himself into the society of men, to brave their resentment, or to try the effect which his presence might occasion.

Although there was something peculiarly suspicious and disagreeable in the appearance of this stranger, there was nothing to excite alarm, or to call for the expression of any disapprobation. He was armed like other men of that frontier region, and the road was a public highway, frequented by people of various character and condition. Still there was a shrinking, and a silent interchange of glances among the carriers, on discovering his silent and almost mysterious intrusion; one whispered, "what does that fellow want?" and another muttered, "keep a red eye out, boys—that chap is not too good to steal." The young hunter who had just joined them, was not of the kind of mettle to sit still on

such an occasion. He jumped up, and addressing their visitor in a blithe, frank tone, said, "Good evening, stranger."

The person addressed turned his eye deliberately towards the speaker, and returned his salutation with a nod, without opening his lips.

"Travelling, stranger?"

"Yes," replied the other. The sound of his voice, even in uttering this monosyllable, was cold and repulsive, and any other than a resolute inquirer would have pursued the dialogue no further. But the young Kentuckian was not so easily repulsed.

"Which way? if it's a fair question," continued he.

"West," was the laconic reply.

"That fellow's mouth goes off like a gun with a rusty lock," said the hunter aside; then addressing him again, "To Kentucky, eh? well, that's right—there's plenty of room there—game enough, and a powerful chance of good living. No two ways about that. Come from old Virginia, I suppose?"

The stranger, instead of answering this question, turned his head in another direction, as if he had not heard it, stepped a few paces off, as if about to retire, and then again halted and faced the party.

"No, I'll be d'rot if ever that chap came out of old Virginny," muttered the young man aside, "they don't raise such humans in the old dominion, no how. I'll see what he is made of, however."

Then winking at his companions, he approached the stranger, and taking a pen-knife from his pocket, presented it to him with a civil bow. The stranger was not

to be taken by surprise. He received the knife, looked at it and at the donor, inquiringly, as if he would have said, "what means this?" and then coolly put it in his pocket, without saying a word. His tormentor did not leave him in doubt.

"It is a rule in our country," said he, "when a man is remarkably ugly, to make him a present of a knife. Keep that, if you please, stranger, till you meet with a homelier human than yourself, and then give it to him."

This practical joke would, in some countries, have been considered as a quiz; in Kentucky it was a kind of challenge, which the receiver might have honorably avoided by joining in the laugh, or which, on the other hand, gave him ample cause to crack his heels together, and assert, that he was not only the handsomest, but the *best man* in company; which assertion, if concluded, as the lawyers say, with a verification, would have been tantamount to calling for "pistols for two." The stranger did neither, but pocketed the knife and the affront, and quietly turned to walk away.

To a brave man nothing causes more painful regret than to have given an unprovoked affront to one who is unable or unwilling to resent it. Had the stranger shown the slightest inclination to take up the gauntlet which had been thrown to him, the young Kentuckian, who viewed him with intuitive dislike, would probably have challenged him to instant combat, and have engaged him with the ferocity of a hungry brute; but no sooner did the latter discover that the person he addressed neither relished his joke, nor was disposed to resent it,

than his generous nature prompted him to make instant atonement.

"Look here, stranger," he exclaimed, drawing a flask of spirits from his pocket, and offering it; "you are a droll sort of a white man; you won't talk, nor laugh, nor quarrel—will you drink? Take a drop, and let us be friends."

This appeal was not in vain. The uncouth man of the woods took the flask, raised it silently to his lips, and drained the whole of its contents, amounting to nearly a pint, without stopping to breathe; then placing one hand on the shoulder of the young man, and leaning towards him, he said in a low voice, "we shall meet again," at the same time grasping the handle of his long knife, and casting a look of defiance at the whole party. Whether he intended to strike is doubtful, for the young man, stepping back, stood on his guard, looking at his adversary with an undaunted eye, while the carriers started to their feet, prepared to defend him. In another moment the stranger had turned, and dashing into the thicket, disappeared.

"Well, if that ain't a droll chicken, I'm mistaken," exclaimed the Kentuckian. "I say, gentlemen, the way that fellow takes his brandy is curious. He is not of the right breed of dogs, no how. There's no two ways about that."

Before any further remark could be made, the attention of the party was arrested by an exclamation of terror from a female voice; the cause of which shall be explained in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER X.

Miss Pendleton had left the place of her nativity, under a melancholy depression of spirits. Reared in affluence, the favorite and only object of affection of a kind guardian, surrounded by friends, followed by a train of admirers, and accustomed to every indulgence, the sudden reverse of her fortunes afflicted her heart with keen anguish. She was too high-minded to mourn with unavailing regret over the blight of those advantages which merely elevated her above her companions. The truly generous mind estimates the gifts of fortune at something like their real value. But the loss of the dearly loved guardian of her youth, and the dreadful catastrophe which produced that melancholy bereavement, deeply touched her heart, and awakened all her sensibilities. The measure of her grief seemed to be full; but when she came to the resolution of quitting the scenes of her childhood, and parting with her early friends, she found that her heart had still room for other afflictions, and she left her native land sorrowing, and bowed down in spirit. Possessed, however, of a strong intellect, and a buoyant temper, the exercise of travelling, the change of scene, and the kindness of her companions, if they did not diminish her sorrows, rendered them supportable. By degrees her mind began to assume its natural tone, and she reflected more calmly on the scenes through which she had lately passed. In

these reveries the image of Fennimore continually presented itself. His visit seemed to be intimately, yet strangely, connected with the death of her uncle. She had heard enough of the circumstances which we have detailed, to know that it had relation to a pecuniary claim against the estate of Major Heyward, but knew nothing of its justice, extent, or character. Mrs. Lee had spoken of it as a demand which would absorb the whole of her venerable relative's vast fortune, and which placed the claimant in the position of a competitor with herself, and had thrown out imputations against his integrity of the darkest import. On the other hand, she remembered that he had been received not only with the hospitality extended to all visitors at Walnut-Hill, but with affectionate cordiality. Her uncle, who was a man of excellent discernment, had treated him with the confidence of friendship, and she was slow to believe, either that he was deceived in the character of his guest, or that he had professed a show of kindness which he did not feel. Mr. Fennimore's appearance and manners were highly prepossessing; there was especially about him a frankness, and manly dignity, which could hardly be deceptive. She passed in review the agreeable hours of his short visit, and a flush of maiden pride mantled her cheek, as she recollected his earnest yet respectful attentions, and confessed, that of all the homage which she had received in the triumph of beauty, none had ever been so acceptable as that of this handsome and gallant soldier. We have little faith in the romantic doctrine of love at first sight; but on the other hand, we cannot think it strange that an intelligent and susceptible

woman should readily draw a distinction between the common-place civilities of ordinary men, or the silly gallantries of mere witless beaux, and the enlightened preference of a gentleman of taste and judgment, nor that she should feel flattered by an appearance of partiality from such a source. She was at an age when the heart is feelingly alive to the tender sensations, and it would have been singular if she had not become interested in a modest and highly-gifted man, so nearly of her own years and condition, who had been her companion for several days; nor would it have been natural for one so accustomed as herself to the attentions of the other sex, to mistake the effect which her own attractions had produced on the mind of the agreeable stranger. Then the ready gallantry with which he risked his own life to rescue her from the flames, and his courageous efforts to save her uncle—these, though she never spoke of them, awakened a sentiment of gratitude which she felt could never be effaced. Again, when she recalled the circumstances under which he left the neighborhood of Walnut-Hill, without any explanation to the friends of Major Heyward, of the object of his visit, and without leaving any message for herself, his conduct seemed incomprehensible, and strangely at variance with what she supposed to be his character. But these mysterious circumstances, although they excited momentary doubts, and sometimes awakened a slight glow of resentment, only served in the end to render Mr. Fennimore more interesting to Miss Pendleton; for without inferring, as some ill-natured persons would do, that the mind of woman is made up of contradictions,

it is enough to say that she exercised her ingenuity in imagining a variety of *possible* explanations, by which his conduct might be placed in a favorable light, and his character even exalted, until she persuaded herself that such developments *would* undoubtedly be made in due time.

Mrs. Mountford, although she had never seen Mr. Fennimore, had made up her mind that he was an impostor; a mere fortune-hunter, who had visited Walnut-Hill in the prosecution of some desperate scheme against the person and fortune of her fair friend. Without having any definite ideas of that plan, or being able to trace its connexion with subsequent events, she was charitable enough to attribute the catastrophe which had marred the fortunes of Virginia, to this source, and spoke of Fennimore as little less than an incendiary. Perhaps there might have been policy in this; for discovering that Virginia always defended her uncle's visitor with some spirit, she often introduced the subject for the sole purpose of disturbing her reveries, and awakening her mind from the apathy into which it seemed to be sinking. In these discussions, Miss Pendleton, with her usual frankness, recapitulated all the evidence in favor of Mr. Fennimore, with some of the arguments which her own ingenuity had suggested, and thus became accustomed to defend his character. After all, there was but one argument which had any weight with the pertinacious Mrs. Mountford; it was the same which had appealed so forcibly to the genuine Virginia feeling of Colonel Antler, namely, "that a gentleman would not commit arson." "If he is really a gentleman, my

dear," was Mrs. Mountford's usual conclusion, "that settles the question; but how few of those do we find north of the Potomac!—and this Mr. Fennimore, you know, did not pretend to have been born in the Old Dominion."

The unexpected discovery of a murdered body in the road, had deeply affected our heroine, and had led her thoughts back to the most melancholy event in her own history. She was this evening unusually depressed, and it was in the hope of diverting her reflections into some other channel, that her friends, though much fatigued, had proposed the walk which led them to the vicinity of the pack-horse camp, and had been induced to linger, the concealed witnesses of the rude scene which was there enacted.

The events which we have described arrested her attention. It had so happened, however, that she stood in such a position as not to see the face of the person whose appearance caused so much curiosity, until the moment of his drawing his knife, when a movement of his body brought him full before her, and to her utter dismay she recognized the same savage countenance which she had discovered at her window on the night of the conflagration! Her alarm and agitation may be easily conceived. An involuntary expression of horror burst from her lips, which drew the attention not only of her own friends, but of the party on the opposite side of the stream. With some exertion she resumed her self-command, and returned immediately to the camp. She had heretofore described to Mr. Mountford, the apparition which had so greatly terrified her on the occa-

sion above alluded to; and that gentleman, as well as others, had supposed that she had been deceived by her imagination. But now, on her repeating that incident, the description which she gave of the supposed incendiary corresponded so completely with that of the remarkable person they had seen, as to leave little doubt of the identity of the one with the other; and he hastened to the encampment of the carriers, to acquaint them with his suspicions, and procure assistance to arrest the stranger. Their services were offered with alacrity, and all the adjacent coverts were carefully examined; but, night coming on, any extensive search was impracticable.

Virginia spent a miserable night. In addition to the afflicting recollections that had previously depressed her mind, the events of the day had suggested a new and dreadful train of thought. Might not the unfortunate person whose remains had been found concealed by the mountain-path have been one in whom she felt an interest which she could not conceal from herself? She had not seen the body, and the friend for whose safety she now trembled was unknown to Mr. Mountford. She knew that Mr. Fennimore was on his way to the western frontier, when he called at Walnut-Hill—his presence there on the night of the conflagration had probably defeated to some extent the designs of the incendiary—and now a young gentleman whose description answered too well with his, was found murdered in the very path that he had taken. She had seen the murderer of her lamented uncle; and circumstances had occurred to render it not unlikely that the same terrible assassin had

waylaid Mr. Fennimore, and was now tracking her own footsteps! A dreadful mystery seemed to hang over her fate. In vain did she endeavor to find some clue to these dark transactions. Major Heyward had been the most inoffensive of men; she herself had no enemy, and why should she, now an unprotected and penniless orphan, be thus persecuted? These thoughts tormented her already agitated mind, and drove sleep from her pillow.

Miss Pendleton occupied a tent containing her own bed and that of a negro maid-servant. Mr. Mountford's negro train were accustomed to spend their evenings in those festivities, to which the whole of that careless race are so much addicted. They had now collected a great pile of logs, whose blaze illuminated the camping ground, and threw a brilliant glare for some distance into the surrounding forest. A gray-haired fiddler, whose musical abilities had contributed to the amusement of several successive generations of the Mountfords—white and black—sat on a log scraping his merry violin, while his sable comrades danced on the green. Happy in the absence of all care, and under the protection of an indulgent master, who had grown up from childhood among them, and was endeared to them by the ties of long association, and the interchange of kindnesses known only to those who are acquainted with the relation of master and servant, these thoughtless beings gave themselves up entirely to merriment. They had no property to care for, no want to supply, no peril in anticipation to excite their fears, no speculation in their eye to poison the enjoyment of the present

moment; and although undergoing the fatigue of a toilsome march, their eye-balls glistened, their sable cheeks shone, and their snow-white teeth became visible, at the first note of the fiddle. Seated in a circle round the blazing log-heap, they ate their rations, told merry tales of "Old Virginny," and then joining in the dance, capered with as much vigor and agility as if their whole bodies were made upon springs and muscles, while streams of perspiration rolled from their shining visages. At length that part of the accompaniment, to which, not being a musician, I am unable to give a scientific Italian name, but which consists in certain drowsy nods, and comfortable naps, on the part of the artist, interpolated between the tunes, and spreading off like the shading of a picture, so as to mingle insensibly with the brighter and gayer parts of the performance, began to preponderate; the heavy eye-lids of the musician were raised less frequently and with a duller motion, the elbow lost its elasticity, the sable belles crawled away one by one to their pallets, and the hilarity of the night died away into a profound silence.

Our heroine, however, did not share the contagious drowsiness. She remained in a feverish state of excitement, sometimes wrapped for a few moments in abstracted thought, as ruminating on the past, and sometimes endeavoring to banish reflection, by listening with an ear acutely alive to the slightest sound. As the vociferous notes of merriment died away, other tones, more congenial with her frame of mind, invaded the silence of the night. The atmosphere was clear and chill; not a breath shook the trees or disturbed the

repose of the valley. The murmuring of the rivulet, scarcely perceptible during the day, now fell distinctly and pleasantly on the ear. An occasional and distant tinkling was heard, at intervals, from the bells attached to the cattle and the carriers' horses. "The wolf's long howl," reverberating from cliff to cliff, was answered by the bark of the travellers' dogs; but even these sounds ceased when the faithful animals sought repose by their masters' sides. The owl hooted from her solitary den; and once, when every other voice was hushed, and nature seemed to repose in death-like stillness, a huge tree, probably a majestic pine, which had braved the mountain storm for ages, fell to the ground with a terrific crash, which re-echoed from rock to rock, and from one cavern to another, rolling along the valley like the prolonged reiterations of thunder, or a continuous discharge of artillery. The scared owl shouted in alarm, the dogs rushed howling from their beds, the wolf renewed his savage complaint, and again all was silent.

Miss Pendleton, exhausted by a variety of contending emotions, at last sunk into a feverish slumber, from which she was awakened by a slight noise. She raised her head, and the strong light, still brightly reflected from the expiring fires upon the white canvas, enabled her to see distinctly the figure of a man at the entrance of the tent; his head—that dreadful head, so strongly pictured upon her memory—already protruded within the opening, and one hand, which grasped a knife, was employed in cutting a number of strong cords by which the entrance was closed. She uttered a loud scream, but

the villain, nothing daunted, continued his efforts, cutting and tearing the slight obstacles, with a violence which shewed a determination to accomplish his dreadful purpose at all hazards. Accident, aided perhaps by the confusion of guilt, delayed him for a moment; his feet became entangled in some harness carelessly thrown before the tent: the screams of Virginia roused the watch dogs; Mr. Mountford seized his pistols and hastened to her relief, while the foiled assassin hastily retreated, leaping nimbly over every obstacle, pushing aside the bushes with gigantic strength, and disappearing in the gloom of the forest.

## CHAPTER XI.

Two days after the occurrence of the events detailed in the last chapter, the inhabitants of the little village of Stanford, in Lincoln county, Kentucky, were surprised by the appearance, in their streets, of a singular group of travellers. Although emigrants of various descriptions were continually passing through this place, to the newer settlements, lying still farther to the west, there was something about this party which attracted universal attention. The leader of the cavalcade was the ferocious individual who has already been more than once brought under the notice of the reader. He was, as before, bareheaded, and carried on his shoulder a long rifle, while

his belt supported two knives, a pistol, and a tomahawk Without turning to the right or left, and scarcely appearing to notice objects around him, he moved forward, along the middle of the street, with a firm and rapid step, and an air of audacious defiance. Yet a close observer might have noticed, that although he neither turned his head, nor seemed to regard those who passed near him, his fierce eye rolled rapidly from side to side, with suspicious watchfulness. Behind him followed three women, two of whom were sun-burnt, coarse, and wretchedly attired, and the other somewhat more delicate, and better dressed. The females led two horses, almost broken down with fatigue, on whose backs were packed a few cooking utensils, an axe, several guns, some blankets, and a small quantity of provisions. Three or four half-naked children, wild, sallow, and hungry-looking, with small fierce eyes, glancing timidly about, followed next; and lastly came a man, smaller in size than him who led the party, but similarly armed, having the same suspicious exterior, and a countenance equally fierce and sinister. The deportment of all the individuals of this company, was that of persons who considered themselves in a hostile or an alien country, and who, accustomed to the apprehension of danger, stood ready to evade by flight, or resist even to death, any assault which might be made on them. Even their dog, a thievish-looking cur, resembling a wolf in looks and action, stole along with a stealthy tread, his tail drooped, and his malignant eye scowling watchfully around. Their determination seemed to be to proceed rapidly on without halting; but when they

had passed the most populous part of the village, and had nearly reached its farther limit, they stopped, apparently for the purpose of procuring some article of which they stood in need. The leader proceeded to a small shop, while the rest of the party stood in the middle of the road, exposed to the burning rays of the sun, and showing no inclination either to seek shelter, or to hold intercourse with the inhabitants.

At this moment a different scene was presented in the other end of the village. A horseman, mounted on a foaming steed, covered with dust, came spurring in at full speed, and dismounted at the house of one of the principal inhabitants, who was also a magistrate. He had brought tidings of the murder committed in the mountains, and had traced the supposed perpetrators to this place. Without disclosing his business to any other person, he sought a private interview with the magistrate; and in a few minutes a plan was prepared for the arrest of the suspected persons. Intelligence was secretly and rapidly passed from house to house, and the hardy villagers, accustomed to arm hastily for war, sallied forth with their rifles and tomahawks, and dividing themselves into small parties, came so suddenly upon the supposed murderers, that it was equally impossible for them to resist or escape. They expressed neither surprise nor fear, neither the shame of guilt nor the courage of conscious innocence, but submitted to their captors in sullen insolence. Some articles were found in their possession, and a variety of facts proved, which rendered their guilt so probable as to justify their commitment for further examination.

At that early period in the history of our country, jails were neither abundant, nor particularly well adapted for the safe keeping of prisoners. There was none at Stanford, and it became necessary to send the culprits to Danville, where a wholesome institution of this kind had been provided. The men were therefore placed under the charge of a party of armed citizens, and marched off, while the women and children, who were left at liberty, followed at their leisure. The escort rested that night at the house of a farmer, a comfortable log cabin, in one apartment of which the prisoners, securely tied, were placed, under the charge of two sentinels, while the rest of the guard threw themselves down to repose, on the floor of the same room. Here I must introduce a new character, who came on the scene at this place.

Hercules Short, or, as he was more frequently called, Hark Short, was the only son of a poor widow, whose miserable cottage stood on the borders of an extensive swamp in North-Carolina. It was a wretched abode, consisting of a single apartment, plentifully supplied with crevices, which admitted the light of heaven, and gave free access to the balmy airs of spring, as well as the rude blasts of winter. On three sides it was surrounded by a range of barren ridges, covered with a stinted growth of evergreens. In front, was a dismal swamp, filled with huge trees, whose great trunks supported a dense canopy of foliage, which excluded the rays of the sun from the gloomy mass of turbid waters that covered the earth. An undergrowth of tall weeds and rank grass, nourished by the fertilizing ooze, but deprived of

the light and warmth of the sun-beam, shot up into a sickly and dropsical luxuriance. Here the mocasin-snake might be seen gliding over the roots of the melancholy cypress, or exposing his loathsome form on the decaying trunk of a fallen tree. Here the tuneful frogs held nightly concerts, astonishing the hearer by the loudness and variety, if not by the melody, of their voices. This too was the favorite haunt of that musical and valiant insect, the musquito, whose thirst for human blood is so distressing to all persons of tender feelings. The bear, too, loved to wander and repose in these solitudes, wading with delight among the flags and rushes of the ponds, in search of tender buds, or snoring securely in the hollow of a tree, where the sound of a human footstep never disturbed his pleasant slumbers. His neighbor, the owl, sometimes kept bad hours, screeching her untimely song at mid-day, when all discreet brutes should be sleeping; but this he had learned to consider as a pleasant serenade. Other innocent and playful animals tenanted these shades, but the spectator who should have visited them at an hour while the sun was above the horizon, would scarcely have believed that any living thing existed here. All around him would be motionless and silent. Even the humid atmosphere seemed here to have lost its elasticity and power of circulation. One animated being alone might occasionally be seen, winding his way through the morass, with the stealthy tread of the midnight prowler. It was a youth, whose slender and emaciated form, of dwarfish height, seemed a living personification of hunger. His diminutive skeleton was covered with a skin

sallowed by the humid damps, and embrowned by exposure. His gait was slow, from caution as well as from indolence. His features were stolid, and the muscles of his face as immovable as if nature had denied them the power of expressing passion or emotion. A small gray eye alone, moving warily in its socket, and continually glancing from side to side, with the watchfulness of apprehension, indicated the existence of feelings common to the human animal. He was bare-headed and bare-footed; his tangled hair seemed never to have known the discipline of a comb; while his coarse and torn garments, which certainly performed no useful or agreeable office in relation to the comfort of his body, might have been worn in deference to the customs of his species; and this was probably the only instance in which he complied so far with the prejudices of society as to identify himself as a member of the human family.

This promising young gentleman was Mr. Hark Short, the boy of the swamp, and the heir of the pleasant cabin described above. His father had, from necessity or choice, found it convenient to select a retired country residence; and after his demise, the widow, whose love of solitude seemed congenial with that of her lord, continued to inhabit the family mansion. The earliest employment of our hero, was to gather for his mother the pine-knots which not only constitute the fuel of that country, but are the most fashionable substitutes for spermaceti candles; his first amusement in life was to spear frogs and rob birds'-nests. His ambition, however, soon rose above these humble pursuits, and before he

was twelve years old, he took to killing snakes, hunting opossums, catching fish, and finding wild pigs in the woods. His practice in relation to pigs was a little remarkable. The farmers in that country suffer their hogs to run at large in the woods, paying them little attention except that of marking the ears of each generation of pigs while in their infancy, so that each owner may be able to distinguish his property. Our friend Hark, well aware of this practice, and of the care with which the farmers performed it, whenever an increase in their swinish families rendered it expedient, reasoned plausibly enough, that every pig which was not marked must be common property, or, as he expressed it, *a wild varment*, subject to be converted to the individual use of any one who should first appropriate it to himself. Whether he inferred this doctrine from the principles of natural law, or practised it as an instinct, is not important, and could not now be precisely ascertained. We deal only in facts, and the truth is, that although Hark never acquired a pig either by descent or purchase, he made it a rule to place his own mark in the ear of every juvenile animal of this species, which he found running unmarked in the woods. Whenever the maternal care of a female swine, wilder or more cunning than usual, induced her to hide her litter in some unfrequented covert of the woods, or in some solitary islet of the swamp, inaccessible to the owner's search, or when any unfortunate orphan strayed from the herd and escaped the owner's eye, Hark was sure to find them. His dexterity in accomplishing this feat was remarkable. He would lie at the root of a tree watching a herd for hours; but no sooner were the grunt-

ers nestled in their beds of leaves, than Hark commenced operations, crawling towards them with a noiseless and almost imperceptible motion, until he could place his remorseless hand upon an innocent pig, who never dreamt of being marked, until the knife was at its ear, while the left hand of the dexterous Hark grasped the snout with such skill as to stifle the cries of the affrighted animal. A whole litter would thus pass through his hands in the course of a short time.

If any should be so squeamish as to object to the propriety of this mode of gaining a livelihood, we must urge in its extenuation the same apology which is considered as sufficient in most of the ordinary transactions of life, and especially in reference to its pecuniary concerns,—that of necessity. Hark had been raised a gentleman, that is to say, he had never been taught to work; he had no fancy for agricultural pursuits, and the barren sands around his mother's cabin were ill suited to that employment. He therefore necessarily resorted to the woods for a support, where he sometimes shot a deer; but although he handled a rifle well, he disliked its use; the labor of carrying the weapon was irksome to one of his gentlemanly nature, and the noise of its report particularly uncongenial with his habits of privacy, and meditative turn of mind. Besides, gunpowder and lead cost money, which is not to be picked up every day in the swamps of North-Carolina. And why should not marking a pig be considered as respectable as gambling, or as honest as overreaching a neighbor in a bargain? Hark could see no difference. He knew little, of course, of morality; but an intuitive great-

ness of mind induced him, early in life, to adopt the magnanimous rule of the Spartan, which attached no shame to any act, except that of doing it so awkwardly as to be detected. Hark had no ambition to make a noise in the world, but on the contrary shrunk habitually from observation, and courted the society of his own thoughts. Like many great men, he seemed to have discovered that ingenuity is a nobler quality than brute force, and that discretion is the better part of valor. His mother's table, therefore, was tolerably well supplied with game, consisting entirely of the flesh of animals which might be taken without labor, or ensnared by art. In the spring he caught fish, in the autumn he shook the stupid opossum from the persimmon-trees and pawpaw bushes, and during the rest of the year he took—whatever chance threw in his way. Sometimes the weather was inclement, and nothing stirred in the woods, but the creaking bough, or the trembling leaf; and sometimes Hark, who like other persons of genius had his dark days of despondency and lassitude, was disinclined to hunt, and he and Dame Short were reduced to short allowance. But they were used to this, and it was marvellous to see with what resignation they could starve. They polished the bones which they had picked before, and when this resource was exhausted, passed whole days without eating; the goodwife croaking over the fire with a short black pipe in her mouth, and Hark nestling in his pallet, like some hybernating animal who sleeps away the long months of winter.

Solitary as was the life of Hark, it was not passed without amusement. Every intelligent mind is apt to

become addicted to some pursuit, which soon grows into a master passion of the soul; and although we can hardly conceive that the practice of cruelty could ever afford enjoyment, yet, strange as it may seem, it is no less true, that *destructiveness* has been strongly developed in men of the most magnanimous souls. From Nimrod the "mighty hunter," down to Black Hawk, the Sac warrior, the magnates of the earth have ever taken great delight in killing animals, and cutting the throats of their fellow-men. Setting down this remarkable thirst for blood as one of the undoubted attributes of high ambition, we see no reason why Hark should not be ranked with "Macedonia's madman and the Swede." The bent of his genius lay particularly towards the killing of reptiles. With a slight spear, formed of a pointed stick, or slender cane, he would sit for hours by a pond, transfixing every frog which showed its head above the surface of the water, or, with a great switch in his hand, lie in wait for lizards by the decaying trunk of some great fallen tree. But his soul panted for higher exploits than these. He entertained a special antipathy for snakes, and like Hannibal vowed eternal enmity against the whole race. Nothing delighted him so much as to encounter a serpent; no matter to what variety it belonged, the intrepid rattle-snake, the lurking copper-head, the insidious viper, or the harmless black-snake,—he no sooner beheld his enemy, than he prepared for battle with the eagerness of an amateur, and the skill of an experienced gladiator. A martial hatred flashed from his eye, and his swarthy visage, flushed with a chivalrous intrepidity, assumed an unwonted

animation. His mode of proceeding on such occasions was a little singular; for, either to show his contempt for the reptile, or his indifference to danger, or because he thought it the most scriptural plan of bruising his adversary's head, he invariably jumped upon the crawling animal with both his feet, and trampled it to death.

The world went quietly along with Hark until he approached his eighteenth year, when several untoward events occurred to mar his felicity. In childhood he had been an honest boy, with a character perfectly unblemished except by certain little improprieties, such as sucking eggs, or milking the neighbors' cows when he found them grazing in the swamps; and it was thought that the undue severity of the farmers, in flogging him for these little frailties of his nature, caused him to grow up with the shy and misanthropic habits, for which he was so remarkable. But as he became older, his large herd of swine began to attract attention; the farmers, who believed in the adage of the civil law, *partus sequitur*, &c., which means in plain English that the offspring belong to the owner of the mother, began to complain that the descendants of their hogs were passing frequently into the possession of Hark, the snake-killer, and threatened him with the visitation of Lynch's law. Indeed, it is rumored that he was actually arraigned before a tribunal exercising this impartial jurisdiction; but as there is no report of the case, we suppose the allegation to be slanderous. Dangers, however, were thickening around him; he now spent all of his days in the deepest recesses of the swamp, and grew so wild, that whenever he heard the tramp of a horse, or the

crack of a rifle, he crept into some hollow tree, or bounded away with the caution of a startled fox. The fear of Lynch's law was continually before his eyes, and he would rather have crawled into a den of rattle-snakes, than have shown his face in the neighboring settlement.

But the longest lane will have a turning, and the time was arrived when the destiny of Hark was to be materially changed. One night, on returning home, he found his mother expiring. He would have gone in search of a physician, but she knew that the hand of death was upon her, and charged him not to leave her bedside. He lighted some pine knots, and as the blaze illumed the cheerless cabin, gazed in stupefied wonder at the pale and distorted features of her, who had been his sole companion through life. She was the only human being who had ever treated him with kindness. He had not been taught obedience by precept or example, but had served and supported her from that kind of instinct which induces animals to consort together for mutual protection, or to follow the hand that feeds them. Blunted as his feelings were by his habits of life, he discovered for the first time an emotion of tenderness swelling at his heart. He watched for hours, in silence, the expiring taper of existence. Unable to render any assistance, and unskilled in those tender assiduities which soothe the pillow of disease, he felt how helpless and how hopeless is the sorrow of him, who watches alone in the chamber of death, awaiting the departure of the soul of a beloved object, whose flight he cannot arrest nor retard. At length, when her breathing

became indistinct, he leaned over the ghastly form, and sobbed in broken accents, "Mother, don't—don't die!" The dying woman recognized the voice of her son; she turned her eyes towards him; a gleam of maternal tenderness passed over her face, and in the next moment her spirit passed from life to eternity.

Hark, who was naturally superstitious, would now have fled from the house of death, but a decent sense of propriety restrained him, and renewing the blaze upon his now solitary hearth, he sat with his face buried in his hands, giving unrestrained vent to his sorrow. These were new feelings, and, like all sudden impulses, they were evanescent. Grief soon exhausted itself, and when day dawned, and the beams of the sun began to dissipate the mists that hung over his dwelling, his wonted habits resumed their empire. The events of that day need not be told. The following night the moon shone brightly. A hunter who had strayed far from home in search of game, returning at a late hour, discovered the diminutive form of Hark, perched on the summit of a small knoll, not far from the cabin of the late widow. He sat motionless, with his head resting on his hand, unconscious of the hunter's approach. The latter, who knew the wary habits of the boy, was surprised at his remaining thus motionless, and supposing he was hurt, or had fallen asleep, drew near with a friendly intent to awaken or assist him. But the sound of his approaching footsteps soon broke the reverie of Hark, who no sooner became aware of being observed, than he started up, and after a cautious glance around, instantly fled in terror from the spot. The astonished

hunter, on examining, found that the boy had been sitting by a newly-made grave, over which the moist earth had been just closed. The spade lay there, with the fresh soil still clinging to the blade. Alone, and by moonlight, this singular being had performed the melancholy rite of sepulture. On the following morning, some of the neighbors visited the cabin by the swamp, but found it deserted; nor was Hark ever seen again in that vicinity. Sometimes the hunter, when entangled in the mazes of that wild morass, fancied he heard a sound like that of a man striking his feet rapidly on the ground, and it was said that the form of Hark, the snake-killer, was seen gliding quietly over the turbid pools. But his fate remained unknown; whether in his solitary wanderings he had been stung to death by some venomous reptile, or sunk in a quagmire, or whether the Evil One, who seemed to have long since marked him for his prey, had carried him off, none could conjecture. It is said that a variety of noxious animals took possession of the deserted cabin, as if in triumph over their persecutor; and when it was visited long afterwards, it was surrounded by a rank growth of weeds, and the entrance choked with thorns and briers; a she-wolf had hidden her litter under the ruins of the chimney; a numerous colony of rattle-snakes coiled their loathsome forms beneath the dilapidated floor, and the roof afforded a congenial solitude to the bat; from the hollow of a blasted tree hard by, the owl shouted a savage note of exultation, and a thousand voices arising out of the green and stagnant pools, proclaimed that the tenants of the swamp had increased in number and security.

## CHAPTER XII.

CONTRARY to all the conjectures which had been formed respecting him, Hark Short, the snake-killer, was still in the land of the living. Some months after his disappearance from the place of his nativity, he presented himself, nearly naked, and almost starved, at the house of a farmer in Kentucky, where he was received, in conformity with the hospitable usages of that country, without suspicion or question. It was enough that he was destitute and a stranger. He was fed and clothed, and continued to linger about the house, wandering off in the day-time to the woods to hunt or kill snakes, and creeping quietly into the cabin at night, where he nestled in a blanket upon the hearth, with his feet to the fire. When called upon to assist in any of the labors of the farm, he complied with the most evident distaste. He could not handle any farming implements but the hoe and axe, and these but awkwardly; and evinced a thorough dislike against all domestic animals. If sent to ride a horse to water, or lead him to the stable, he was sure to pinch or prick the creature with a thorn, until those which were most sagacious and spirited, learned to show their antipathy for the unlucky boy, by laying back their ears whenever he approached. In short, he could do nothing useful, except to hunt raccoons and opossums, or to assist the farmer in catching his half-wild hogs, which, as in all new countries, ran at large in the woods. On occasions like the latter, his exploits were the sub-

jects of wonder and merriment. It seemed to afford him an honest pride to exhibit a genius superior to that of the swinish multitude. He was an overmatch for the fiercest and most bulky of these animals; evincing clearly, in his triumphs, the vast disparity between intellect and instinct. Having selected the object on which to exercise his dexterity, he would lie for hours coiled upon a log, until his victim approached, or would drag his body along the ground towards it, so slowly that the motion was imperceptible, and at last springing upon its back, seize the bristles with his left hand, and press his heels into its flanks, clinging with so firm a grasp, that the enraged animal could neither assail nor dislodge him, until he brought his prey to the ground by passing his knife into its throat. If he failed to alight on its back, or if his position was unfavorable for this exploit, he seized one of the hinder limbs, and when the animal happened to be large and strong, it would dart away on three legs, dragging the light form of Hark rapidly over the dried leaves and fallen timber. But it was impossible to shake him off; in vain did the enraged swine dash through the closest thickets, or plunge into the miry swamps; Hark retained his hold until the dogs and men came to his relief. These feats gained him applause, and rendered his society tolerable to those who would otherwise have been disgusted with his unsocial temper and unamiable habits. The only brute that he could endure was the dog; even these he at first viewed with manifest symptoms of repugnance; but after witnessing their good qualities in catching hogs, and hunting, he admitted that if dogs would not bark, they

might be made very useful. There was one redeeming quality in the conduct of this singular being, which was, fondness for children. He had never until now associated with any of the human race but his mother; of men he had an instinctive dread, and seemed to hate the whole brute creation; towards children alone did he evince a show of kindness. It was a kindness which displayed itself in mute and almost negative actions, like that of the faithful dog, who watches the playing infant with a complacent eye, and suffers it to sport with his paws and teeth, to pull his ears, and even to torment him, without the least show of resentment.

It was to the house of the farmer with whom Hark had found a temporary home, that the prisoners taken at Stanford were brought, on the evening succeeding their arrest. On their approach, the boy, who sat in a corner, in his accustomed moody silence, was the first to hear the tramp of horses. Without speaking to anybody, he rose, stole cautiously out, and under the shade of an out-house, watched the dismounting horsemen. With his usual stealthy habits, he continued to linger about, listening to all the conversation he could catch, without making his appearance. At last, as if satisfied that no immediate danger threatened his own safety, he entered the room in which the prisoners had been lodged, veiling his constitutional fear of strangers under an assumed apathy of countenance, or only betraying it by an occasional wild and timid glance, like that of the wolf, who, crouching in his den, listens to the distant bayings of the hunters' dogs.

After a little while, the men who guarded the prison-

ers left the apartment, some to take care of their horses and others sauntering around the house, so as still to be near enough to prevent the possibility of their prisoners' escape. The latter sat upon a bench, with their feet bound together, and their arms strongly pinioned behind them, while Hark continued immovable in his corner, until one of the men, in a coarse tone, asked him for a drink of water. The boy arose, and, as if determined to profit by the opportunity which thus presented itself of indulging his curiosity without hazard, presented a gourd of water with one hand, while he held a candle with the other. The person to whose lips he held the cooling draught, who was the larger of the two felons, looked sternly at him; their eyes met, the boy seemed to recoil, but the features of both their countenances retained their imperturbable apathy.

"Hark," said the man, in a low harsh voice, "do you know me?"

The boy hesitated, as if afraid to reply.

"Put down the light," continued the man, "and sit near me."

Hark obeyed; replaced the candle on a table, and threw himself on the floor as if disposed to sleep, yet so near the man as to hear him speak in a low tone.

"Do you know me?" was again repeated.

"Nobody ever saw Big Harpe, and not know him again," replied the killer of snakes.

"Is that all you know of me?"

"Well—I can't say—in peticklar,"—replied the boy in evident embarrassment; "I have *heern* tell that your given name was Micajah."

"Did you never hear your mother speak of me?"

"Not—in peticklar—as I know of."

"Where is she?"

"Mammy's dead."

Here a pause ensued.

"Will you do me a service?" resumed Micajah.

"Did *you* ever do any good to anybody?" asked Hark.

"None of your business!" replied the man, fiercely, but still in the same under-tone; "how dare you speak to me that way, you stupid wretch?"

Hark edged a little further off, and gazed at the man with intense curiosity and fear, while his limbs shook with trepidation.

The felon seemed to think it necessary to change his ground, and try the effect of conciliation.

"And so your mother's dead—I'm sorry—you say she never spoke about me?"

"Not, in peticklar——"

"But she said something; I'd like to know what it was."

"Mammy didn't know as you'd ever hear it."

"Then it was something bad?"

"Not in peticklar."

"Then you might as well tell me what it was."

"It would make you mad."

"No it wouldn't—I don't mind what women say, no how."

"Well, she said, if any body was to rake hell with a fine-comb, they could not find sich a——"

Here he hesitated.

"Out with it, boy."

"Sich a tarnal villain."

"Was that all?" inquired the man coolly, and as if disappointed in not getting out some fact, which he was endeavoring to draw from his stupid companion—"Did she say nothing more?"

"Well—I don't know as she ever said anything else, in peticklar."

"Give me some more water," said Harpe; and as the boy held the gourd to his lips, instead of drinking, he whispered something, in a hurried authoritative tone. Hark stepped back in surprise, and retreated across the room, much agitated. He then resumed his former position in the corner most distant from the prisoners, coiled himself up upon the floor, and appeared to sleep; and when the men composing the guard returned, every thing seemed quiet.

As the night wore away, these hardy backwoodsmen continued to sit to a late hour around the fire; for although it was early in the autumn, the night was cool, and a cheerful blaze glowed on the hearth. They amused themselves in conversing of their early homes from which they had emigrated, of the incidents connected with their journeys, and of their adventures in hunting and war. These subjects are so interesting as always to awaken attention, and they become particularly so, when discussed by a race of men who are eloquent by nature, and speak with a freedom of sentiment, and fluency of language, which are not found in any other people who use our dialect.

At last one of the hunters, wrapping a blanket about

his brawny frame, threw himself on the floor, and soon slumbered with a soundness which the bed of down does not always afford; another, and another, followed his example, until two only, who were appointed for the purpose, were left to keep watch over the prisoners, for whom a pallet had been made upon the floor. In the meanwhile Hark had been lying in the corner unnoticed, and apparently fast asleep; his eyes were closed, and those who might have looked towards him, would not have been able to discover, by the uncertain light, that one eye-lid was partially raised, and that, while seemingly asleep, he was attentively watching all that passed. He had changed his position too, unobserved, and the prisoners having been placed near the middle of the small apartment, he was now lying near them. At length one of the guards left the room, and the other was sitting with his back towards the prisoners, intently engaged in cleaning the lock of his rifle. Hark now drew himself silently along the floor, until he placed himself in contact with the pallet of the captives, then passing his hand rapidly under the blanket which covered them both, cut the thongs which bound their arms, placed the knife in the hand of the one nearest to him, and hastily resumed his former place in the corner. All this was the work of one minute; and in another, the Harpes were on their feet rushing towards the door, and the sentinels started up only in time to witness their escape. The whole company was instantly alarmed; men and dogs dashed into the surrounding thickets in eager pursuit, but the murderers eluded their skilful search, and the party returned dispirited and angry with

each other. An animated debate occurred as to the cause of the disaster, but its real author was not suspected until it was found that Hark was missing. In the confusion of the first alarm he had slipped away, and was seen no more in that neighborhood.

## CHAPTER XIII.

Some of our readers are perhaps disposed to throw this volume aside, in disappointment at not finding in it any of those touching love-scenes, which constitute the charm of most novels. It will perhaps be said that the hero is the most insignificant character in the book, and the heroine not half so interesting as some of the other personages. This objection has been urged against some of the most delightful pictures in our language, but has not been found sufficient to prevent the circulation, or diminish the celebrity, of those admirable works. It has been said of Scott that he has made his heroes secondary characters, while the highest powers of his mighty genius have been employed upon those who play subordinate parts. We may admit the fact as stated, without, by any means, conceding that it forms a valid ground of objection. We can see no reason for the assumption, that the young gentleman, the story of whose love is interwoven with our tale, should, as a matter of course, be intruded upon the reader at every turning, or that all the writer's best powers should be

exhausted in embellishing him, who being already so attractive as to have made a deep impression on the heart of the heroine, ought to be, in all conscience, attractive enough for the rest of the world. Besides, we wish to be permitted to tell our story in our own way, and to pass our hero in silence until we find him achieving some adventure worthy of being told. As for love matters, we have little taste for them, and are content to leave them to be imagined by our tasteful and sentimental readers.

If there be any who are disposed to listen to a dry detail of events, which are necessary to explain and connect the circumstances which have been hinted at in this history, we shall introduce them into a small Dutch tavern, on the frontiers of the settled part of Pennsylvania. It was a stone house, built with an attention to solidity, which showed that the proprietor entertained the hope of transmitting it to his descendants. On the sign-board, which swung conspicuously before the door, was painted the bust of a woman, with arms extended, and with a great suit of long hair, streaming like a birch broom down her back, grasping a looking-glass in one hand, and a comb in the other, while the lower extremity of the figure tapered off into something resembling the tail of a sea-serpent. Over this singular representation was written "THE MARE MADE," and underneath, "By Jacob Shultzhoover." The front door opened into a bar-room, in the centre of which was placed a large ten-plate stove, around whose heated sides was collected a circle of teamsters, smoking their pipes, and convers-

ing with all convenient deliberation, in the harmonious accents of the Dutch language. In a back room, similarly warmed, was a table from which a traveller had lately risen, and over whose ample surface was scattered, in gigantic ruin, the remains of a great dish of sour-kraut and pork, the relic of a capacious apple-pie, and a rye loaf, flanked by pitchers of cider and milk. Several bouncing girls, with faces "round as my shield," rotund forms, and fleshy sun-burnt arms, bare to the elbow, were clearing away the truck of the evening meal with a marvellous activity, simpering and smiling all the while, as they covertly peeped at the handsome young gentleman who sat picking his teeth by the stove, so deeply plunged in meditation as not to notice what was passing around him. I am not aware whether picking the teeth is altogether heroic, but a fit of abstraction is the very thing—it looks so lover-like and interesting. This meditative gentleman was our friend Mr. Fennimore, who was hastening to join the army on the frontier. Shortly after supper he retired to his chamber, took a set of writing materials from his valise, and spent the evening in composing a long letter, from which we shall take the liberty of making some extracts:

*Lieut. Lyttleton Fennimore, to C. Wallace, Esq.*

"My father was a native of England, who came to Virginia when he was quite a young man. He was of a good family, and well educated; if my mother be considered a competent witness in such a case, he was even more,—highly accomplished, and remarkably in-

teresting in person and manners. He brought letters of introduction, and was well received; and as soon as it was understood that his extreme indigence was such as to render it necessary that he should embark in some employment, to earn a support, he was readily received as private tutor in the family of a gentleman, residing not far from Mr. Heyward, the father of the late Major Heyward, whose melancholy death I have described to you. Mr. Heyward also employed him to give lessons in drawing, and the French language, to his only daughter, then a girl of about sixteen. A mutual attachment ensued between my father and this young lady, which was carefully concealed, because the Heywards, though generous and hospitable, were proud and aspiring.

"I do not know how it was, that my father became unpopular among the young gentlemen of the neighborhood. His manners might not have been sufficiently conciliating, or his spirit might have been above his station, and have prompted him to exact attentions which were not thought due to a private tutor. Perhaps his attentions to Miss Heyward were suspected, and regarded as presumptuous. Whatever might have been the cause, the result was, that he was coolly received in society, and subjected to many petty indignities. The younger Mr. Heyward, who had at first treated him with kindness, no sooner suspected him of paying attention to his sister, to whom he was tenderly attached, than he became his violent enemy, and insisted on his immediate discharge. The elder Mr. Heyward, too magnanimous to do a deliberate act of injustice, took

time for reflection. During this interval, an event occurred, which brought matters to a crisis.

"Although the American colonies were at that time loyal to the British king, and no plan of revolution had been matured, yet extensive discontents prevailed, and language of the strongest reprehension against the ministry was currently used. My father had, in writing to England, drawn a vivid picture of the state of public sentiment in Virginia, and the letter having been shown to a cabinet minister, he was so well pleased with the spirit displayed in it, as well as with the talents of the writer, that he intimated a wish that the correspondence should be kept up. This led to a series of letters, written by my father, expressly for the eye of the minister. He was a Briton by birth and allegiance, and did nothing dishonorable in acting thus, as an agent of the government; and as he adhered strictly to truth, and depicted the motives of the colonists even in favorable colors, he could not be justly considered as violating hospitality. This correspondence, however, was discovered; its author was represented as a spy, and loaded with all the opprobrium which the indignation of an enraged community could suggest. Nothing but sudden flight could have saved his life. Miss Heyward was the first to warn him of his danger. Having already given him her affections, and being prepared to share his fortunes, she proved her sincerity and her devotion, by nobly consenting to elope with him, and become the companion of his poverty and misfortune. They commenced their flight at the dawn of day, and before its

close, had indissolubly united their fates by the marriage bond.

"They retired for a while from notice, hoping that my mother's friends would become reconciled; but this expectation proved deceptive. Major Heyward, though of a generous disposition, was a man of aristocratic feelings; he loved his sister tenderly, and had, perhaps, indulged some views in relation to her settlement in life, which were blasted by her marriage with my father. He had also a great antipathy to foreigners, and considered his family degraded by the marriage of one of its members with a person who, however estimable, was an alien to our country. For even at that early period, many of the oldest families among the colonists felt a pride in their native land, and gloried in the name of American, though it was then but a name. He refused to be reconciled to my mother on any terms, and spoke of my father in language which forbade any subsequent advance on their part. They settled in Philadelphia, where they lived in the most retired manner, supported by the scanty pittance earned by my father as a merchant's clerk. Of that unfortunate parent I have no recollection, for he died while I was an infant. My mother, left penniless in a strange city, was reduced to a state of extreme necessity, but her pride would not permit her to return to her father's house, where she would now undoubtedly have been received with open arms. You have seen my excellent mother, and you know that she is a woman of uncommon talents, and remarkable fortitude. When thus thrown upon her own resources, she resolved to make the best of her unfortu-

nate situation. She took a secluded lodging, and applied herself with unwearied industry to her needle; and being patronized by several fashionable ladies, maintained herself creditably, though with extreme frugality, by fabricating the most elegant and expensive articles of female dress. Her taste and skill in these delicate manufactures were unrivalled. I cannot express the feelings of anguish which I experienced while a mere child, in witnessing the silent, the incessant toils of my mother, which were secretly undermining her health; and the devotion with which all her affections were concentrated in myself, the only earthly object of her regard. And I can remember, too, the fervor with which I mentally vowed to devote my whole life to her service. The death of a relative of my father in England, placed us in possession of a small annuity, which relieved my excellent mother from the necessity of laboring for a support, and enabled her to educate me in a manner suitable to her wishes; though we were still poor, and obliged, as you are aware, to live in the most frugal manner.

"At the decease of my grandfather, Mr. Heyward, we learned that a considerable sum of money would fall to my mother, under the provisions of a settlement made at the marriage of her parents. But again her pride, and her wounded feelings, induced her to prefer obscure indigence rather than make her situation known in any manner to her family; nor until I became old enough to take the management of my affairs into my own hands, would she consent to have her claim investigated. This was the purpose of my visit to Virginia. I have

detailed to you most of the events attending that visit: it is enough to add, that my uncle satisfied me that we had been misinformed. No marriage settlement had ever existed, his father died intestate, and he, under the rule of primogeniture, which then prevailed in Virginia, was the sole heir. Thus a hope long cherished in secret by my mother, was in a moment blasted."

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## CHAPTER XIV.

At the close of a fine autumn day, a solitary traveller found himself bewildered among the labyrinths of the forest, near the shores of the Ohio. He had taken his departure early in the morning from the cabin of a hunter, to whose hospitality he had been indebted for his last night's lodging and supper—if that deserves the name of hospitality which consisted of little more than a permission to spread his blanket, and eat his provisions, by the woodsman's fire. We call it so because it was granted in a spirit of kindness. When he parted from his host in the morning, he learned that the settlement to which he was destined was fifty miles distant, and he spurred onward in the confident hope of reaching his journey's end ere the setting in of night. Before the day was half spent, he began to suspect that he had taken the wrong path; but unwilling to retrace his steps, he still pushed on in the expectation of meeting with some human habitation from which he could take a new departure.

It was, as we have before remarked, forty years ago, and this country was still a wilderness; the Indian tribes had been driven to the opposite shore of the Ohio, but continued to revisit their ancient hunting grounds, sometimes in peace, but oftener impelled to war by their insatiable appetite for plunder and revenge. Small colonies were thinly scattered throughout the whole of this region, maintaining themselves by constant watchfulness and courage, and every here and there a *station*—a rude block-house surrounded with palisades—afforded shelter to the traveller, and refuge, in time of danger, to all within its reach. Between these settlements, extensive tracts remained uninhabited and pathless, blooming in all the native luxuriance and savage grace, which had captivated the heart of their earliest admirer among the whites, the fearless and enterprising Boon.

On the same evening, Mr. Timothy Jenkins, the sole proprietor, occupant, and commander of "Jenkins' Station," might be seen alternately plying his axe, with a skill and vigor of which a backwoodsman alone is master, and shouldering huge logs of wood, under the burthen of which, any other sinews than such as were accustomed to the labor, would have been rent asunder. It was evident that Captain Jenkins was preparing for a vigorous defence of his garrison against an enemy of no mean importance, and was determined to guard against the inroads of a frost, by building a log heap in his fireplace. That the latter was of no ordinary dimensions might have been readily inferred from the quantity of fuel required to fill it; for Timothy, like a true Kentuckian, never considered his fire made, until the hearth

was stowed full of the largest logs which his herculean limbs enabled him to carry. An unpractised observer might have supposed that he was laying in a supply of fuel for the winter, when the hospitable landlord was only performing a daily labor. And here it is necessary to inform those who have not enjoyed the luxury of reposing in a cabin, that the fire-place is generally about eight feet in width, and four or five in depth, so as to contain conveniently about a quarter of a cord of wood, which quantity produces a cheerful warmth, the more necessary as the doors are left standing open.

Having performed this duty, Captain Jenkins threw down his axe, with the air of one greatly relieved by having gotten fairly through a disagreeable job, and relaxing into the ordinary indolence of manner, from which the momentary stimulus of necessary exertion had aroused him, sauntered round his inclosure with one of his hard bony hands stuffed in either pocket. Perceiving that an aperture had been made in the outworks by the removal of one or two of his pickets, which had rotted off and fallen to the ground, he proceeded to close the breach.

"They are of no use, no how," said the Captain; "the Indians have not paid me a visit these eighteen months, and may never come back. It seems right hard to be at the trouble of barricading them out, when they don't try to get in; but, howsever," he continued, as he raised the prostrate timbers, and propped them in their places, "I 'll put the *wooden sogers* on post again, if it 's only for a show—they keep the hogs and wild *varments* out, and if an *inemy* should come, it will *sort o'* puzzle

'em to find out the weak place." Having thus compromised with his indolence, he stopped the breach in such a manner as to have deceived the eye of a hasty observer, and returned to the house, hastened by the sound of loud talking and mirth which proceeded from his guests.

The fortress popularly known as "Jenkins' Station," consisted simply of a circular inclosure, formed by a picketing composed of long sticks of timber planted firmly in the ground, and was intended to protect the domicil of honest Timothy against a sudden onset of the Indians. At that period every farmer who ventured to pitch his tent in advance of the settlements, fortified his house in this manner; others, who followed, settled around him, and sought shelter in the *station* upon any sudden emergency. Thus these places, although private property, partook of the nature of public defences, and became widely known; and travellers made their way from one station to another, so that they also became houses of entertainment, and those of the owners of them who would accept pay from wayfaring persons, were, in a manner, forced into the business of tavern-keepers. The proprietor moreover, became a *captain*, by common consent; because, as the people gathered here in time of danger, and it was natural that he should command in his own house, that office fell to him during a siege, and of course pertained to him through life. And such is the love of military titles among a people who are mostly descended from warlike ancestors, that however the individual thus honored may be afterwards distinguished, though he may become a legislator, or

even a magistrate, his military designation is seldom merged in any other.

The dwelling of Captain Jenkins was composed of two log houses, covered under the same roof, so as to leave a wide passage between them, after the most approved fashion of a Kentucky log cabin. Round the fire-place, which occupied nearly the whole gable-end of the house, sat five or six men recently dismounted from their horses, who were compensating themselves for the fatigue and abstinence of a day's travel, from the contents of a bottle which was circulating rapidly among them.

"Come on, Tim Jenkins," said one of them to the landlord, as he entered, "step *forrard*, and touch the blue bottle to your lips. Your whiskey is as good as your fire; and that is saying a great deal, for you are the *severest old beaver* to *tote* wood that I've seen for many a long day."

"I like to warm my friends inside as well as out, when they call on me," rejoined Jenkins, "the nights are getting powerful cold, and they say it's not good for a man to lie down to sleep with a chill in his blood."

"I say so too," said the other: "I don't know what cold is good for, except to give a man an appetite for his liquor——"

"Or long nights," continued the host, "but to get sober in—so here's good luck to you, Mr. Patterson, and to you gentlemen, all."

At this moment the attention of the company was arrested by a loud "hallo!" uttered without, and Mr. Jenkins hastened to receive a new guest. He soon re-

turned, introducing a young gentleman of a very prepossessing appearance, whose dress and manners announced him as an inhabitant of a more polished country than that in which he found himself. It was our friend Mr. George Lee, who having been lost in the forest, as we have seen, had continued to grope his way in great perplexity, until he chanced to fall into a path which led him to the "Station." Bowing cheerfully to the rough sons of the forest, as they greeted him with the usual "How d'ye do, stranger?" he seated himself and began to throw off his spurs, leggins, gloves, and other travelling accoutrements, while Patterson and his companions, after a passing glance, resumed their bottle, and their mirth.

Tired and cold, Mr. Lee drew his chair towards the fire, and remained for a time solely occupied in the enjoyment of its comfortable warmth. Patterson sat by the table replenishing his glass, and pressing his companions to drink, talking all the while in a loud and overbearing tone, and growing more and more boisterous, until the annoyance awakened Mr. Lee, from a kind of stupor that was creeping over him. He raised his head, and discovered the eyes of one of the party fixed upon him, with a gaze so eager, and so malignant, as to attract his own instant attention. The man, whose countenance displayed nothing remarkable, except a ferocity unmingled with the least touch of human feeling, no sooner caught the eye of the young traveller, than he drew back, as if to avoid observation. Mr. George Lee was a young gentleman, by no means remarkable for penetration; but he was bold and manly,

nad mixed with the world more than most persons of his years, and had a tolerable faculty of knowing men by their looks—a faculty which by no means evinces a high degree of intellect, but more frequently is found in ordinary minds. He looked round upon the company into which he had been accidentally thrown, and for the first time his eye rested upon the savage features of Patterson. The latter was a large stout man, evidently endued with more than common strength. There was a considerable degree of sagacity in his countenance, and his strong peculiar language seemed to be that of one accustomed to think and speak without constraint. His blood-shot eye, and bloated skin, betokened habitual intemperance; the fierce and remorseless expression of his face was rendered more terrific by a large scar on his forehead, and another on his cheek, while the whole appearance of the man was bold, impudent, and abandoned. He possessed, or, what was more likely, affected, joviality and humor, continually pressing his companions to drink, and giving to every remark a strangely extravagant and original turn, which always created laughter. Another peculiarity was the loudness of his coarse voice—partly from habit, partly out of an assumed frankness, and an affectation of not caring who heard him, and partly to produce an impression of his superiority upon those around him, he always spoke as loud, even in a small room, as another person would in haranguing a multitude. But when intoxicated, this peculiarity became very striking; then he bellowed and roared—uttering his sentiments with an astonishing energy of language, and a horrible profusion of the

most terrific oaths, in a voice naturally loud, and now pitched to its highest and harshest note, and with a wonderful vehemence of gesture. This characteristic had gained for him the nick-name of "Roaring Bob," by which he was as well known as by his proper christian and surnames.

Our friend George Lee, who had never before seen a man whose presence excited so much disgust, turned from him, and looked round upon his associates. They were a villanous and ruffian set, who seemed fit instruments to perpetrate any crime, however base or bloody. There was one person present, however, whose countenance drew his regard the more forcibly, from the contrast it presented with those around. It was that of a young man whose placid features, and neat though coarse dress, indicated an acquaintance with the decencies of social life. There was a fine expression of ingenuousness in his face, and his clear blue eye sparkled with vivacity and intelligence. He seemed to be under some constraint, for, although addressed by the party as an acquaintance, his answers were brief, and while he treated them with civility, he appeared to be not disposed to join their conversation, or share their mirth. At an early hour, a plentiful supper was spread, to which the whole of this ill-assorted party sat down; and immediately after, Mr. Lee, pleading fatigue, retired to repose.

A weary traveller needs no poppies strewn upon his pillow, "to medicine him to that sweet sleep" which is the reward of toil; and on this occasion, although the imagination of our friend George, never very active,

was considerably excited by the novel scenes he had just witnessed, his reflections were soon drowned in forgetfulness. He had not slept long, when his slumber was suddenly broken by a cold hand, which grasped him by the shoulder. He started up in alarm, and was about to speak, but was prevented by a voice addressing him in a firm but hurried tone, so low as to be barely audible: "Do not speak—you are in danger—rise and follow me—be quick and silent!" The first impulse of the traveller's mind, was distrust towards his mysterious visitor, for whose secret warning he could not readily perceive any rational ground; but as he proceeded mechanically to obey the mandate, his generous nature, not easily awakened to suspicion, repelled the hasty suggestion of doubt, and induced him to follow his guide with confidence. The latter, again cautioning him to silence, led the way to the open air, and proceeding under the shadow of the house, to an aperture in the stockade, passed out of the inclosure, and hastily penetrated into the forest. Mr. Lee pursued the rapid, but noiseless footsteps of his conductor, amazed at the suddenness of the adventure, and perplexed with his own endeavors to guess its probable cause or issue. It will be readily imagined that his conjectures could lead to no satisfactory conclusion, and that his situation—decoyed into the solitude and darkness of the forest, by a stranger—perhaps one of those whose felon glances had attracted his attention—was such as to have created alarm in the stoutest heart. Yet there is something in every young and chivalric bosom, which welcomes danger when it assumes an air of romance; and George

Lee, while internally blaming his own imprudence, which seemed to be leading him from a fancied to a real danger, could not resist the curiosity which he felt to develope the mystery, nor resolve to abandon an adventure which promised at least novelty. His uncertainty was of short duration; for his guide, after a few minutes' rapid walking, emerged into an open clearing, and halted; and as he stood exposed in the clear moonlight, Mr. Lee had no difficulty in recognizing the young forester whose prepossessing appearance he had remarked as affording so strong a contrast to the suspicious looks and brutal manners of his associates.

Pointing to a ruined cabin near which they stood, "It is fortunate for you, sir," said the guide, "that our landlord's stable within the stockade was filled before you arrived, and that your good nag was sent to this sorry roof for shelter."

"I shall be better able to appreciate my good fortune," said Lee, endeavoring to imitate the composure with which the other had spoken, "when I learn in what manner I am to be benefited by the bad lodging of my horse."

"By the badness of his lodging nothing," said the other, "by its privacy, much—to be brief, you must fly."

"Fly! when—how?"

"Now; upon your horse, unless you prefer some other mode of travelling."

"Fly!" repeated Mr. Lee, incredulously, "from what?"

"From danger—pressing and immediate danger."

The young traveller stood for a moment irresolute, gazing at the placid features of the backwoodsman, as if endeavoring to dive into his thoughts. His embarrassed air, and suspicious glance, did not escape the forester, who inquired,

"Are you satisfied?—will you confide in me?"

"I cannot choose but trust you—and there is that in your countenance which tells me my confidence will not by misplaced; I only hesitated under the suspicion that I was to be made the subject of some idle jest."

"I have been too familiar with danger," said the other, "to consider it a fit subject for pleasantry. Had you looked death in the face as often as I have done, you would have learned to recognize the warning voice of a friend who tells you of its approach."

"Enough," replied Lee, "pardon my hasty suspicion —and let me know what has excited your apprehensions for my safety."

"First let us saddle your horse,—we delay here too long." So saying, the young woodsman hastened into the cabin, and with Mr. Lee's assistance equipped the gallant steed, whom they found sounding his nostrils over a full trough, with a vigor which announced as well the keenness of his appetite as the excellence of his food.

"Your nag has a good stomach for his corn," said the backwoodsman, leading him out into the moonlight, "and if he does not belie his looks, he travels as well as he feeds;" and, without waiting for a reply, he threw the bridle over the animal's neck, and, returning into the cabin, produced the baggage, great coat, and other equipments of Lee, who, now more than ever astonished

at the conduct of his companion, prepared in silence for his journey.

"Are you ready?" said the forester.

"I am ready."

"Then mount, and follow me."

The guide struck into the woods, and, proceeding with the same noiseless steps which Lee had before remarked, strode forward with a rapidity to which neither the darkness of the forest, nor the thick undergrowth of tangled bushes, seemed to present any obstacle. They proceeded in silence, the horse following instinctively the footsteps of the forester, until the latter striking into a hard foot-path halted, and, advancing to the horseman's side, placed his hand on the pummel of the saddle.

"With common prudence, you are now safe," said he —and after a moment's hesitation he continued in a low rapid tone; "those scoundrels in the house have laid a plan to rob and murder you."

"Is it possible? Can they be such base——"

"It is true—I have not alarmed you on bare suspicion. I overheard their plan—and knowing the men, I was satisfied that you could save your life only by flight."

"But our landlord—surely he is not privy to their design."

"He is not."

"Why then should I fly? If he and yourself will stand by me, I could defy a regiment of such fellows."

"You do not know your danger—to return would be madness—Jenkins, though an honest, is a timid man; as for myself, I would cheerfully aid you, but circumstances forbid that I should embroil myself with those

men at present. Besides, you cannot remain at the station always, and your departure can never be effected with such safety as now, before the enemy is on the alert. Farewell—keep that path, and you are safe." So saying, he disappeared, and our traveller, with a heavy heart, resumed his journey.

If Mr. Lee had found his situation perplexing on the preceding day, while wandering in uncertainty through the forest, it was certainly more so now, when surrounded by the gloom of night. Unable to see the way, he was obliged to trust entirely to the instinct of his horse, who kept the path with surprising sagacity. Sometimes he found himself descending into a ravine, sometimes the splashing of water announced that he was crossing a rivulet, and sometimes a bough overhanging the path would nearly sweep him from his seat; but he continued to move cautiously along, satisfied that he could encounter no danger more pressing than that from which he had escaped. He was aware that the outlaw is often found on the extreme frontier of our country, perpetrating deeds of violence and fraud, beyond the reach of the civil authority. In those distant settlements, and at the early period of which we write, the inhabitants, thinly scattered, were fully occupied in providing for their own defence and sustenance, and the wholesome restraints of law, if they existed, were but feebly enforced. At such points, gangs of ruffians would sometimes collect, and for a time elude, or openly defy, the arm of justice. Carefully avoiding to give offence to their own immediate neighbors, and striking only at a distance, they for a time escaped detection. The honest settler, simple and

primitive in all his habits, unwilling to meddle with laws which he little understood, endured the evil so long as the peace of his own community remained undisturbed; until roused at last by some daring act of violence, he hunted down the felon, as he would have chased the panther. That Patterson and his associates belonged to that class of marauders, Mr. Lee had little doubt; and he judged correctly, that if they had really marked him out as their prey, he could only be protected by a force superior to their own.

Occupied with such reflections, he continued to grope his way, until he supposed the night must be nearly exhausted. The moon, whose beams had occasionally reached him through the shadows of the forest, had gone down, and the darkness was quite impenetrable. He stopped often, turning his eyes in every direction, to discover the first beam of the morning. Never did night appear so long—he counted hour after hour in his imagination—until his impatience became insupportable. The silence of the forest, so long continued and so death-like, became painfully distressing; but when it was suddenly broken by the savage howl of the wolf, or the fearful screaming of the owl, the traveller involuntarily started, and was not ashamed to acknowledge a thrilling sense of danger. Even now, the panther might be silently crawling along his track, watching for a favorable opportunity to spring upon his prey, the hungry wolf might be scenting his approach, or the Indian crouching in his path. Wearied with conjecture, a feverish excitement took possession of his frame, and he thought he could cheerfully encounter any peril, rather

than be thus tortured with darkness and suspense. Bodily fatigue was added to his sufferings, and at length he dismounted to seek a momentary relief by change of posture, and threw himself on the ground at the root of a tree, holding his bridle in his hand; and the vividness of his sensations subsiding with the inaction of his frame, he was unconsciously overcome by sleep.

When Mr. George Lee awoke, the morning was far advanced. The bridle had fallen from his hand, and his horse was grazing quietly near him. Stiff and aching with cold, he remounted, and pursued his journey. The road, if such it could be called, was no other than a narrow path, winding through the forest, of sufficient width to admit the passage only of a single horseman. Pursuing the course of a natural ridge, the traveller passed through a hilly region, clothed with oak and hickory trees, and thickly set with an undergrowth of hazle-bushes and grape-vines; often halting to seek the path which was concealed by the intertwining brush, or covered with fallen leaves, and sometimes delaying to gather the nuts and fruit, which offered their luxuries in abundance. Thence descending into the rich alluvion flats, his way led through groves of cotton-trees and sycamore, whose gigantic trunks ascending to an immense height were surmounted with long branches so closely interwoven as almost to exclude the light of heaven. Sometimes the graceful cane skirted his path, and he waded heavily through the tangled brake, embarrassed by the numerous tracks beaten by the wild grazing animals, who resort to such spots, or alarmed by the appearance of beasts of prey, who lurk in these

gloomy coverts. Alternately delighted with the beauties of nature, or chilled by the dreary solitude of the wilderness, our traveller passed rapidly on, sometimes enjoying those absorbing reveries in which young minds are apt to revel, and sometimes indulging the apprehensions which his situation was calculated to excite. For the bear, the wolf, and the panther, still lurked in these solitudes, and the more dangerous Indian yet claimed them as his heritage.

The sun was sinking towards the western horizon, when he reached the broken country bordering on the Ohio. His heart, which had been saddened by the monotonous gloom of interminable flats, and the intricacy of miry brakes, was cheered as the hills rose upon his view, and his faithful horse moved with renewed vigor when his hoof struck the firm soil. Still, the apprehension of approaching night was not without its terror. The backwoodsman alone, accustomed to such scenes, inured to the toils of the chase, and versed in the stratagems of border warfare, can contemplate with indifference the prospect of a solitary encampment in the forest; and our traveller began to look impatiently for the signs of human habitation. He listened with intense interest to every sound. In vain; the deer still galloped across his path, stopping to gaze at the harmless stranger, then throwing back their horns, and leaping leisurely away with graceful bounds. The owl hooted in the dark valleys, sending forth yells so long, so loud, and so dismal, as to mislead the traveller into the momentary belief, that it was the mournful wail of human misery; while the long shadows falling across the deep

ravines, and seen through myriads of yellow leaves which floated on the breeze, assumed fantastic shapes to the now heated fancy of the tired wayfarer.

## CHAPTER XV.

Mr. George Lee had been accustomed from his youth to active sports, and severe bodily exercises; he was perfectly at home in the saddle, and loved to wander about the woods, better than to do anything else except to drink wine. There were, therefore, some pleasures mixed with the perplexities of his present situation. He bore the fatigues into which he was so unexpectedly thrown, like an experienced hunter, accustomed to long and weary excursions; his native courage rendered him careless of the dangers of the way, and his taste for forest sports was frequently gratified by the sight of animals which were new to him, and of places charmingly suited to the amusements in which he delighted. The only thing that distressed him was hunger. Although he was in love, and had travelled all the way from Virginia, in pursuit of Miss Pendleton, whose hand he considered indispensable to his happiness, yet he was so unsentimental as to be actually hungry—and well he might be, for the poor young man had now been riding twenty-four hours without food. When suffering a privation of this kind, we are apt to torment ourselves with the recollection of the good things that we have eaten in happier days. And who had been more fortu-

nate in this respect than our friend George, who had not only

"—— sate at good men's feasts"

all his life, but kept expert cooks, and gave famous dinners himself? He looked back with pleasurable and mournful reminiscence, similar to that of the man who is suddenly reduced from opulence to poverty. He too was reduced in his circumstances, for he was denied the luxury of eating, which is the most important circumstance of life; and the visions of departed saddles of venison, turkeys, hams, roast pigs, oysters, and various other dainty dishes, which the Virginians have in great perfection, and dispense with prodigal hospitality to their friends, rose before his mind's eye in mournful yet delicious profusion. These reveries he dwelt upon until their sameness wearied his mind. He began to grow faint and tired; excessive hunger produced drowsiness, accompanied with such callousness of feeling, that a propensity was creeping over him to throw himself on the ground, and sleep away his senses and his existence. He tried to recollect some text of scripture which might comfort him, but for his life, he could think of nothing but "eat, drink, and be merry," or something that had eating and drinking in it. He attempted to sing, but his songs were all bachanalian, and only served to provoke thirst. He would have repeated some stanzas of poetry to keep him awake, if he had known any; but he had never cultivated the muses, and not a line could he recollect, but

Little Jackey Horner, sitting in a corner,
Eating a Christmas pie;

and the dreadful conviction fastened itself at last upon his alarmed fancy, that if he should escape a miserable death by starvation in the wilderness, he would surely meet a wretched end by surfeit whenever he should come in contact with food. Never did George Lee commune so long with his own thoughts, or reflect so seriously.

All at once, his tired horse, who was moving slowly along the hardly perceptible path, with the bridle hanging on his neck, suddenly stopped, as the path turned almost at right angles, round a dense thicket. A few paces before him, and until this instant concealed by the thick brush, stood a miserable squalid boy, intently engaged in watching some object not far from him. A small, gaunt, wolf-looking, starved dog, crouched near him, equally intent on the same game, so that even his quick ear did not catch the tread of the horse's feet as they rustled among the dry leaves, until the parties were in close contact. The dog then, without moving, uttered a low growl, which the ear of his master no sooner caught, than he looked round, and seeing Mr. Lee, started up, and was about to fly. But George exclaimed, "My little man, I've lost my way," and the lad stopped, eyed the traveller timidly, and then looked earnestly towards the spot to which his glance had been before directed.

"I have missed my way," continued Mr. Lee, "and am almost starved."

"Can't you wait a minute till I kill that *ar* snake?" replied Hark—for it was he.

The traveller looked in the direction indicated by the boy's finger, and saw an immense rattle-snake, coiled,

with its head reared in the centre, his mouth unclosed, his fierce eyes gleaming vindictively, and all his motions indicating a watchful and enraged enemy. Hark gazed at the reptile with an eager and malignant satisfaction. His features, usually stupid, were now animated with hatred and triumph. The scene was precisely suited to interest the sportsmanlike propensities of Mr. George Lee, if he had not happened to be too hungry to enjoy anything which might delay him any longer in the wilderness.

"Kill the snake, boy," said he, impatiently, "and then show me the way to some house."

Hark motioned with his finger, as if enjoining silence, and replied laconically, "It ain't ready yet."

The rattle-snake now raised his tail and shook his rattles, as if in defiance; and then, as if satisfied with this show of valor, and finding that his enemies made no advance, but stood motionless, slowly uncoiled himself, and began to glide away. Hark left his position, and, with noiseless steps, alertly made a small circuit so as to place him in front of the enemy. The snake raised his head, darted out his tongue, and then turned to retreat in another direction; but no sooner had he presented his side to Hark, than the intrepid snake-killer bounded forward, and alighted with both his feet on the neck of the reptile, striking rapidly, first with one foot, and then the other, but skilfully keeping his victim pinned to the ground, so as to prevent the use of its fangs. The snake, in great agony, now twisted the whole of its long body round Hark's leg; and the boy, delighted to witness the writhings of his foe, stood for a while grinning in

triumph. Then carefully seizing the reptile by the neck, which he held firmly under his foot, he deliberately untwisted it from his leg, and threw it on the ground at some distance from him, and seemed to be preparing to renew the contest.

"You stupid boy," cried Mr. Lee, "why don't you take a stick and kill the snake?"

"That ain't the right way," replied Hark, and as the venomous creature, disabled and sadly bruised, essayed to stretch its length on the ground, to retreat, the snake-killer again jumped on it, and in a few minutes crushed it to death with his feet. Then taking it up in his hands, he surveyed it with his peculiar grin of joy, counting the rattles as he separated them from the body, with an air of triumph, as great as that of the hunter when he numbers the antlers of a noble buck.

Mr. Lee gazed at this scene with unfeigned astonishment. Though no mean adept himself in the art of destroying animal life, he had never before witnessed such an exhibition. The diminutive size of the youth, his meagre and famished appearance, his wretched apparel, together with the skill and intrepidity displayed in this nondescript warfare, with a creature scarcely his inferior in any respect, strongly excited his curiosity.

"Well, you've beaten your enemy," said he in an encouraging tone.

"Yes, I reckon I've *saved* him."

"But why did you not take a club to it?"

"It ain't the right way. I never go snaking with a pole."

"What is your name?"

"Do you live about here, stranger?"

"No, I am a traveller from Virginia, and was going to Hendrickson's settlement, when I lost my way."

"People's mighty apt to get lost, when they don't know the range," replied Hark familiarly, encouraged by the stranger's affability.

"Where do you live?" inquired Mr. Lee, endeavoring to conciliate the half-savage being, whose friendship was now important to him.

"I don't live nowhere, in peticklar."

"But you seem acquainted with these woods."

"Yes, I *use* about here some."

"How do you employ yourself?"

"I hunt some, and snake a little; and when I *haint nothen* else to do, I go a *lizardin*."

"Lizardin! what in the name of sense is that?"

"Killen lizards," replied the boy, rather consequentially. "I use up all the varments I come across."

"Then you must *frog it some*," said Mr. Lee, laughing.

"Oh yes—and there's a powerful chance of the biggest bull-frogs you ever see, down in the slash yander. It would do you good to go there in the night and hear 'em sing. I reckon there's more frogs and water-snakes there, than they is in all Virginny."

"I have no curiosity to see them. And now, my lad, if you will guide me to the settlement, I will satisfy you generously for your trouble."

Hark made objections—it was too far—he could not tell the distance—but it was farther than he could walk in a day. Mr. Lee then begged to be conducted to the nearest house; but the snake-killer shook his head.

"Surely you lodge somewhere," exclaimed the Virginian, growing impatient; "take me to your camp, and give me something to eat. I am starving."

Hark seemed irresolute, and continued to eye the traveller with a childish curiosity, mingled with suspicion; then, as if a new idea occurred to him, he inquired, "Where's your gun, mister?"

"I have none."

For the first time the melancholy visage of Hark distended into a broad grin, as he exclaimed, "Well, I never see a man before that hadn't a gun. If it aint no offence, stranger, what do you follow for a living?"

"Why, nothing at all, you dunce," said George; "I am a gentleman."

Hark was as much puzzled as ever. "In North-Carolina," said he, "where I was raised, the people's all gentlemen, except the women, and they've all got guns."

"All this is nothing to the purpose—will you not show the way to your camp?"

"Well—I reckon"—replied Hark, withdrawing a few steps, "I sort o' reckon it wouldn't be best."

"What objection can you possibly have?"

"I am afeard."

"You need not fear me; I can do you no harm, if I felt so disposed; and I have no disposition to injure you."

"Won't you beat me?"

"Certainly not."

"Nor take my skins from me?"

"No, no. I would not harm you upon any consideration."

"Well, then, I reckon I'll take you to my camp."

So saying, Hark marched off through the woods, followed by Mr. George Lee.

## CHAPTER XVI.

The snake-killer urged his way through the forest with a rapid but noiseless step, followed by our friend George, whose weary horse was scarce able to keep pace with the hardy boy. After travelling a short distance, they arrived at the top of a hill, whence the river Ohio could be seen at a distance, gliding placidly, and reflecting the sun-beams from the broad mirror of its clear and beautiful surface. Here Mr. Lee was requested to dismount, and leave his horse; an arrangement with which he was by no means disposed to comply, for he was too good a horseman not to love the generous animal which had borne him safely through the fatigues of so long a journey. But the cautious policy of Hark was not to be overthrown by any argument; and after some discussion, the saddle and bridle were stripped off and hung upon a tree, and the horse turned out to graze, with his legs secured in such a manner as to prevent him from wandering far from the spot. They then descended the hill until they reached an extensive plain of flat alluvion land, covered with a thick forest of tall trees, skirting the shores of "*the beautiful stream*," and forming what is called in this country, the river bottom. Here, concealed in a tangled thicket of brushwood, matted with grape-vines, was a small lodge,

constructed of slender poles, covered with bark. Hark paused, and cast furtive glances of apprehension around, before he disclosed the entrance to this primitive and wretched abode, examining with his eye the neighboring coverts, and then looking timidly towards his companion, as if still balancing in his mind between prudence and hospitality; while the dog, imitating his master's caution, crept silently round the spot, snuffing the air. At last, Hark, as if satisfied, pushed aside the leafy branches which concealed his place of retreat, and entering hastily with his guest, carefully replaced the bushes behind him.

If Mr. Lee had been astonished before, at all he had seen of the mysterious being into whose company he had been so strangely thrown, his wonder was not decreased on finding himself introduced into "a lodge in some vast wilderness," which seemed a more fit habitation for a wild beast than a human creature. The lodge was square, and not more than eight feet in diameter, while its height was barely sufficient to allow the dwarfish proprietor to stand upright in the centre. It was dry and tight. The floor was formed by logs embedded in the ground, and covered with dried grass. The only visible articles of property consisted of an iron stew-pan, a steel trap, an axe, and a quantity of skins. Motioning to his companion to seat himself on the floor, Hark proceeded with some alacrity to prepare a meal. In the first place, he drew from a magazine of sundries, hidden in one corner of his tent, several pieces of jerked venison dried so hard as to be nearly of the consistency of wood, but which, by the bye, was by no means unpalatable; and placing them before his guest, signified that he might

commence operations; an intimation which Mr. Lee, with the assistance of a pocket-knife, obeyed without hesitation. Hark then retired, and having kindled a small fire, in a ravine near the tent, produced the carcase of a fat opossum, which he cut up, and placed in the stew-pan. In a few minutes the savory mess was in a condition to be placed before the traveller; and although totally unseasoned, and destitute of the accompaniment of bread or vegetables, the famished wayfarer did ample justice to the cookery of Hark, who sat by, and refused to partake, until the hunger of his guest was appeased. This was the proudest day of the life of Hark the snake-killer. Unused to kindness, and accustomed from the earliest dawn of reason to consider men as his enemies, this was probably the first time that he had ever enjoyed the luxury of doing good from motives entirely voluntary. He was in company with a gentleman of fine appearance, and, to his apprehension, of superior intelligence, who treated him as an equal. Although an aristocrat by birth, property, and association, Mr. Lee was naturally good-humored, and his habits as a sportsman and man of pleasure had thrown him frequently into contact with the lower classes of society, and this we suppose to be generally true of those who engage in sensual pleasures, or in what is more commonly called dissipation. And it is, if we mistake not, a national characteristic, that our gentlemen can, when circumstances render it convenient, adapt themselves with perfect ease to the society of their inferiors in education and manners. Mr. Lee, therefore, without much effort, had the tact to treat our friend Hark as an

equal, simply by avoiding any supercilious show of aversion, or airs of superiority; and the consequence was that he rose every moment in the esteem and affection of this uncouth boy, who soon began to venerate him as a superior being.

It was now dusk, and our traveller had no choice left but to spend the night under the miserable shelter which he had found so opportunely. Indeed, contrasting his present situation with the gloomy terrors of the forest, and the disquietude which he had experienced within the last twenty-four hours, he found great room for congratulation, and recovered his natural flow of spirits sufficiently to converse freely with Hark, whose reserve began imperceptibly to wear away. While they were thus engaged, the dog all at once showed symptoms of agitation, pricking his ears, then crawling out of the tent and snuffing the air, and at last uttering a low sharp whine, and hastily retreating back to his master, with his hair bristling and his limbs trembling. Hark, always alive to fear, looked at his dumb companion, and at his guest, with a ghastly expression of terror on his sallow features. Mr. Lee would have spoken, but the boy cautioned him to be silent, and creeping to the aperture of the lodge, reconnoitred the surrounding shades with the cunning of a wary hunter. George followed, and was about to step from the lodge, when his companion caught his arm, and whispered "Indians!" Footsteps could now be heard passing around; they were the wily steps of the cautious savage treading softly as if aware of the vicinity of a foe; but the rustling of the leaves, and the cracking of the dried twigs, betrayed them to the ears

of the attentive listeners. Then a low signal-cry was heard, which was answered by another from a different direction. A party of Indians, painted for war, was seen scattered about, moving silently through the bushes, or standing in the attitude of eager and watchful attention, with their hands upon their weapons, and their dark eyes gleaming with ferocious avidity. It was evident that they had traced their victims to this spot, and were now anxiously seeking the place of their concealment. Suddenly, Hark uttered a piercing scream, and rushing forward a few steps, pushed aside the bushes, so as to disclose the entrance of the lodge to the Indians.

"Traitor!" exclaimed Mr. Lee, as he sprung after him, convinced by this action that the wretched boy had betrayed him into an ambuscade, and intending under a sudden impulse of passion to strike him to the ground. But a momentary glance induced him to abandon the suspicion. Before him stood a tall Indian, whose superior air and dress announced him to be a leader, with his rifle pressed to his shoulder as if in the act of taking aim. His keen eye had discovered the faces of the whites, through some slight opening of the intervening foliage, and he was deliberately preparing to fire with a deadly aim, when Hark, perceiving his intention, leaped towards him to implore mercy, throwing himself on his knees, and regarding his savage captor with looks of intense agony. Mr. Lee stood behind him, unarmed, and embarrassed; while the Indians, dashing through the bushes, with the most terrific yells, and brandishing their tomahawks, crowded about their victims, prepared to glut their vengeance by immolating them upon the

spot. But the chief restrained them, making a brief but peremptory explanation, in a language unknown to the prisoners, but which probably suggested a respite from instant death, only as a prelude to a more lingering and dreadful fate.

Ferocious as this band of savages appeared to the eye of Mr. Lee, to whom the scene was new, an experienced observer would have remarked in their deportment a more than ordinary degree of moderation. The Indians, like all other unlettered men, act from impulse. A battle always whets their appetite for blood; and they visit upon the lives of their unfortunate captives, the ill-humor occasioned by their own fatigues, losses, or sufferings. They are cruel, always when excited, and often without excitement; and sometimes from mere caprice treat their prisoners with lenity, and even kindness.

It happened that the captors of Mr. Lee were in a good humor. They had perhaps made a successful inroad upon the whites, or had met with no occurrence recently to awaken resentful feelings. The fine horse of Mr. Lee, the gun, the axe, and the skins of Hark, constituted in their estimation a prize of no small value, and their ready tact enabled them to see at a glance that their prisoners were not persons of warlike habits. Some, or all of these reasons operated to protect the captives from ill usage, and they were marched off to the shore of the Ohio, where the Indians embarked in canoes that were concealed among the willows, and crossed to the opposite bank, where they encamped.

At an early hour the following morning, the whole party prepared to march; but not until some of the war-

riors evinced a disposition to amuse themselves at the expense of Hark. The diminutive size and queer looks of the half-civilized youth, attracted their attention, and they indulged their drollery by forming themselves into two parallel lines, and making the disconcerted snake-killer march backwards and forwards between them. As he passed along, one would prick him in the side with the point of his knife, and when the frightened boy turned his head towards his tormentor, another would trip him by placing an obstacle in his path. One of the tallest of the braves led him to a tree, against which he placed him, while with a tomahawk he marked his diminutive height accurately upon the bark; then measuring and marking his own height upon the same tree, he pointed out the difference to the amused warriors, who laughed vociferously at this specimen of wit.

Mr. George Lee joined heartily in the laugh occasioned by the ludicrous appearance of his new acquaintance, but it was not long until he became himself a subject of merriment. Among the spoils was a large iron kettle, into which the Indians had packed their provisions, and when the march was about to be commenced, it was determined to make our friend George the bearer of this burden. In vain did he remonstrate, both by emphatic signs and imploring language, assuring them that he was a gentleman, unused to labor, and totally unable to carry such a burthen; the Indians persisted in placing the kettle on his head, and the unfortunate gentleman, willing to try the virtue of obedience, and afraid to refuse, moved forward. But although his head had always been considered hard, in one sense of the word,

it did not prove so in the present instance, and after proceeding a few steps he began to falter, and showed a desire to set down his load. A very muscular savage, a surly malicious-looking ruffian, advanced towards him, and brandishing his war-club, ordered him to proceed. George, without understanding the language, readily comprehended the meaning of the Indian, and turning towards him, exclaimed in a tone of vexation, "I say, my good fellow, if you think it's so mighty easy to carry this load, you had better try it yourself." The Indian raised his club to strike, but George, who was a theoretical boxer, and a man of spirit, threw the kettle from his head, suddenly darted upon him, wrested the club from his grasp, and throwing it from him, struck his assailant with his fist. The Indians shouted applause, formed a circle, and encouraged their companion to continue the battle; and the latter, who could not refuse without disgrace, sprung furiously upon the rebellious prisoner. Though stout and active, he found his full match in Mr. Lee, who was a young man of large frame, in the prime of manhood, and accustomed to athletic exercises. He was much stronger than the savage, while the latter was his superior in cunning. Thus matched, the battle was severely contested for several minutes, when George, by a lucky blow, stretched his adversary upon the ground, to the infinite amusement of the bystanders, who made the forest ring with their acclamations, while they taunted their beaten comrade with the severest irony. Mr. Lee now rose considerably in the estimation of his captors; the kettle was

suspended upon a pole and carried by two of the party, and our friend accommodated with a lighter load.

They had not proceeded far when they reached the margin of a broad and rapid stream, which they prepared to cross by fording. To this evolution Hark evinced great repugnance; for although accustomed to dabble in marshy pools, he could not swim, and was marvellously afraid of deep water. The Indians, who became more and more amused with his untoward vagaries, drove him into the water before them, with shouts of merriment. The stream was about waist deep to the men, who waded firmly through without difficulty; not so, Hark, whose chin floated like a cork upon the surface, while his feet scarcely touching the bottom, were frequently swept by the force of the current from under him, and the terrified urchin completely immersed—until he was relieved, and again placed in a perpendicular attitude. The Indians, either from a sense of the ludicrous, or from the pleasure of giving pain, found such rare sport in the sufferings of Hark, that they no sooner reached the shore, than they determined to repeat the exhibition; actuated by the same spirit which induces the spectators at a theatre to *encore* some precious piece of buffoonery. Hark was therefore commanded to retrace his steps to the opposite bank, attended by a warrior, whose duty was to keep the performer's head above water, but who mischievously bobbed it under the surface, whenever a suitable opportunity offered. Having thus recrossed, and returned, the savages, satisfied for the present, prepared to resume their journey. Such are some of the sports of the Indians, by which they

enliven the brief intervals of enjoyment, few and far between, that succeed the solitary labors of the chase, and the butcheries of war, the gloomy nights of watching, and the long days spent in brooding over meditated violence, and insatiable revenge.

Hark, though greatly terrified, was not much fatigued by his late exertions, for he was as hardy as a pine knot, and accustomed to exposure to the elements. He was therefore soon rested, and was leaning carelessly against the stem of a young tree, when the singular expression of his countenance attracted the attention of the Indians, who are quick and accurate observers of physiognomy. His eye, usually dull, was now lighted up, and keenly fixed upon some object at a short distance off, in the woods. His lips were compressed, and the muscles of his vacant countenance in perceptible motion. He seemed to be drawing himself up like some crouching animal preparing to spring on its prey. Suddenly he darted forward towards a large black-snake, which was slily dragging its shining folds over the dry leaves, and seizing the reptile by the neck with one hand, whirled the long body in the air over his head, as a child would flourish a whip-lash. Then he suffered it to coil itself round his arm and neck; and disengaging it, threw it into the air, catching it as it fell. This he repeated frequently, always taking care to seize the animal dexterously so near the head, as to prevent the possibility of its biting. At length, he dropped on his hands and knees, and fixing his teeth in the back of the creature's neck, shook it violently as a terrier dog worries a rat; and finally taking the head in his hand, he rose and

lashed the trees with the long flexible body of his victim, until he dashed it to pieces, exhibiting in the latter part of this singular exercise, a degree of spite and fury altogether foreign from his ordinary indolence of manner. The Indians, in the meanwhile, gazed at this novel achievement with delighted admiration, clapping their hands, and shouting applause; and when Hark rested from his labors, some of the oldest warriors patted him on the head, and exclaimed in broken English, "good!" "velly good!" They forthwith conferred upon him a sonorous Indian name, which being interpreted, signified "He that kills snakes," and treated him afterwards with lenity, and even favor.

It was very evident that the Indians were neither in haste, nor fearful of pursuit; for they loitered by the way, stopping at particular places, and examining for signs, as if expecting to fall in with some other war party of their own tribe. At length, towards evening, they reached the brow of a hill, where a small mark was discovered, which had been made by chipping a portion of the bark from a sapling, with a tomahawk; and at a distance, in the low ground, a thin column of smoke was seen wreathing above the trees. Here they halted, cut a large pole, which, after stripping off the bark, they painted with several colors, and then planted in the ground. They now cut a lock of hair from the head of each of the prisoners, and after braiding them, placed them in a medicine bag, which they hung upon the pole; and endeavored to explain by signs and broken English, that these locks represented the prisoners, whom they intended to adopt into their tribe. All things being

ready, the chief shouted with a loud voice, uttering certain peculiar yells by which they intended to convey to their tribe the intelligence of their successful return, and the number of their prisoners. Then they formed a circle round the pole, and joining hands with each other and with the prisoners who were now taken into companionship, danced round it, singing and leaping with great vivacity.

After this exercise had continued about half an hour, they were joined by some of their companions whose smoke they had seen, and the whole party marched off, in great ceremony, to the camp, where Mr. Lee witnessed a spectacle which filled him with astonishment and horror. What this was, will be explained in a future chapter.

## CHAPTER XVII.

The course of our narrative now brings us back to Jenkins' Station. William Colburn, the brave youth who effected the escape of Mr. Lee, was the same hunter to whom the reader was introduced at the carriers' encampment, in the Allegheny mountains. He knew the ruffians by whom he was surrounded, and having saved a stranger from their clutches, retired silently to his lodging, little apprehensive of any danger to himself. But his situation was not without peril, which, however he might be disposed to despise it, occupied his thoughts; while the interest that he felt in the stranger, who

seemed to have been thrown upon him for protection, concurred to drive sleep from his pillow. The apartment which he occupied was a mere loft, the same which Mr. Lee had just left, immediately above the room in which the noisy ruffians were assembled. Their loud conversation had now ceased, and they seemed to have thrown themselves on the floor to slumber. After some time, he heard a slight noise in the apartment below, succeeded by a faint murmur of voices; then a step could be distinguished, as of one slowly ascending to his chamber. He snatched his hunting-knife from the chair beside his bed, and concealing it under the bed-clothes, feigned sleep. A person entered, and approached the bed which had been occupied by Mr. Lee. A short silence ensued, then a blasphemous expression of disappointment escaped the intruder, who now partially threw aside a cloak which had concealed a dark lantern, and a dim light gleamed over the apartment. Having satisfied himself that the bed before him was empty, the ruffian turned hastily to that of Colburn, whose placid features indicated the calmness of profound slumber. The ruffian laid his hand upon his knife, gazed for an instant with resentful malignity, and then hastily retired, but not until the youth had recognized the savage countenance of Patterson. Colburn heard him enter the room below, and arising lightly from his bed, placed his ear to a crevice in the floor, and heard one of the party exclaim,

"Gone!"

"Ay," replied Patterson, "gone, hook and line."

A confused whispering ensued, from which Colburn could gather nothing; but directing his eye to the

crevice, he saw Patterson point his finger upwards, and concluded that the conversation related to himself.

A moment afterwards, one of the party remarked, "*He* knows something about it."

Patterson, with a tremendous oath, replied, "He knows more than he shall ever tell."

A long consultation ensued, which ended with Patterson's saying, "Not to-night—it will not do—but to-morrow he must be taken care of."

During this time, Patterson had applied himself several times to the whiskey-bottle, and becoming much intoxicated, began to curse his companions as villains and cowards.

"It was you," said he, "that put me on this—I never attempted the like before—I have stood by you, and protected you in all your villany—but you know I have always said I would never be concerned in taking life—I never have done it before—this is the first time—and when the act come to be done, you all backed out, and left me to do it—but this is the last time—I shall never lift my hand against a man in the dark again—"

"Yes you will," said a coarse voice; and the speaker, followed by another person, entered the room.

"Harpe!" exclaimed several voices.

"Ay—that's my name; I am not ashamed to own it."

"You ought to be," rejoined Patterson, "for if ever there was a bloody-minded villain——"

"That's enough," said Harpe fiercely, "you and I know each other, and the less we say of one another the better."

"I never killed a man," said Patterson.

"Because you havn't the courage," cried Harpe; "but you pass counterfeit money, and steal horses—and besides that, don't I know something about a man that's just gone from here, and another that's asleep," pointing significantly upwards.

Pattterson saw that Harpe had been eavesdropping, and felt the necessity of compromising matters.

"I was only joking, Mr. Harpe," said he: "what you do is nothing to nobody but yourself—go your ways, and I'll go mine."

"I am willing to do you a good turn," replied Harpe, "and you must do me one; that lad up there, must be ——you understand—or else you must quit the country —and there's another that I missed in the woods, that must be hunted up in the morning—help me, and I'll help you."

Colburn had been satisfied, until now, that he was safe for the night. Being the son of a respectable farmer in a neighboring settlement, whose courage and enterprise were well known, and being popular himself, he was aware that Patterson and his gang would not dare to molest him under the roof of Jenkins, where a deed of violence could not be perpetrated without the risk of discovery. Had he been a stranger, his situation would have been hopeless; the chances of detection would, in that case, have been few, and the danger of retribution small, compared with the consequences that would result from an injury to himself. That an attempt would be made in the morning to waylay him in the woods, where no witness would be present, he saw was probable, and to escape that danger required all his ingenuity

But the arrival of the Harpes, and the disclosures he had heard, convinced him that he was placed in imminent peril.

At the time of the escape of the Harpes from justice, in the manner formerly related, their names were unknown in Kentucky. They were strangers in the country, and the aggression for which they were then in custody, was the first that they were known to have committed. Since then, a series of shocking massacres had given them a dreadful notoriety. They had passed through the whole length of the scattered settlements of this wild region, leaving a bloody track to mark their ruthless footsteps. They spared neither age nor sex, but murdered every unprotected being who fell in their way. What was most extraordinary, they appeared to destroy without motive or temptation. Plunder was a secondary object; the harmless negro, and the child, were their victims as often as the traveller or the farmer. A native thirst for blood, or a desire of vengeance for some real or imaginary injury, seemed to urge them on in their horrible warfare against their species. They had escaped apprehension thus far, in consequence of the peculiar circumstances of the country, and by a singular exertion of boldness and cunning. Mounted on fleet and powerful horses, they fled, after the perpetration of an outrage, and were heard of no more, until they appeared suddenly at some distant and unexpected point to commit new enormities. Their impunity thus far was the more astonishing, as the people of the frontier have always been remarkable for the public spirit, alertness, and

success, with which they pursue offenders, who seldom escape these keen and indefatigable hunters.

Colburn was aware that from such enemies he had no chance of escape but in immediate flight, and hastily putting on his clothes, he had the good fortune to slip out of the house unperceived. A few minutes afterwards, a loud hallooing from beyond the stockade, announced the arrival of other travellers; and Captain Jenkins soon appeared, introducing a lady and gentleman into the common room, which served as a receptacle for all the guests, gentle, simple, or compound, whom chance or inclination brought to this primitive hotel. The lady was Miss Virginia Pendleton, and the gentleman Colonel Hendrickson, her uncle—an elderly man, of plain, but peculiarly imposing exterior. He was spare and muscular, and, though past the age of fifty, seemed to be in the vigor of strength and activity. His person was erect, his step martial, and somewhat stately. His features, sunburnt and nearly as dark as those of the Indian, were austere, and announced uncompromising firmness. There was in his deportment towards Miss Pendleton, a mixture of parental kindness, with the punctilious courtesy observed by the gentlemen of Kentucky towards all females, as well those of their own families as others. There was even a more than ordinary degree of polite observance in his attentions, which might have arisen, in part, from a spontaneous admiration of the womanly graces of his lovely ward, and have flowed in part from sympathy for her misfortunes. These feelings produced a kind of fatherly gallantry, a mixture of delicacy and respect, with fond-

ness and admiration, which blended harmoniously with the plain but dignified and gentlemanly air of the veteran pioneer. They were followed by two negroes, a man and maid servant, who, having removed the outer garments of their master and mistress, retired to the kitchen.

The arrival of Colonel Hendrickson, struck the ruffian party who were assembled round the fire, with awe; for he had long been a terror to evil-doers. They shrunk back to make room for the travellers, while Micajah Harpe drew Patterson out of the apartment, and disclosed to him a tremendous scheme of diabolical revenge. Representing the advantage which would accrue to themselves by ridding the country of Colonel Hendrickson, an active magistrate, and a man of military skill and intrepidity, he proposed not only to murder him and his fair ward, but to destroy all evidence of the foul act by including Jenkins and all the inmates of the house. Patterson started back in horror at this proposal. The felons who sometimes infest our frontiers, have generally an aversion against deeds of violence, and seldom practise on the lives of those they plunder; Patterson, though dissipated, unprincipled, and a hardened depredator, had never dipped his hands in blood. But human nature is always progressive in depravity or in virtue. The heart of man is continually becoming strengthened in principle, or callous to the dictates of conscience; and he who embarks in criminal pursuits can affix no limits to his own atrocity. Some recent occurrences had rendered Patterson more than ordinarily reckless, and stirred up his vindictive passions; he was disappointed, excited, and intoxicated—and the foul compact was made.

Supper was prepared for the travellers, and placed upon the table. Colonel Hendrickson led his niece to the ample board, and as soon as they were seated, bowed his head, which was slightly silvered with age, and in a manly, solemn voice, implored the blessing of Divine Providence. At that moment, while the uncle and niece sat with eyes bent downwards, the two Harpes appeared in the door, and deliberately aimed their rifles at the unconscious travellers. Their fingers were already on the triggers—their eyes, gleaming hellish vengeance, were directed along the deadly tubes with unerring skill, and another second would have rendered all human aid unavailing, when each of the ruffians was felled by a powerful blow from behind. The rifles went off, sending the bullets whistling over the heads of those who had been doomed to death. Patterson and some of his gang rushed to the rescue of their confederates, while the assailants, snatching the guns from the grasp of the prostrate ruffians, passed rapidly over their bodies, and Fennimore and Colburn stood by the side of Colonel Hendrickson, who in an instant comprehended the scene, and acted warily on the defensive. They were all brave and athletic, and although opposed to thrice their numbers, the gentlemen thus accidentally thrown together, stood erect, fearless, alert, and silent. There is a dignity in courage which awes even opposing courage, and subdues by a look the mere hardihood which is unsupported by principle. The ruffians had crowded tumultuously into the room; but when Colonel Hendrickson and his two friends, who were all armed, advanced to meet them, they faltered. Harpe, who was again on his feet,

with a voice of desperation, and the fury of a demon, urged them to the attack; but they stood irresolute, each unwilling to commit himself by striking the first blow, and fearful of being the foremost in assailing men who stood prepared to sell their lives at the dearest price; and when Colonel Hendrickson, in a tone of the most perfect composure, and in the most contemptuous language, commanded them to retire, with bitter reproaches on their baseness, they slunk away, one by one, until the two Harpes, finding themselves deserted, retreated, muttering horrible imprecations.

The doors were now secured, and the arrangement being made that one of the party should act as a sentinel while the others slept, alternately, the travellers separated, but not until Colonel Hendrickson returned to Colburn, who was his neighbor, and to Mr. Fennimore, whom he now saw for the first time, his hearty thanks and commendations for their gallant interference. Miss Pendleton, in acknowledging her acquaintance with the young officer, extended her hand with a cordiality which evinced her gratitude, and having introduced him to her uncle, retired.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

On the following morning, Miss Pendleton met the young officer who had a second time been instrumental in saving her life, with some embarrassment. She had seen him first in the spring-day of her happiness and the pride of her beauty, and had mentally awarded to him that preference over most other men of her acquaintance, which the heart so readily accords to a pleasing and amiable exterior. He was associated in her mind with the last of her days of joy, and with the dawn of her misfortunes. She had twice witnessed his courage, voluntarily and generously exerted in her behalf; and if she acknowledged to herself the existence of no more tender feeling, she felt that she at least owed him a debt of gratitude. His abrupt departure from Virginia, at a time when his own conduct had seemed mysterious, and when some explanation appeared to be due to herself, or to the representatives of the deceased Major Heyward, surprised and perplexed her. She had ascertained that he was related, in what degree she knew not, to the guardian of her youth, and his interests had been placed in painful opposition to her own. These recollections passed hastily through her mind, and she met him with a flushed cheek, and a constrained manner, very foreign from the usual easy frankness of her deportment. But she saw in him the same traits of character which at first won her confidence—the same calm self-possession, cheerful conversation, and open countenance; and the

thin clouds of suspicion which had cast a momentary shadow over her mind, floated rapidly away.

After an early breakfast, the whole party mounted and commenced the journey of the day, for in new countries, ladies as well as gentlemen travel only on horseback. They were not without their apprehensions that the Harpes, who were desperate and unrelenting villains, might endeavor to take revenge for the disappointment of the preceding night by firing upon them from some covert in the woods; but Colonel Hendrickson, confident that his name and standing would deter their late confederates from joining in any such attack, considered his party sufficiently strong to repel any attempt that might be made upon it. But every precaution was used to insure safety; the gentlemen, who were all provided with rifles, loaded them carefully, and the little company was arranged with all the precision that would have attended the march of a squadron of cavalry. Fennimore managed, as young men are apt to do in such cases, to place himself by the side of Miss Pendleton, the other two gentlemen took the van, while the servants brought up the rear. Their way led through the same lonesome expanse of forest, which had been traversed by Mr. Lee, when suddenly ejected from the hospitable roof of Captain Jenkins, in the manner related: a vast wilderness, rich in the spontaneous productions of nature, but in which the travellers could not expect to see a human being, or a dwelling, until their arrival at their place of destination.

In travelling, many of the restraints of social intercourse are necessarily laid aside; and those whose lots are thus for the time being cast together, find it expedient

as well as agreeable to render themselves acceptable to each other. There is a race of islanders, who, in travelling, become even more unsocial, morose, and supercilious, than they are at home; but the ordinary effect of this occupation upon human nature is such as we have suggested; and well-bred persons, in particular, always bring their politeness into active exercise, when the necessity of the case renders this accomplishment a virtue. And at the risk of being accused of national vanity, we will assert, that our own countrymen are the best travellers in the world, the most affable, patient, and cheerful, and the least incommoded by accidental hardships. An occasion like the one before us, is peculiarly calculated to produce the effects to which we have alluded—when the long and lonesome way exhibits a wild but gloomy monotony of scenery, and a sense of danger unites the parties in the bond of a common interest. Thus felt the young and graceful pair of riders, who had, besides, so many reasons for entertaining a strong interest in each other. Mr. Fennimore exerted all his powers in the endeavor to render himself agreeable, and people who try to please most generally succeed, for the art of pleasing depends almost entirely upon the will; and the young lady, with that admirable tact, in the possession of which her sex is infinitely superior to ours, displayed her conversational powers with more than ordinary vivacity and eloquence. We shall not set down what passed, because we were not there; and if we had been, it would ill become us to give publicity to those sprightly and unpremeditated sallies, which were never intended for other ears than those to which they were addressed,

but flowed spontaneously from young hearts in the glow of unrestrained feeling. Tradition has only preserved the fact, that although they rode forth from the woodland fortress, on a bright sunny morning, as stately as a hero and heroine of chivalry, it was not long before they were laughing and chatting like people of flesh and blood, and wit and feeling.

They had travelled for some hours when the experienced eye of Colonel Hendrickson discovered the fresh track of a horse in the path before them. On dismounting and examining more closely, it appeared that several horses had entered the path at this place, and passed on in the same direction pursued by our travellers; and one of the tracks was pronounced by Colburn to be that of the horse of Patterson. That the gang whose villany they had so much cause to dread, should have taken the same direction with themselves, and at the same time should have avoided the beaten path, for so great a distance, were circumstances so suspicious as to leave little doubt of a design to attack them at some point, which was now probably near at hand. In the irritation of the moment, nothing would have pleased these gentlemen more than to have marched directly upon the ruffians; but a proper care for the lady under their charge rendered more prudent measures advisable; and, after a short consultation, it was determined to abandon the road, and to endeavor to avoid the danger, by taking a circuitous route through the forest. They now proceeded rapidly through the woods, observing all the precautions of a warlike party; avoiding the thickets and low grounds, and keeping along the ridges, and in the most

open woods. This mode of travelling was extremely arduous, for they were now obliged to pass over many inequalities of ground, and to surmount a variety of obstacles. At one moment they leaped their horses over the trunk of a fallen tree, at another they climbed a steep hill; sometimes deep ravines were to be crossed, and sometimes low branches, or the great grape-vines swinging from tree to tree, obliged them to bow their heads as they passed along.

After riding several miles in this manner, guided only by that knowledge of natural appearances which enables the experienced hunter to ascertain the points of the compass, under almost any circumstances, they arrived at the bank of a deep creek, which was not fordable except at the spot where it was crossed by the road they had forsaken, and where the robbers would be most likely to await their approach. As there are several modes of passing over streams, practised by backwoodsmen, they rode along the bank consulting as to the most practicable expedient, when they reached a place where a large tree had fallen across the creek, affording the very facility which they desired. Few ladies, however, would have possessed sufficient courage and dexterity to have walked over this natural bridge. The banks of the creek were extremely high, and the trunk of the fallen tree was still further elevated by the large roots at the one end, and the immense branches at the other, so that its distance from the water was so great, as to render it unpleasant to look downwards. But Virginia had a mind which could not be daunted by ordinary dangers, and stepping nimbly upon the log, she walked with a firm step along

its round and narrow surface, and reached the opposite shore in safety. The saddles and baggage were carried over by the same way. The greatest difficulty was to cross the horses, for the banks were so steep and miry, as to render it almost impossible to get them into the water. By dint of coaxing, pushing, and whipping, however, all the animals were forced in, except that belonging to Colburn; and after swimming part of the way, and floundering through mire the remainder, they struggled up the opposite bank, where Colonel Hendrickson and Fennimore stood to receive them. Colburn had remained alone, and was about to send over the last horse which was still fastened to a tree, when the rapid tramp of horses' feet was heard upon the dry leaves, and he had barely time to unloose his steed and spring upon its back, when Patterson and his confederates came sweeping towards him at full speed. To cross the creek with his horse was now impossible; to abandon the animal and seek safety for himself on the other side, would have been but the work of an instant, but Colburn loved his horse, and had too much spirit to give him up to an enemy. Besides, the heroic idea occurred to him at the moment, of making a diversion in favor of his friends, by drawing the pursuit upon himself. Catching up his rifle which leaned against a tree, he shouted to his companions to take care of themselves, and turning towards the pursuers, flourished his weapon round his head in bravado, and dashed off through the forest. The outlaws saw that the party which had crossed the creek was beyond their grasp, as it was but a few miles to Colonel Hendrickson's settlement, which could be reached by the

fugitives, before they themselves could accomplish the tedious process of crossing with their horses; nor were they willing to attempt the passage in the face of two resolute men armed with rifles. Their whole fury, therefore, was turned towards Colburn, and, uttering a volley of execrations, they put spurs to their horses, and went off at full speed in pursuit of the young forester.

Colburn, well mounted and admirably skilled in all the arts of the hunter, had little doubt of being able to evade his enemies by speed or artifice; and guided only by the sun, and by his knowledge of the country, pressed onward through the trackless forest. Relying on the great strength of his steed, and his own superior horsemanship, he often chose the most difficult ground, leaping over ravines, plunging down steep declivities, or dashing through dense thickets where thorns and tangled vines seemed to render it impossible for any animal to pass; and he had the satisfaction of seeing more than one of his pursuers thrown from their horses, while others were left in the rear. Still they kept upon his track, with the unerring sagacity of woodsmen.

Patterson, who, although the largest man, was best mounted, soon left his comrades, straining forward to overtake the young hunter; while Colburn, confident of success, and anxious only to separate his pursuers and keep them in his rear, so as to prevent their surrounding or intercepting him, held up his horse, to husband his powers for a long race. But he had judged too meanly of the animal ridden by Patterson, who soon came in sight, uttering a loud yell when he beheld the young forester, and madly urging his steed over every obstacle.

Still the advantage was in favor of Colburn, who, being the lightest rider, and mounted on a fine blooded animal, led the outlaw through the most intricate ways, passing dexterously through thickets apparently impenetrable, plunging into deep morasses, and leaping ravines which seemed impassable. The latter pursued with spirit, sometimes gaining a view of his adversary, and sometimes falling in the rear.

At one time an accident had nearly decided the contest, for Colburn's horse became entangled in a close thicket of hazle and grape-vines, and the outlaw came near enough to discharge his rifle deliberately, and with so true an aim, that the ball passed along the side of the hunter, inflicting a severe though not a dangerous wound. The young man extricated himself from the tangled brushwood, reined up his horse, and turning towards his enemy, waved his hat in the air, shouted in derision, and then rode on with unsubdued alacrity. At last, in leaping over the trunk of a fallen tree, his horse sprained an ancle, and Colburn found that it was impossible to retreat any longer. A gentle swell of the ground concealed him at that moment from Patterson, who had stopped to reload his rifle, and hastily pushing his horse into a clump of bushes, he crouched behind a tree, to await the coming of his foe. In a few minutes Patterson came in sight, pressing eagerly forward, with his heels closed into his horse's flanks, his eye gleaming with fury, and his countenance animated by the excitement of an anticipated triumph. When he arrived within a few paces of the spot where Colburn stood concealed, the latter stepped boldly out, directly in front of

the advancing horseman, and presented his rifle. Patterson, with a powerful arm, reined up his well-trained horse, dropped the bridle, and threw his gun to his shoulder; but before he could fire, the young forester's ball passed through his body, and the wretch fell forward, with a deep groan, upon his horse's neck. Instantly recovering his strength, he raised himself in his stirrups, and charged upon Colburn with his rifle presented; but the latter, no longer avoiding the combat, darted nimbly upon his foe, and throwing his arms around him, dragged him from the saddle. For a moment they struggled fiercely upon the ground; the ruffian, abandoning his gun, drew his knife; but Colburn parried the stroke, and at the same time disengaging himself, seized the loaded rifle of his adversary, and stood on the defensive. Patterson attempted to rise, but his career of crime was ended!

The young forester now caught the outlaw's horse, which stood trembling beside his own disabled animal, and having re-loaded his rifle, continued his retreat. He was pursued no further. The ruffian gang were struck with panic when they reached the spot where their comrade lay in his gore, a mangled corpse. They had perhaps carried their scheme further than had been at first intended, and they now feared the consequences of their audacious attempt. The remains of Patterson were hastily buried, at the lone spot where he had fallen; and the unprincipled companions of his guilty life, dispersing in different directions, sought safety in concealment or flight.

Colonel Hendrickson and his young friends had been

greatly shocked, on beholding the peril in which Colburn was placed, when surprised, as we have narrated. But it was impossible to render him any assistance, and when the sounds of the pursuit died away, they recommenced their journey with heavy hearts. They soon regained the road which they had left in the morning, and descending from the high grounds, struck into a rich flat, through which a deep creek was sluggishly meandering. On their right hand the Ohio, smooth and transparent as a mirror, suddenly burst upon their view. They stopped and gazed for a moment with delight—for there is something so cheerful in the appearance of a beautiful sheet of water, that the same scenery which had seemed gloomy without it, became, with this addition, gay, brilliant, and romantic. The western bank of the river was low, and fringed to the water's edge with trees, whose long limbs dipped into the current, while their shadows stretched far over the stream, and pictured the exact contour of the shore upon the green surface. Nearer to them, the beams of the setting sun fell upon the water, tinging it with a golden hue. There was a softness and repose in this landscape that were irresistibly charming; no living object was to be seen, not a leaf moved, not a sound was heard; all was serene and silent.

Their path now pursued the course of the river for a short distance, then turning from it at right angles, crossed the creek by a deep ford. They had nearly reached the fording-place, when their horses pricked their ears, snorted aloud, and stopped trembling in the path. At the same instant the travellers discovered that they were beset on all sides by a party of Indians, hideously paint-

ed, who had risen from an ambuscade, and stood around with their rifles pointed, and their black eyes gleaming with a hellish triumph. They uttered a terrific yell when they beheld their victims; our travellers saw their ghastly smiles, their murderous looks, their flashing knives, and felt in anticipation the tortures of a lingering death. A single glance satisfied them that it was impossible to reach the ford, as the largest body of the savages stood in that direction, while on either hand they were so stationed as to cut off all hope of retreat. One of superior stature stood in the path, a few paces before them, laughing with demoniac exultation, as he took a deliberate aim, and discharged his rifle. This was the signal of attack; several others fired at the same time, and a number of tomahawks whistled around the heads of the assailed party.

Colonel Hendrickson and Mr. Fennimore closed up on each side of Miss Pendleton, endeavoring to shield her with their own persons, and beating back the assailants, with the most desperate courage. But they were overpowered by numbers. Colonel Hendrickson was dragged to the ground. Fennimore received a wound which caused him to reel in his saddle. A faint and sickly numbness was creeping over him. At this instant his horse wheeled suddenly, and plunged into the thicket. He rushed through the savage band, who in vain attempted to arrest his flight, and in a moment stood on the margin of the creek. The bank was perpendicular, arising to a considerable height above the water; but the noble animal without hesitating leaped forward, and alighted in the turbid stream, about midway from either

shore. A few powerful struggles brought him to the opposite side, which was steep, but less precipitous than the other. Clambering up the bank, he soon reached the level of the plain, and darted through the forest with the swiftness of an arrow, bearing his rider, wounded, and nearly insensible, beyond the reach of pursuit.

## CHAPTER XIX.

The place to which Mr. Lee was conducted by his captors, was situated in a secluded valley, among a range of low hills. At a spot from which the underbrush had been cleared away, so as to form an open space, shaded by tall trees, a number of Indian warriors, armed and painted for war, were arranged in a circle, and seated upon the ground. In the centre, strongly bound to a tree, was a man of large stature, whose face was painted black,—an indication, as Mr. Lee recollected to have heard, that the prisoner was doomed to death. Near the victim, was a lady, also bound, in whom the eye of our young friend instantly recognized the companion of his childhood, the idol of his heart, the long-loved Virginia Pendleton!

The warriors of the newly arrived party were received with much ceremony by their friends, with whom they took their seats, while Mr. Lee and Hark were placed within the circle. A conversation ensued, in which

only the older and more conspicuous of the warriors participated. They spoke with deliberation, but with much emphasis, and from their pointing frequently towards the east, it was inferred that they were severally relating to each other the incidents of the late predatory excursion.

Their attention was then directed towards their prisoners, and the interest with which they referred to him who was bound to the tree, who was Colonel Hendrickson, showed that they exulted in his capture with no ordinary degree of triumph. One of the warriors approached him, and addressed to him a speech, in which he seemed to pour out a volume of eloquent hatred, contempt, and ridicule upon the defenceless captive, often brandishing his tomahawk as he spoke, and describing, with gestures too significant to be mistaken, the tortures that were proposed to be inflicted. The unfortunate gentleman eyed him with perfect composure, and listened to his speech without showing the least appearance of fear or irritation. Several warriors then placed themselves in front of the captive, and prepared to throw their tomahawks. Mr. Lee, whose good-nature, and chivalrous feelings, began to be warmly enlisted, now sprung up, and rushing towards the victim, exclaimed to the torturers, "Gentlemen! gentlemen Indians! consider what you are about—don't murder the gentleman! If he has done you any harm, I'll be security that he shall make you ample satisfaction;" while poor Virginia shrieked and buried her face in her hands. In a moment George Lee was at her side; "Virginia! dear Virginia!" he cried, "don't be alarmed—they shall not

touch you—I'll fight for you, while there is a drop of blood in my veins!" But the Indians did not intend to slay their prisoner. Paying no attention to the distress of his friends, which only afforded them amusement, they threw their tomahawks, one after another, in such a manner as to strike them into the tree immediately over his head, each striving to come as near as possible to the mark without actually hitting it. Others came, and threw spears in the same mode, and a variety of other means were used to torture and intimidate their victim, and to induce him to degrade himself by showing some symptom of alarm. But all to no purpose: Colonel Hendrickson was well acquainted with the habits of his enemies; he had prepared himself to die, and faced his savage persecutors with the composure of intrepid resignation.

The feelings of his companions in misfortune may be better imagined than described. The unhappy Virginia, though her high spirit enabled her to display a show of resignation, felt herself bowed down by this unexpected calamity. The calm fortitude of her brave relative, while it won her admiration and stimulated her courage, made her heart bleed for the sufferings of one so worthy of a nobler fate. Mr. Lee had ceased to entertain any fears for his own safety, but his love for Virginia, and his native goodness of heart, induced him to sympathize deeply with his fellow-sufferers; while Hark, who had withdrawn himself from observation as much as possible, was lying on the ground, coiled up, gnawing a bone that had been thrown to him, and hiding another which he had stolen, casting stealthy and watchful glances around

him all the while, as if in constant dread of harm, but lying so motionless that his eye alone afforded the slightest indication of his apprehension.

At length the shades of night closed in, and the warriors prepared for repose. Colonel Hendrickson remained tied to the tree; Miss Pendleton sat not far from him on the ground, but no intention was shown of offering her anything to lie upon, or any covering to protect her from the night air. Mr. Lee was more favored, for, as the Indians happened to have several blankets among the plunder recently taken, one of these was thrown to him. Our friend George immediately threw his blanket over the shoulders of Virginia, and obliging Hark to resign a similar present that had been made to him, was enabled effectually to protect the young lady from the cold. The Indians interposed no objection to these arrangements; though they look upon acts of gallantry with sovereign contempt, they know how to estimate a humane action, and thought none the less of Mr. George Lee, for this sacrifice of his own comfort in favor of *a woman of his tribe*.

Silence reigned throughout the camp. Not a sound was heard but the footstep of the armed sentinels, who moved incessantly about, watching the prisoners with jealous eye, and listening with intense eagerness to catch the most distant sound which might announce the approach of an enemy. As they glided slowly in the shade of night, rendered still deeper by the thick shadows of the overhanging forest, and but slightly relieved by the faint glow of an expiring fire, they seemed more like spectres than human beings. Colonel Hendrickson

remained in a standing posture, bound securely and painfully to a great tree, which was probably destined to be his place of execution. He knew that the Indians more frequently carry to their villages the prisoners destined to death by torture, in order that the women, the children, and the whole tribe, may participate in the horrid entertainment, and derive instruction in the dreadful rites of cruelty. A conformity with that custom might procure him a reprieve for a few days, though it would enhance the tortures that inevitably awaited him; while a more speedy death on the spot they then occupied, would cut off all hope of rescue. Occupied with such reflections, it was impossible to sleep; but though denied repose, he was not without consolation. Colonel Hendrickson was a Christian; and, in this trying hour, when enduring torture, and anticipating a lingering and excruciating death, he submitted with the most perfect composure to the will of the great Disposer of all events. He prayed silently, but with fervor and sincerity, in the full belief that he was heard, and that his was "the fervent effectual prayer of the righteous," which availeth much to the humble petitioner. His devotional feelings became quickened and elevated by this exercise, until at last the overflowings of his heart burst from his lips in audible and eloquent language.

Virginia, who dozed, but did not sleep, raised her head when these solemn accents struck her ear. The embers of a nearly extinguished fire threw a faint glare over the figure of Colonel Hendrickson, and rendered his features distinctly visible, while an impenetrable veil of darkness hung around. The forms of the Indian war-

riors could be barely distinguished, as they reposed on the ground, and raised their heads at this unexpected interruption. Their dim outlines only could be faintly traced in the uncertain light, except where, here and there, a scattered ray fell upon the harsh visage of a savage warrior, and for a moment lighted up the ferocious lineaments. The only object upon which the expiring blaze threw its beams directly, was the victim prisoner, whose person resembled the prominent figure in a gloomy and deeply shaded picture. His appearance was strikingly sublime. His large frame, placed thus in bold relief, and dimly illuminated, assumed gigantic dimensions to the fancy of the beholder. His face was serene and tranquil; his full, bold eye, meekly raised towards Heaven. Neither fear, nor resentment, marked his features; all was hope, confidence, and calm self-possession. His voice was full and manly; his enunciation deliberate, though impassioned; his language, the bold, the beautiful, the affecting phraseology of the holy scriptures. Even the eye of the savage was attracted by this picturesque and striking spectacle, exhibited in the lone wilderness, and at the midnight hour; and all gazed upon it in wonder and in silence. They knew their prisoner to be a distinguished warrior, before whose arm some of the most renowned of their tribe had fallen; and when they heard his solemn voice, beheld his dignified composure, and saw him in the act of holding converse with the Master of life, under circumstances so calculated to impress the imagination, they regarded him as a being under supernatural protection, and were filled with awe. And although they would have felt a dread in approach-

ing him at that moment, they were the more determined to rid themselves as soon as possible of so hated, and so powerful a foe.

Gradually the fire became extinguished, a thick cloud gathered over the camp, and total darkness shrouded the spot. The voice of the prisoner ceased, the warriors sunk again to their slumbers, and all was silent. The sentinels renewed their vigilance, and as their eye-sight could now avail nothing, other precautions were used to prevent any attempt to escape on the part of the prisoners. It was near day-break, when Colonel Hendrickson felt a hand passing slowly from his feet upward along his person—and then another hand which evidently grasped a knife. He knew that almost every Indian has some individual quarrel to avenge upon the white men, which he broods over in secret, until a favorable opportunity enables him to satiate his appetite for vengeance; and he supposed that some warrior who had lost a relative in battle, was now about to take that revenge which is so grateful to their lust of blood. Brave as he was, a chill crept over him, and the blood almost ceased to flow in his veins, as he felt the hand of the murderer, cautiously seeking out, as he supposed, the vital spot, into which he might plunge his weapon with the certainty of reaching the life of his victim. The point of the knife was pressed to his back, and he expected to feel the steel passing through from that direction, when the cord that bound his hands was suddenly cut, and in a moment he stood free from his bonds. His unknown friend glided away with a step as noiseless as that with which he had

approached; and the released prisoner had now to exert his own ingenuity in effecting his escape.

His determination was soon made. To attempt to release his companions would jeopard all their lives; and should he succeed in escaping with them from the camp, it was next to impossible that such a party could elude the pursuit of a large number of skilful warriors, who would follow them at the break of day, which could be little more than an hour distant. But he was himself a woodsman; hardy, cunning, and swift of foot: with a start of an hour, he believed he could outstrip the fleetest of the savage warriors, and bring a rescue to his friends, whose lives were probably not in immediate danger. He stole silently from the camp, passed the sentinels, and in a few minutes was rapidly making his way through the forest, with unerring skill, towards the waters of the Ohio.

Great was the astonishment, and bitter the imprecations, of the savages, when they discovered, at the first dawn of day, the escape of their prisoner. They were almost frantic with disappointment and fury, and were ready to sacrifice their remaining prisoners to their rage. Suspicion very naturally fell upon them as having been instrumental in the escape of Colonel Hendrickson; but after a close examination it did not appear that Mr. Lee or Miss Pendleton had moved. At length a track, different from that of an Indian, was discovered near the tree to which the victim had been tied, and a yell of rage was uttered by the whole gang. It was the track of Hark Short, the snake-killer, who, it was now perceived, was also missing.

## CHAPTER XX.

No sooner were these discoveries made, than the greater portion of the warriors set out in immediate pursuit of the fugitives, while a few remained to guard the prisoners. Mr. Lee and Miss Pendleton were now seated near each other, and for the first time had the opportunity of conversing together; and the latter addressing her former playmate with the frankness due to so old an acquaintance, expressed her regret for his misfortune, while she could not help congratulating herself on having a friend near her at so trying a period.

"Ah, cousin Virginia!" exclaimed George, "how willingly would I bear captivity, or even death, to do you a service!"

This speech savored too much of gallantry for the time and place, and Miss Pendleton looked very grave.

"Dear Virginia," continued George, "don't be cast down; they will not have the heart to do you any harm. I have been a brother to you all my life—you have been kinder to me, and dearer to me, than a sister—and they shall not separate us, while I have a drop of blood in my veins."

"Thank you, cousin George," was all that Virginia could reply, while the tears started from her eyes. This touching proof of affection went to her heart, and her noble nature enabled her to comprehend the full extent of the sacrifice that her kind-hearted companion was willing to make for her. Had that affection flowed only

from the friendship of the playmate of her early years, it would have been most grateful to her feelings; but sensible as she was, that it resulted from a hopeless passion, which she could not encourage without insincerity, nor without cherishing hopes which she felt could never be realized, it distressed and pained her. She endeavored to change the subject; but the single-hearted George always came back to the same point, and continually exclaimed, "Poor Virginia!" "Dear cousin Virginia!" "To think that *you*, *you*, should be here, a prisoner among savages!"

At length a new thought seemed to strike him; and starting up suddenly, he beckoned the Indian to him, who seemed to have been the chief person in the party by which he was taken. This person had seemed to claim George as his own prisoner, and had treated him with a show of kindness. To him Mr. Lee now offered to give any ransom which might be demanded, for the liberty of Miss Pendleton, assuring the Indian of his ability to comply with any contract which he might make. The Indian, who spoke a little broken English, readily understood the proposition, and listened to it with interest.

"Hugh!" said he, "how much?"

George, who was no great hand at making a bargain, and was besides too much in love to think of standing upon trifles, replied eagerly that he would give all he was worth for her liberation.

"Velly good!" replied the Indian, perfectly comprehending the offer, "how much—how much you got?"

George told him that he owned a thousand acres of

land; but the Indian shook his head, and swinging his arms with a lordly contempt, as he pointed to the vast forest around them, gave the Virginian to understand that he had land enough.

The Indian then inquired if he had any '*whiskee*."

George had no whiskey, but said he had money enough to buy boat-loads of it, and promised to give his captor as much as would keep the whole tribe drunk for a month.

"Hugh! velly good!" exclaimed the delighted Indian, who then inquired for tobacco.

"Plenty, plenty, my dear fellow," cried George, who thought he was making a fine bargain, "I raise ever so much on my plantation every year. You shall have as much as you can use all your life!"

"How much hos?" inquired the warrior.

"Horses! no man in Virginia has more horses, or finer ones. I have more than forty on my plantation now, as fine blooded animals as ever you saw."

"How much?"—inquired the Indian, who had caught the meaning sufficiently to see that a large number was intended to be expressed, but without understanding exactly how many.

George was at a loss how to explain, until the Indian directed him to hold up his fingers. He then held up both hands, to express ten. The Indian nodded. Mr. Lee repeated the operation, and the Indian nodded with still greater satisfaction; and this dumb-show was carried on until Mr. Lee had signified that he was willing to give forty horses, in addition to the whiskey and tobacco before stipulated, for the ransom of the lady of his heart.

Avarice is a passion which exists in some form in every state of society;-the Indian can make all the other feelings and propensities of his nature bend to his interest, as well as the most civilized inhabitant of a commercial city. The wealth of George Lee had its usual effect upon his captor. Naturally distrustful, he had some misgivings as to the sincerity of so generous an offer, and he could hardly conceive how one man could be so rich as to possess so many horses, and such a quantity of whiskey and tobacco; but then Mr. Lee had an ingenuous countenance, and a rather imposing person and appearance, and, upon the whole, the Indian felt disposed to credit his word. Inasmuch, however, as he had proffered freely thus far, the crafty savage determined to try how far he might extort from the liberality of his captive; and he again inquired if Mr. Lee had nothing more to offer.

George considered, and muttered aside, "Yes, I have a great gang of negroes—but I can't give them to be roasted and eaten by the savages—no, plague on it, I could'nt have the heart to send my black people here"—and he prudently replied, that he had nothing more to give.

The warrior shook his head, and intimated that unless more was offered, he should marry the lady himself.

"Heaven forbid!" exclaimed the terrified lover, "take all I have,—take my farm! take my black people! I have a hundred likely negroes; you shall have them all!"

"Nigger!" said the Indian, "velly good—help squaw to make corn—how much nigger?"

George had now to go through the tedious process of

counting his fingers, frequently stopping in hopes that the cupidity of the savage would be satisfied without taking all; but the latter possessed that faculty of the wily gambler, or the experienced merchant, which enables its possessor to judge from the countenance of the subject under operation, whether he is still able to bear a little more depletion, and continued to shake his head until George declared that the black people were all counted. He then coolly remarked that he should keep the woman himself.

George flew into a rage, and then burst into tears—"You unconscionable rascal!" he cried, "will nothing satisfy you? I offer you all I have in the world, for the liberty of this lady. I am willing, besides, to stay and serve you myself all my life. Set her free, you avaricious dog, and I will stay, and be overseer for you, among my own negroes!"

"The white man has a forked tongue," replied the warrior calmly: "when he offered horses, whiskey, and tobacco for his squaw, I thought he was honest. White men are fools; they will give all they have for a pale-faced woman. But when the white man offers to sell himself, to be a servant to the Indian women, and to send his squaw back to the thirteen fires, I know that he speaks lies."

So saying, he walked off. But the overture had a good effect. The idea of procuring a valuable ransom for Miss Pendleton, determined the Indians to treat her with kindness. A lodge of mats was prepared for her, and she soon found herself placed in a situation of comparative comfort. She was not an inattentive listener to

the preceding conversation. The solicitude and generosity of Mr. Lee, affected her deeply. But she was generous herself, and noble natures know how to receive, as well as to confer, obligations. Conscious that her warm-hearted friend was offering no more than she would have freely given to redeem him, or any other human being, from so dreadful a fate, she did not attempt to interfere, until he proposed to become a slave himself. Then she exclaimed "No! not so—George—cousin George Lee—dear George—" but he heard her not, and in the vehemence of his exertions in her behalf, he lost perhaps the tenderest words that she had ever addressed to him, since the days of their childhood.

But, however Miss Pendleton's heart might have been awakened to sensations of gratitude, she felt that this was not the time nor place to indulge them; and in the exhausted state of her mind and body, she readily and hastily accepted the shelter prepared for her, and throwing herself, stupefied with sufferings of various kinds, upon a mat, endeavored to find repose. She had sunk into a feverish slumber, when she was awaked by the noise of loud and triumphant shouting. The camp was again crowded with Indian warriors; the party which had gone in pursuit of the fugitives was returned; they had overtaken Colonel Hendrickson, and that unfortunate gentleman was again a prisoner. His fate was now sealed. The determination which had originally been formed, of carrying him to the village of the captors, to be publicly sacrificed, was now abandoned; and the savages determined to gratify their eager thirst for his blood, by torturing him at the stake, without further

delay. He was again bound, and preparations were made for the awful solemnity. Some of the savages employed themselves in painting their faces and bodies, to render them the more terrific; other were whetting the edges of their tomahawks and knives; and some were endeavoring to excite their own passions, and those of their companions, to the utmost pitch of fury, by hideous yelling, by violent gesticulations, and by pouring out bitter execrations upon their defenceless prisoner.

"I saw you in the dark and blood ground," cried one, drawing the back of his knife, in mockery, across the throat of the victim—"You killed my brother there, and I will have your heart's blood!"

"You slew my son," shrieked a hoary-headed savage; "his bones lie unburied in the villages of the white men, his scalp is hanging over the door of your wigwam—but his spirit shall rejoice in the agonies of your death!"

"You led the warriors of your tribe to battle," exclaimed a young warrior, as he flourished his tomahawk over the head of the veteran pioneer, "when the long knives met the red men on the banks of the big river—my father fell there—your foot was on his neck—I will trample on your mangled body. The wolf shall feed upon your flesh—the bird of night shall flap her wings over your carcase, and the serpent shall crawl about your bones!"

"Revenge is sweet!" shouted one.

"Revenge! revenge!" echoed many voices.

"It is good, and pleasing to the spirit of the warrior, to witness the death-pang of the enemy he hates!" exclaimed another human monster.

"The white man is our enemy!"

"He is the serpent that stung our fathers!"

"He is the prowling fox that stole away our game!"

"He is the hurricane that scattered our wigwams and destroyed our corn-fields!"

"He drove us from our hunting grounds, and trampled in scorn upon the bones of our fathers!"

"His knife has drunk the blood of the red man; the blood of our women and our children is on his hands!"

"Let him perish in torture!"

"Let him be slowly consumed by fire!"

"The great Spirit will laugh, when he sees the white man writhing in agony!"

"The spirits of our fathers will rejoice—they will shout and clap their hands in the world of shades, when they hear the shrieks of the white warrior."

These exclamations were uttered severally by different individuals, in the Indian tongue, with which Colonel Hendrickson was acquainted, in the emphatic tones of savage declamation, and with that earnestness of gesticulation, which renders their eloquence so impressive. There were others who addressed the victim in coarser language, loading him with opprobrious epithets, and pouring out the bitterness of their malignant hearts, in copious streams of vulgar invective. And now the wood was piled about the victim; torches were lighted, and blazing brands snatched from the fire, and the hellish crew, flourishing them around their heads, danced round the prisoner with that malignant joy, with which devils and damned spirits may be supposed to exult in the agonies of a fallen soul.

At length a chief stepped forward and commanded silence. "White man," said he, 'are you ready to die?'

"I am!" replied the brave Kentuckian, in a calm tone: "the white man's God has whispered peace to my soul."

"Can the God of the white man save you from torture? Can he prevent you from feeling pain when your flesh shall be torn, when your limbs shall be separated, one by one, from your body, and the slow flames shall scorch, without consuming, your miserable carcase?"

"My God is a merciful God," replied the undaunted pioneer; "his ear is ever open to the prayers of those who put their trust in him. He has filled my heart with courage. I have no fear of death—blessed for ever be the Lord God of Israel!" Then raising his eyes upward, he exclaimed, with devout fervor, "Make haste, O God, to deliver me; make haste to help me, O Lord. Let them be ashamed and confounded that seek after my soul: let them be turned backward, and put to confusion, that desire my heart!"

Virginia, who had thus far endeavored to restrain her feelings, now rushed forward, and gliding rapidly through the circle of warriors, threw herself upon her uncle's bosom, exclaiming in frantic accents, "Let us die together!" while Mr. George Lee, who had gazed on the preceding scene with stupid wonder, sought to follow her, determined to share her fate. Being prevented, he swore that it was "the most infamous transaction he had ever witnessed, and that if he got back to old Virginia, he would have satisfaction, at the risk of his life."

And now the whole fury of the savage band was ready to be poured upon their devoted but heroic prisoner, when the report of a single rifle rang through the woods, and the principal chief, who stood alone, received a death-wound. A volley instantly followed, and every ball being aimed by a skilful hand at a particular object, brought one of the Indian warriors to the ground; in another minute, a band of hardy backwoodsmen, headed by Fennimore and Colburn, rushed into the camp. Before the Indians had time to array themselves for battle, the bonds of Colonel Hendrickson were cut, and Fennimore had passed one arm round Miss Pendleton, while he prepared to defend her with the other. The assailants rushed upon the savage band, and hewed them down with desperate valor. Colonel Hendrickson snatched up a war-club, and plunged into the thickest of the fight. Nor was George Lee backward; he first sought Virginia, and finding her supported by the young soldier, he caught up a weapon, and mingled in the battle with more hearty good-will than he had for some days shown for any operation in which he was called upon to join, except that of eating. The valor and skill of the backwoodsmen soon prevailed. It was impossible to withstand their fury. Colonel Hendrickson seemed a new man; he shouted until the woods resounded with his battle-cry, and his friends, animated by the sound of his voice, returned the yell, and pressed on with determined vigor. They literally cried aloud and spared not. The Indians sounded their terrific war-whoop; but that cry, so dreadful to the white man, so full of thrilling horror to the hearts of the borderers who have heard it in the lone hour

of night, breaking in upon the repose of the wilderness, and ringing the death-knell of the mother and the infant, was drowned in the louder shouts of the Kentucky warriors. The first fire had reduced the savages to a number less than that of the assailants, and they now stood opposed to men who were their superiors in bodily strength, their equals in courage, and in all the arts of border warfare. Thus overmatched, they maintained the fight for but a little while, when they began to give back; the whites still pressed on, cutting them down, with the most revengeful hostility, at every step. The battle soon became a massacre, for the Kentuckians not having lost a single man, the disparity of force was becoming greater every moment; and those who had so often witnessed the scenes of savage barbarity, or mourned over the affecting consequences of that unsparing warfare, now dealt their blows with unrelenting animosity.

So long as the battle raged round the spot where Miss Pendleton stood, Fennimore joined in it, supporting her with his arm, and shielding her with his body, while he performed a soldier's duty with his sword. But when the Indians began to give way, he withdrew from the fight, and gave his whole attention to his fair charge. Not so Mr. George Lee; animated with a newly-awakened fury, smeared with blood, and shouting like a madman, he rushed forward among the foremost, beating down the stoutest warriors with his war-club, and taking full satisfaction for all the fright, the sufferings, and the hunger, he had endured. While thus engaged, he saw the Indian who had captured him, and had saved his life, struck

down, by a sturdy backwoodsman, who was aiming the death-blow at his prostrate foe.

"Don't strike!" cried George, "that's a good fellow —he treated me well——"

But he spoke to deaf ears; the tomahawk fell, and the only Indian in whom he had seen anything to conciliate his good-will, slept with the mangled dead.

"Bless me," cried George, "what a bloody business! They are all alike—Indians and Kentuckians—a bloodthirsty set."

Having uttered this moral reflection, he drew his gory hand across his brow, to wipe off the big drops of perspiration. The battle swept on past him, like a heavy storm, which no human hand can stay, and his momentary pause gave him time to look round. The ground was strewed with the dead and dying; wherever he turned his eye, it fell on distorted features, and gaping wounds, from which the crimson current still flowed. He stepped forward, and the blood gurgled under his footstep. Groans and convulsive breathings fell upon his ear. His heart sickened at the scene of horror, and he slowly retraced his steps to the camp-fire of the vanquished Indians.

Colonel Hendrickson and young Colburn, who fought side by side through the whole contest, were the last to relinquish the pursuit. The veteran seemed to be animated with a supernatural strength and activity, and to be actuated by an inhuman ferocity. Wherever his blow fell, it crushed; but his fury was unabated. Blood seemed to whet his appetite for blood. As he struck down the last enemy within his reach, he halted, and his eye

seemed to gloat upon the victims of his revenge. His cheek was flushed, his nostrils distended, and his muscles full of action—like those of a pawing war-horse. In a moment, this excitement began to subside, and he exclaimed, "God forgive my soul the sin of blood-guiltiness!"

Colburn looked at him with astonishment. The veteran turned towards him, and said, "Young man, I have this hour shown how frail are our best intentions. I was once a soldier of some note. But when I became a Christian, and felt the obligation to love all men, and forgive my enemies, I determined to fight no more, except in defence of my home or country. I even prayed that I might have strength to forgive an injury which had rankled in my bosom for years. You were too young to remember my boy—my only son, who was butchered in my presence by this very tribe. Dearly did I revenge his death, and devoutly did I afterwards pray that I might forgive it. For years have I disciplined my feelings so severely, that I had thought the last spark of hatred was extinguished, and that my last days would glide away in charity with men, in peace with God. When I stood a prisoner, bound to the stake, and expecting a miserable death, I endeavored to subdue every vindictive feeling. I prayed that I might die the death of the righteous, and felt that peace which the world cannot give nor take away. When it pleased God to cut my bands asunder, it was my right and my duty to defend the life which He spared, and the friends who were dear to me. But no sooner did I raise my armed hand, than all my former feelings of vengeance against

the race who had slain my child, were kindled up. Hatred, long smothered, broke forth, with implacable fury, and I tasted the sweets of revenge. It was a bad, a wicked feeling. It is a dreadful, an unholy passion. Take warning from me, my young friend; never let the passion of revenge find a place in your bosom. It will poison your best enjoyments, destroy your noblest feelings, and make shipwreck of your purest hopes. God preserve you from hating as I have hated, from suffering as I have suffered!"

## CHAPTER XXI.

Several days had succeeded the termination of the adventure described in our last chapter, and the parties were all assembled at the mansion of Colonel Hendrickson. This was a house somewhat larger than ordinary, built of hewn logs, after the plain but comfortable fashion of the country. There was not the slightest attempt at ornament, but every thing was substantial and neat; and a stranger might see at a glance that it was the abode of hospitality and abundance. A large farm lying around, consisted of extensive fields newly cleared, whose deep rich soil was now heavily loaded with luxuriant crops of tobacco and corn. A large number of negroes, decently clothed, cheerful, and contented, were engaged in the various labors of agriculture.

The Colonel's family consisted of himself, his wife,

and an only daughter, a beautiful girl of eighteen, who combined in her person and manners the truly feminine gracefulness, the easy politeness, the cordiality, and frankness, so remarkably characteristic of the ladies of Kentucky, who unite, with singular tact and elegance, the noble independence and generous kindness of their country, with the gentleness and delicacy appropriate to their sex.

This young lady was now walking, arm in arm, with William Colburn, on the beautiful lawn in front of the house. It was one of those fine autumnal days, which are thought to be peculiar to the western country, when the atmosphere is mild, and in a state of perfect repose, the leaves of the forest are tinged with a variety of rich and gorgeous but pensive hues, and every natural object wore the sober drapery and the serene aspect of the departing year. The sun shone brightly, the soft warm air created a delightful sense of luxurious enjoyment; and the young couple that sauntered together, conversing in expressive glances, and tones of confiding affection, were not the least interesting objects in the picturesque landscape.

Miss Pendleton sat at a window, with Mr. George Lee. This young gentleman was as much in love as ever, and as difficult to be persuaded that it was not altogether possible and proper for his fair relative to return his passion. It was beyond the power of language, and the art of logic, to convince him that he had not the best claim to her affections. He was a gentleman of good family, and had an ample estate—he had been her companion from infancy, and had loved her from the first

dawn of reason. These arguments he now urged, for the hundredth time, with all the eloquence of which he was master, not forgetting to insist on the priority of his suit.

"Who is there, cousin Virginia, who has loved you as long as I have? or who will ever love you half as much? When we were children, did I not climb the tallest trees in the woods, at the risk of my neck, to gather grapes for you, or to catch young squirrels or birds for you to play with?"

"I am inclined to think, cousin George, that you had a natural propensity for such feats, which required but little stimulus to bring it into action."

"There it is, again! I have been trying all my life to convince you of my love for you—and you will never believe it."

"Do not do me injustice; I have always known your feelings—have always been sincerely grateful for your kindness—have always valued and prized your friendship—"

"Friendship! there it is, again—it is a shame to call such devoted love as mine by the cold name of friendship. I love you better than my own life; I have shown that."

"You have indeed," replied Virginia, with much emotion, "and I should be most ungrateful not to be deeply affected by your kindness, by an affection so long continued and disinterested. But it is painful, Mr. Lee—"

"Don't, don't, call me *Mr. Lee*. You know, Virginia, I can never stand that. Refuse me, if you will—but don't treat me as a stranger."

"I was only going to remark, how painful it is to see you persevere in a suit which I have never encouraged —and which I have so often—so very often—declined. I feel towards you, cousin George, all the affection of a relative; if you were my only brother, my feelings and sentiments in regard to you could hardly be different from what they are. More than this we cannot be to each other."

"There it is, again—that is just the way you always wind up. I can't for my soul, understand you. *Why*, if you love me so much, will you not marry me?"

Miss Pendleton, though grieved, and even shocked, at the perseverance of her generous but silly lover, could not repress a melancholy smile as she replied, "Because there is a great difference, George, between sisterly affection, and that love which is necessary to happiness in marriage."

"Well, I cannot for my life see that. I love you like a brother—yet I wish to marry you, to live for you, to die for you, to do anything for you, that would make you happy."

"But if marrying you would not conduce to my happiness, what then?"

"Dear Virginia, you could not help being happy. I should be devoted to you. I have a large fortune, a fine house, plenty of servants, and every thing that heart could wish."

"Let us drop the subject, Mr. Lee, now and for ever."

George rose, and walked across the room.

"So you are determined not to marry me?"

"I have always told you so."

"Virginia, it is not for myself that I care. It is for your happiness that I am interested. I cannot bear to leave you here in this cabin, in these wild woods, and in the neighborhood of those dreadful savages. Say you will go back to the Old Dominion, live with my mother, and be my sister; let me divide my fortune equally with you; and I will never again ask you to be my wife."

She was deeply affected. She had always known that this simple young man, although almost an idiot in intellect, was generous, and sincerely attached to her. She had seen him forsake an affluent home, and pleasures to which he was fatally addicted, to follow her to the wilderness. She had been the innocent means of leading him into captivity and suffering. There he had shown his devotion to her, in the most extravagant, yet touching, offers of self-sacrifice. All this passed rapidly through her mind; and his last offer brought tears into her eyes.

"No, George," said she, rising, and offering her hand, which he grasped with a lover's eagerness, "I cannot accept your offer, nor is it necessary—I cannot be your wife, but if ever I should need a friend, or a brother, I will frankly apply to you—if ever I shall be destitute of a home or a protector, most willingly will I seek them under your mother's roof." So saying, she left the room.

While this scene went forward, Colonel Hendrickson and Mr. Fennimore were engaged in close consultation, in the garden. Mr. Fennimore, after communicating the facts with which the reader is already acquainted, proceeded as follows:

"Major Heyward having satisfied me that my mother had no legal claim upon him, added that he had already made his will, by which he had bequeathed his whole estate to Miss Pendleton, who had been brought up as his adopted child, and who, having been reared in the expectation of being his sole heiress, could not now be disinherited without injustice. Nor could his affection for her, which was that of a father, permit him to make any disposition of his fortune to the prejudice of her interest. But he desired to be reconciled to my mother, and spoke of making some provision for her.

"That will, you are aware, has been lost. I am the heir at law of my uncle, and I have come to you, as the legal guardian of Miss Pendleton, to say that I intend to fulfil strictly his intentions. This instrument contains a formal relinquishment and transfer to her, of all my right, title, and claim, to the whole of my deceased uncle's estate. This was one of the objects of my visit here; the other is to bring to justice the murderer of Major Heyward, who I am satisfied is Micajah Harpe, and who, with the assistance of our friend Mr. Colburn, I have traced to this neighborhood."

"That paper," replied the Colonel, "I shall not accept, without consulting Miss Pendleton. I had determined to divide my own property equally between her and my daughter. I shall apprize her of my intention, and let her decide for herself on your offer."

"But I hope, my dear sir, that you will advise her that it is her duty to accept that which of right belongs to her."

"If my advice is asked," said Colonel Hendrickson,

"I will give such as I think it becomes my niece to accept. You are the proper heir of your uncle. Had he left all his property to her, he would have done wrong; and I shall certainly not advise her to avail herself of your generosity."

## CHAPTER XXII.

A HAPPY company was assembled that evening, at the mansion of Colonel Hendrickson, consisting of the agreeable and interesting personages mentioned in the last chapter, together with several young people who had dropped in during the afternoon, and who were, of course, expected to spend the night. For in this region of generous living and abundant hospitality, a visit of a few hours is a thing not to be thought of; the fashion of *making calls*, which furnishes such pleasant occupation to the city belle, is not practised; and a young lady always carries with her, on such occasions, a wardrobe that will serve for at least a week.

Colonel Hendrickson was comfortably seated in his arm-chair, by the side of an immense fire-place, filled with one of those enormous piles of wood, which the Kentuckians build up, in the hospitable desire of giving a warm reception to their friends; while the door was judiciously left wide open, to admit a free circulation of frosty air. The apartment was spacious, and the plain old-fashioned furniture, consisting of a few articles, each

of which was particularly large and inconvenient, was such as may be readily imagined by those of my readers who are acquainted with the habits of the more wealthy of the pioneers; and those who have not that advantage, may fancy it what they please—for it has little to do with the story. One article, however, must not be passed over, because it is characteristic of the times and the country—this was a bed, covered with a snow-white counterpane, and surrounded by a fine suit of curtains; for as cabins—by which we mean log houses—however large, contain but few apartments, all of them are occupied as sleeping-rooms, and the common sitting-room is always my lady's chamber. One consequence of this fashion is, an excessive, and even ostentatious neatness, rendered necessary by the fact, that every apartment is open to the inspection of visitors; and another is, that the mistress of the mansion must be an early riser, that her room may be put in order before breakfast, and the visitors must retire early at night, to avoid encroaching upon her regular hours.

There was an engraved portrait of General Washington, hanging over the fire-place, and above it a rifle, with a powder-horn and shot-pouch. Of the rest, it is enough to say, that the whole interior of this primitive dwelling, bore evidence that it was the residence of comfort and abundance—that it was the habitation of a fine, liberal old gentleman, and a handsome, neat, industrious, stately, old lady. It was, as we have seen, forty years ago, and this worthy couple were both revolutionary patriots, who, having served their country well, in their respective departments, were now enjoying their laurels

in content and competency. The worthy lady, who sat in the corner opposite to her husband, diligently plying her knitting-needles, still retained traces of great beauty, and wore an air of demure sedateness, mingled with a feminine, lady-like, grace, that contrasted finely with the bold, manly, countenance of her lord. She was a dear old lady; few of the girls were as handsome, and none of them looked half so natural. Her soft eye beamed with benevolence, the charities of life were in her smile, and even her snow-white cap had a matronly and christian-like appearance, which invited respect. Over the back of her chair hung the almanac for the current year, conveniently at hand for frequent reference; on whose margin might be seen numerous marks, made with a pencil, or still oftener with the point of a needle, denoting certain days on which remarkable events had happened in the family, such as the birth of a negro or a brood of chickens, or the sale of a crop of tobacco, and marking the times in the age of the moon, most proper for planting particular seeds, or shearing sheep, or weaning children.

When supper was announced, the whole party was seated round a large table, loaded with substantials, well cooked, and piping hot. Other people may know the luxury of good eating, but the Kentuckians practise it. Before the master of the house was an ample dish of fried chickens, dressed with cream and parsley, a little farther up were venison steaks, then fried ham; then there was cold ham, and chipped beef, and sausages, and, better than all, there was a fine dish of *hominy*, and a noble pile of sweet-potatoes. Of the eatables composed

of bread-stuffs, served in various shapes, no one who has had the misfortune to be *raised* north of Mason and Dixon's line, can form an adequate conception. The biscuits, white, light, spungy, and smoking hot—the wheat bread, smoking hot—the corn bread, smoking hot—and the cakes, almost red hot—these are luxuries which defy the power of description, and the excellent qualities of which can only be estimated truly by that infallible test which the old adage supposes to be necessary in reference to a pudding. There was no lack of sweetmeats and pastry; but the pride of the feast were the great pitchers of milk—sweet-milk, sour-milk, and butter-milk; for, after all, milk is the staff of life, and is a thousand times better than the cold water so much lauded by modern philosophers. There were other good things; but we shall content ourselves with mentioning a capital cup of coffee, and leave the reader to form his own conclusions as to the comforts of a tea-table in the backwoods.

After supper, when the company were again ranged about the fire, the conversation took a lively turn; hunting, war, and love, naturally became the leading subjects. The old, when they are benevolent, love the conversation of the young. Genuine simplicity of character is always shown, in a relish for hearing the sentiments, and witnessing the joys, of youth. Persons of the strongest minds, often read children's books with interest, and mingle with delight in their sports. Colonel Hendrickson was one of those. Although dignified in his manners, and even austere in his appearance, he could unbend, and win the eager attention of a youth-

ful circle, by his cheerful sallies. On this evening he was in high spirits, and joined freely in the mirth of his guests.

"I will tell you," said he, "a very singular *hunting adventure*, which happened when Mrs. Hendrickson and I were both young people——"

"Mr. Hendrickson," interposed the venerable lady mildly, but with a little spice of one having authority, "I would not tell that story now."

"Why not, my dear? It is a good story."

"But you have told it so often, Mr. Hendrickson."

"No matter for that, my dear; our guests have never heard it."

"You must know," said he, while the young folks all assumed the attitude of eager listeners, "that my father was a wealthy farmer, in the western part of Virginia. We lived near the mountain, and I learned to hunt when I was a mere boy. We had plenty of servants, and I had little else to do than to follow my own inclination. At fourteen I used to break my father's colts, and had gained the reputation of a daring rider; at the same age, I could track a deer as successfully as the most experienced hunter; and before I was grown, I had been a volunteer among the Indians. At sixteen, I began to get fond of going to see the young ladies; so that between my gun, my father's colts, and the girls, I was in a fair way of growing up a spoiled boy. Things went on in this way until I was twenty-one; then the Revolution came on, and saved me. War is a good thing in some respects. It furnishes employment for idle young men. It brings out the talents, and strengthens the character, of

those who are good for anything; and disposes of many who would otherwise hang upon society, and be in the way of better folks. I joined a company that was raised in the neighborhood, and was made an officer; and off I went, in a gay suit of regimentals, mounted on a fine horse, with a capital rifle in my hand, and a heart full of patriotism, and courage, and love. Perhaps you all want to know who I was in love with?"

Here the old lady began to fidget in her chair, and threw a deprecating look at her spouse, who nevertheless proceeded:

"I was just of age, and my old dame there was seventeen, when the war broke out. Our fathers' estates joined, and we had known each other, intimately, from childhood. She was generally allowed by every body—"

"Mr. Hendrickson," exclaimed Mrs. H., "I would leave *that* out."

"To be remarkably handsome," continued the Colonel, "and what every body says, must be true. She was, really, although I say it myself, a *very great beauty*."

"Well, I declare—you ought to be ashamed, Mr. Hendrickson!" interrupted the lady; but the husband, who was used to these scattering shots, very composedly continued his story.

"She was a regular toast at the barbacues, and General Washington, then a Colonel, once drank her health at a county meeting."

This reminiscence was better received by the worthy matron, who took a pinch of snuff, and then left the room; not without throwing a look of pride and affection at her good man, as she passed; but as the tale was

becoming rather personal, as respected herself, she remained absent until near the close of it."

"I cannot say that we ever fell in love with each other; for our mutual affection commenced with childhood, grew with our growth, and filled our hearts so gradually, that it may be said to have formed a part of our natures. As for courtship, there was none; I rode to meeting with Caroline every Sunday, went with her to the races and barbacues, danced with her at every ball, and spent half of my time at her father's house. When returning home late in the evening, after an absence of several days, I used to stop at her father's, or at my own, just as happened to be most convenient, and felt myself as welcome at the one as at the other. But no explanation had taken place. When equipped for service, the last thing I did, before we marched away, was to go there in my new regimentals, to take leave. She wept, but my mother and sisters did the same, and I thought nothing of it at the time.

"I was gone more than a year, was in several engagements, and went through a great variety of hardship and suffering. We were poorly paid, badly fed, and terribly thrashed by the regulars, while learning the discipline which enabled us to beat them in return. At length our company was completely destroyed; some were killed, some taken prisoners, some got sick, and a few grew tired of being patriots. The remainder were discharged, or transferred into other companies; and I obtained leave of absence. I had lost my horse, spent all my money, worn out my clothes, and had no means of travelling, except on foot. Patriotism, young gentle-

men, was a poor business then, and is not much better now. Like Falstaff's honor, it will not set a limb; and I found to my sorrow, that it would not keep out cold, or furnish a barefoot soldier with a pair of shoes. But it warmed the hearts, and opened the doors of all true whigs, and I generally procured a meal and a night's lodging, at the close of each day's travel, under the roof of some friend to the cause of liberty.

"I had lately thought a great deal about Caroline. It was not until I parted from her that I knew how necessary she was to my happiness. I now recollected her remarks, and recalled with delight the amusements in which we had participated together. When lying upon the ground in my cheerless tent, or keeping guard at some solitary outpost, I amused the weary hours in forming plans for the future, in which she was always one of the *dramatis personæ*. When anything agreeable occurred, I longed to tell it to her; and when in trouble, I could always fancy how entirely she would enter into my feelings, and how tender would be her sympathy, could she be at my side. I had no doubt that her sentiments were similar to my own; yet, when I recollected that no disclosure had been made, or pledge given, on either side, and that she was not even bound to know of my attachment, I condemned myself for having taken no precaution to secure a treasure, without which the laurels I had won would be valueless, and life itself a burthen.

"In order to get home, I had to pass the door of Caroline's father; and I determined to stop there first, curious to know whether I should be recognized in my

wretched garb, and how I should be received. I was as ragged a rebel as ever fought against his unlawful king. I had no shoes on my feet, my clothes were faded, torn, and dirty, my long hair hung tangled over my face, I had been without a razor for some time, and this scar which you see on my cheek, was then a green wound, covered with a black patch. Altogether, I looked more like a deserter, or a fugitive from a prison-ship, than a young officer. The dogs growled at me as I approached the house, the little negroes ran away, and the children of the family hid behind the door. No one recognized me, and I stood in the hall where most of the family were assembled, like some being dropped from another world. They were engaged in various employments; as for Miss Caroline, she was spinning upon a large wheel, in the farther end of the room; for young ladies then, however wealthy their parents, were all taught to be useful. She looked at me attentively as I entered, but continued her work; and I never felt so happy in my life, as when I saw her graceful form, and her light step, while she moved forward and backward, extending her handsome arm, and displaying her pretty fingers, as she drew her cotton rolls into a fine thread. The ingenuity of woman never invented a more graceful exercise for showing off a beautiful figure, than spinning cotton on a large wheel.

"I thought she looked pensive; but her cheek was as blooming as ever, and her pretty round form, instead of being emaciated with grief, had increased in stature and maturity. I felt vexed to think that she was not wretched, that her eyes were not red with watching, nor

her cheeks furrowed by tears. I endeavored to speak in a feigned voice, but no sooner did the tones meet her ear, than she sprang up, eagerly repeated my name, and rushing towards me, clasped both my hands in hers, with a warmth and frankness of affection, which admitted no concealment, and left no room for doubt. The whole family gathered round me, and it was with some difficulty that I tore myself away.

"When my good mother had caused me to be trimmed, and scrubbed, and brushed, I felt once more the luxury of looking and feeling like a gentleman. I passed a happy evening under my native roof; and the next morning, early, shouldered my rifle, for a hunting excursion. My friends thought it strange, that after the hardships I had so recently undergone, I should so soon evince a desire to engage in this fatiguing sport. But I had different game in view from any that they dreamed of. I took a by-path which led to the residence of a certain young lady, approaching it through a strip of forest, which extended nearly to the garden. Caroline was in the garden. I thought she was dressed with more than usual taste, and she certainly tripped along with a livelier step than common. I leaped the fence, and in a moment was at her side. I shall not tell what passed, nor how long we stood concealed behind a tall clump of rose-bushes—nor how much longer we might have continued the *tête-à-tête*, if the approach of some one had not caused Caroline to dart away, like a frighted deer, while I retreated to the woods, the happiest fellow in existence.

"I strolled through the forest, thinking of the pleasant

interview, recalling the soft pressure of the hand that had trembled in mine, the exquisite tones of the voice that still murmured in my ear, and the artless confessions that remained deeply imprinted on my heart. It was some hours before I recollected, that in order to save appearances, I must kill some game to carry home. How many fat bucks had crossed my path while I was musing upon this precious little love-scene, I know not; I had wandered several miles from my father's house, and it was now past noon. Throwing off my abstraction of mind, I turned my attention, in earnest, to the matter in hand, and, after a diligent search, espied a deer, quietly grazing in an open spot in full view. I took aim, touched the hair-trigger, and my gun snapped. The deer, alarmed, bounded away; and not being very eager, I renewed the priming, and strolled on. Another opportunity soon occurred, when my unlucky piece again made default,—the priming flashed in the pan, but no report followed. As I always kept my rifle in good order, I was not a little surprised that two such accidents should follow in quick succession—and I began to consider, seriously, whether it might not be an omen that my courtship would end in a mere flash. Again and again, I made the same attempt, and with a similar result. I was now far from home, and night was closing around me; I could not see to hunt any longer, nor was I willing to return home without having killed anything. To sleep in the woods was no hardship, for I had long been accustomed to lodging upon the hard ground, in the open air; indeed, I had been kept awake most of the preceding night, by the novel luxury of a feather-bed.

Accordingly, I kindled a fire, and threw myself on the ground. I never was superstitious; but my mind was at that time in a state of peculiar sensitiveness. My return home, the sudden relief from privation and suffering, the meeting with my family, and the interview with Caroline, had all concurred to bewilder and intoxicate my brain; and as I lay in the dark shade of the forest, gazing at the few stars that twinkled through the intervals of the foliage, some of the wild traditions of the hunters occurred to my memory, and I persuaded myself that a spell had been placed upon my gun. When I fell asleep, I dreamed of being in battle unarmed, of hunting without ammunition, and being married without getting a wife:—the upshot of the whole matter was, that I slept without being refreshed.

"I rose, and was proceeding towards a neighboring spring, when a strain of singular music burst upon my ear. It was so wild, solemn, and incoherent, that I could make nothing of it, and became more and more convinced that I certainly was bewitched; but, determined to see the end of this mysterious adventure, I hastened towards the spot from which the sounds proceeded. As I approached, the tones became familiar, and I recognized a voice which I had known from childhood. I had rested near the foot of a mountainous ridge, at a spot where a pile of rocky masses rose in tall cliffs abruptly from the plain. Against the bald sides of these precipices, the rising sun now shone, lighting them up with unusual splendor. On a platform of rock, overhung by jutting points, from which the sound of the voice was returned by numerous echoes, knelt a superannuated negro,

whom I had known from my infancy. From my earliest recollection, he had been a kind of privileged character, wandering about the country, and filling the various offices of fiddler, conjurer, and preacher. Latterly, he had quit fiddling, and taken to philosophy, most probably because ambition, the last infirmity of noble minds, had induced him to seek higher honors than those achieved by the triumphs of the violin. The old man was engaged in his morning devotions, and was chanting a hymn, at the top of his voice, with great apparent fervor and sincerity. I made up my mind, in a moment, that he was the very conjurer who had placed a spell upon my gun, and, perhaps, upon my courtship; for he had long served as a kind of lay-brother at the altar of Hymen, and was famous for his skill in delivering *billet-doux*, and finding out young ladies' secrets. Moreover, his name was Cupid. As soon as his devotions were concluded, I approached, and disclosed, with perhaps more seriousness of manner than I felt, and, certainly, with more than I would have acknowledged, the mysterious conduct of my gun, which was as good a rifle as ever a man put to his shoulder, and my suspicions that some necromancy had been practised. The old man was overjoyed to see me, for I had danced to his violin many a long night; he uttered some very profound and philosophic moral reflections, upon the rapidity with which little boys grow up into big men—complimented me upon my improved appearance, and safe return from the wars, and assured me that I looked "*mighty sogerfied.*" Then proceeding to inspect my unlucky weapon, he first examined the lock, then drew the ramrod, and having

searched the barrel, handed it back, exclaiming, with a most sarcastic grin,

'Please goodness! massa Charley, how you *speck* your gun go off, '*out* no powder?'

"The truth broke upon my mind with the suddenness of an explosion. I stood with my finger in my mouth, like a boy caught in a forbidden orchard, a lover detected in the act of swearing allegiance upon his knees, or an author whose wit has flashed in the pan. The simple fact was, that in the pleasure of courting, and the delight of winning my old dame there, who, plain as you see her now, was, as I said before, in her young days, allowed to be a great beauty, I had totally forgot to load my gun! But old Cupid kept my secret—I kept my own counsel—Caroline kept her word, and I have always had reason to consider that as the best hunt I ever made."

## CHAPTER XXIII.

When Colonel Hendrickson had concluded his story, it was found that the hour of retiring to repose had arrived. Mrs. Hendrickson arose, and placed a large family bible and a hymn-book upon the table; for these worthy people, as we are happy to say is the case with a great many families in this region, never separated for the night, without bowing down together in worship. The Colonel read a chapter in the holy book, selected a hymn, in the singing of which the whole circle joined,

and then kneeling down, prayed with fervor and solemnity. There is no worship which impresses the imagination, and warms the heart, like that of the family. When in the silent hour of night, those who are joined together by consanguinity and affection, kneel together—when the father prays for his children and dependants—there is a touching interest, and moral beauty, in the scene; and we know not how any, who profess the doctrines of Christianity, can neglect so serious a duty, or deny themselves so delightful a pleasure.

Just as they were about to retire, a loud barking of the dogs announced the arrival of other visitors, who proved to be a party of boys, sons of the neighboring farmers, going to hunt the raccoon. They had called to borrow the Colonel's favorite dog, who was famous at catching these animals. Mr. George Lee, delighted with anything in the nature of sport, immediately proposed to the other gentlemen to join the party, but they declined participating in any amusement which was considered as being more properly suited to boys. But George was not to be balked in his humor. A refusal from Virginia Pendleton had always the effect of driving him to the sports of the field with renewed ardor, and he now joined the lads in their excursion with hearty good-will.

The party consisted of a number of lads, some of whom were nearly grown, and others quite small. They carried axes, and blazing torches, and were followed by a number of dogs. On reaching the woods, the dogs scattered in different directions, in search of their game; and the human animals strolled carelessly along, waiting for a signal from their brute companions. The atmo-

sphere was still, but frosty; it was a clear and starlight night, but the heavy mass of decaying leaves, that still clothed the tops of the tall trees, rendered the darkness impenetrable, execept where the torches carried by the hunters, threw a bright glare immediately around them, as they passed along. The stillness that reigned through the forest was profound. As the hunters moved, the leaves rustled under their footsteps, and their voices breaking in upon the repose of nature, seemed to have an unnatural loudness; and when they stood still to listen, nothing could be heard, but now and then a distant faint sound of the tread of a dog, leaping rapidly over the dried vegetation, or the scream of an affrighted bird. They pursued no path, but strolled fearlessly through the coverts of the forest, directed only by their acquaintance with the local features of the country. They often paused to listen. The dogs continued to hunt, taking wide circuits through the forest, and returning at long intervals, one by one, to their masters, as if to report progress, or to ascertain what had been the success of others. All at once a barking was heard, falling upon the ear so faintly, as to show that it proceeded from a distant spot. It came from a single dog, and announced that he had fallen upon the scent of a raccoon; and in a few minutes a change in the tones of the animal, which became more lively, intimated that he had chased the game to its hiding-place. The other dogs, on hearing this sound, all rushed eagerly towards the spot from whence it proceeded, followed by the hunters at full speed. They found the successful dog sitting at the foot of a large honey-locust tree—or as

the boys expressed it, "barking up a honey-locust," with every appearance of triumphant delight.

The first thing which was now done, was to collect a quantity of fallen limbs, which were piled into a large heap, and lighted by means of the torches that had been brought for this purpose. In a few minutes an intense blaze shot upwards, throwing a brilliant glare of light upon the surrounding scene; and the animal for whose capture these preparations were made, was seen standing on a bough forty feet from the ground, endeavoring to conceal itself, while it gazed downwards in alarm and wonder. A loud shout announced the delight of the party on beholding their game, the dogs evinced an equal degree of pleasure, and it would have been hard to tell which animals,—the human or canine,—experienced the greatest degree of enjoyment in the sport.

The young men now threw off their coats and began with their axes to cut down the great tree, in which their prey had taken refuge. It was several feet in circumference; but that which would have been considered, under other circumstances, a laborious task, was cheerfully undertaken in the eager pursuit of amusement. Blow after blow fell upon the solid trunk in quick succession, and the woods re-echoed the rapid and cheerful strokes of the axe. Two of the hunters wielded the axe on opposite sides of the tree, striking alternately with regular cadence, and with such energy and skill that every blow made its appropriate impression; others relieved them, from time to time, by taking their places, while the smaller lads continued to supply fuel to the fire. At length the work was so nearly accomplished that a few

more blows only were required to complete it, and all of the party, except those engaged in chopping, retired to the side of the tree opposite to the direction in which it was expected to fall, gathering together all the dogs, and holding them fast by main strength, to prevent them from running under the falling tree, and being crushed by its descent. Nor was it an easy matter to restrain the eager animals, for no sooner did the great tree begin to totter and creak, than they began to whine and struggle, showing the greatest impatience to rush forward and seize their prey, as soon as he should reach the ground. The tall tree slowly bowed its top, trembling for a moment as if balanced, then cracking louder and quicker, and at last falling rapidly, tearing and crushing the boughs that intercepted its downward progress, and stretching its enormous length on the ground with a tremendous crash. The neighboring trees, whose branches were torn off, and whose tops were disturbed by the sudden rush of air accompanying the fall of so large a body, bowed their heads over their prostrate comrade, waved their splintered limbs, and then relapsed into their original state of majestic repose.

No sooner did the tree strike the ground, than the raccoon darted from among its quivering branches, and bounded away pursued by the whole yelling pack of dogs and boys. And now there was shouting and scrambling. Surrounded by so many foes, the raccoon was soon brought to bay by a young dog, who paid dearly for his inexperience, for the enraged animal turning suddenly, struck his sharp teeth into the head of the dog, who yelled lustily with pain; this occupied but a

second; the raccoon resumed his flight, and the beaten dog, whining and bleeding, slunk away. Again and again was the hard-pressed animal obliged to face his pursuers, who now headed him in every direction that he turned, and more than one dog felt his keen bite. The human tormentors crowded around, interfering no further than by encouraging the dogs with loud shouts; and the sport went bravely on, until the raccoon suddenly springing at the trunk of a large tree, clambered up, and with a few active bounds placed himself out of the reach of his pursuers.

Another fire was now kindled under the second tree, which happened to be of a less formidable size than the first, and the indefatigable hunters went to work again with their axes. The raccoon was less fortunate than before, for when the tree fell, he was completely surrounded by his enemies, who took care to prevent him from again "*treeing*." It was astonishing to see the fierceness and success with which this small animal defended himself against so many adversaries of superior size; the sharpness of his teeth, and the quickness with which he snapped, rendered his bite severe, and his sagacity in seizing upon the most vital and sensitive parts of the bodies of his assailants was remarkable. He sprung often at the eye, the lip, and throat of the dog who ventured to engage him; and it is always observable that a dog who is a veteran in such affairs, or as the hunters say, "an old 'coon dog," has a face covered with scars, an effect probably produced by the skill of the canine animal, in protecting the rest of his body, by presenting his front only to his foe. It was impossible,

however, to contend long against such unequal numbers; several of the dogs were sent yelling out of the fight; but at last one more experienced and bolder than the rest rushed in, seized the brave little animal by the throat, and in a moment worried him to death. The whole combat, though lively, fierce, and eventful, lasted but a few minutes.

The dogs were again sent out, and soon succeeded in chasing another victim into a tree, and the same proceedings were thereupon had, as a lawyer would say, as in the case aforesaid; and in the course of the night several raccoons were taken, in a similar manner so far as respected the kindling of fires, and chopping down trees. In other particulars, however, there was a considerable variety of incident. A veteran old male raccoon fought like a determined warrior, and sold his life dearly, while one of smaller size, or of the softer sex, fell an easy prey. Sometimes the unhappy animal was crushed to death by the fall of the tree in which it had taken refuge; and sometimes after an immense tree had been felled with great labor, it was found that the wily game had stolen away along the interlocking branches, and found refuge in the top of another. Then the fires were renewed, and the bright glare usually enabled the hunters to discover the fugitive closely nestled in a fork, or at the junction of a large limb with the body of the tree, where it lay concealed, until curiosity induced it to show its face, in the sly endeavor to take a peep at the operations going on below, or some slight motion betrayed a protruding paw, or the quivering tip of the tail. Occasionally the young dogs committed the disgraceful

mistake, of "treeing" a lazy fat opossum, in the branches of a slender sapling, from which it was quickly shaken down, and beaten to death ignominiously with clubs.

The hunters were nearly satiated with sport, when it happened, that the dogs, on striking a trail, went off with great vivacity, following it to a considerable distance, to the surprise of their wearied masters; for the raccoon runs slowly, and on finding itself pursued, immediately climbs a tree. On they went, full of hope, the scent growing more and more fresh, and the dogs barking louder and with greater animation, as they proceeded, until the game was driven to a tree. The fire was lighted, when the trembling of a bough showed that the animal was springing from one tree to another, where new operations were commenced, and the axes were striking merrily, when an alarm from the dogs was heard, and it was found that the wily game, after stealing from tree to tree, had descended to the ground and dashed off. Away went the dogs and boys again, in higher spirits than ever, for the ingenuity and boldness of the animal showed that nobler game was now started, and that they were on the trail of a wild-cat, who was so closely pressed, as to be again obliged, after a gallant run of about half a mile, to take refuge in the branches of a tall oak, which happened to stand apart, so that the animal could not leap into a neighboring tree. Fires were now lighted all round the spot, so that a considerable space was illuminated with a brilliancy as great as that of noon-day; the cat was seen, with back erect, and glaring eye-balls, looking fiercely down; the axes

were plied with renewed vigor, and the oak was soon prostrated. Greater precautions were now used, to prevent the escape of their prey; the youths, armed with clubs, formed a large circle, and the dogs rushed in from different directions. The enraged animal sprung boldly out, bounding with vigorous leaps, showing his white teeth, and growling defiance. The dogs, highly excited, dashed fearlessly at their prey, and a hot engagement ensued, for they had now to cope with one of the most ferocious brutes of the forest—one which, though not large in size, is muscular, active, cunning, and undauntedly fierce. Fighting with teeth and claws, he inflicted deep wounds on his eager assailants. Growling, barking, hissing, and shouting, were mingled in horrible discord. Dried leaves, and earth, and fur, were thrown into the air, and the slender bushes were crushed and trampled down, by the maddened combatants. Surrounded, and attacked on all sides, the furious cat fought with desperation. Sometimes springing suddenly up over the heads of his assailants, he alighted on the back of a dog, fixing his teeth deep in the neck, driving his sharp claws into the throat on either side, and bearing down the agonized and suffocated animal to the earth; and sometimes overthrown, and fighting on his back, bitten and worried from every direction, he sprang at the throat of one of his tormentors, sunk his deadly fangs into the jugular, nor released his hold until the dog quivered with the pangs of death; until wounded, torn, bleeding, and exhausted, he was overpowered by numbers. Thus ended, in triumph, a most *glorious hunt*.

The night was nearly wasted, and the sportsmen, now

several miles from home, began to retrace their steps. After proceeding a short distance, they divided into several parties, each taking the nearest direction to their respective habitations. One of the youths agreed to accompany Mr. Lee to Colonel Hendrickson's; and our friend George, after expressing the delight he had experienced in the "capital sport" which they had enjoyed, bade them a hearty good night, and marched off with his young guide, through the dark and now silent forest. Fatigued with several hours of severe exercise, they sauntered slowly along, and as the hunter walks, habitually, with a noiseless tread, their footsteps fell silently on the leafy carpet of the forest. The death-like repose of the woods afforded a strong contrast to the fires which had lately gleamed, and the sounds of conflict that had awakened the echoes of the wilderness. Although the darkness was almost impenetrable, the guide moved forward with unerring skill, keeping the direct course, without deviation, climbing over hills, on whose summits the star-light glimmered faintly through the foliage, or descending into vales, where not a gleam of the light of heaven broke in upon the solitary travellers.

At length, they crossed their former track, at a spot where one of the fires had been lighted. The fuel had been heaped up at the foot of a dead tree, of considerable magnitude, and as the pile had been great, and the heat intense, the flames had enveloped the trunk, extended upwards to the branches, and lighted the whole fabric in a blaze of glowing fire. They first saw this beautiful sight from the summit of a neighboring hill, from which, though still distant, it was distinctly visible—a tree of

fire, standing alone in the dark forest! The trunk presented a tall column of intense redness, round which the flames curled, and rolled, giving to this majestic pillar of fire the appearance of a waving motion; while the branches and twigs were all lighted up, and completely enveloped with the glowing element, and parts of them were continually breaking off and falling to the ground, like drops of blazing liquid. As they stood gazing at this splendid exhibition, several figures were seen moving in the light, close to the burning tree, which were ascertained to be those of men and horses; and the hunters felt their curiosity excited by the appearance of horsemen in this solitary place, at such an hour. Mr. Lee proposed to approach them, and ascertain their character; and the guide, equally inquisitive, consented, with some hesitation, and after suggesting the propriety of using caution. Deeds of violence had lately been perpetrated; and the young forester whispered, that for some days past, when the men of the family were at work in the fields at some distance from the house, his mother had kept the doors fastened all day, and if she heard a footstep approaching, hid her children, and armed herself with a rifle, before she looked out, to ascertain the character of the visitor. The butcheries of the Harpes had filled the whole country with dread.

Thus prepared, they advanced, cautiously, towards the fire, and came sufficiently near to distinguish two men, stout, ill-looking, and completely armed. They frequently looked suspiciously around, and listened, like men expecting to be pursued, and resolved to be on their guard; and as they stood exposed in the broad glare of

the light, there could be no doubt that they were the identical ruffians who had disturbed the peace of these new settlements, and against whom the whole community was about to rise in vengeance. Each of them held by the bridle a fine horse, panting as if from a hard ride. There was another person with them, to whom one of the men was speaking, in earnest and authoritative language, and who was recognized, at a glance, by Mr. Lee, as his late companion, Hark Short, the snake-killer.

After conversing a few minutes, the men mounted their horses, and rode rapidly away, plunging their spurs into the sides of their spirited steeds, and riding over obstacles, and through brush, with fearless and careless speed. Mr. Lee waited until they were out of hearing, and then advanced to the fire, to speak to Hark; but the boy, on hearing his footsteps, ran nimbly away, without waiting to ascertain who it was that approached; and the hunters resumed their homeward way, which led in a direction opposite to that taken by the Harpes.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

It was nearly noon, when Mr. Lee rose the following morning. He found Colonel Hendrickson, and all his guests, waiting for him to accompany them in a ride to the house of a neighboring gentleman, where they had engaged to dine. When he communicated the intelligence of having seen the Harpes on the preceding night, the gentlemen expressed great regret at not having heard it sooner, and determined to go in a body the next day, in pursuit of the ruffians.

The horses were soon at the door, and the gay party began to mount, each of the young gentlemen selecting a favorite fair one for his own special charge, as is customary and proper in all well-regulated parties of pleasure. Mr. Lee, who considered that he had a prescriptive right to wait upon Miss Pendleton, was advancing to assist her to mount her horse, when he perceived that Mr. Fennimore had already taken her hand; and turned back, jealous, mortified, and almost determined that he would not join the company. The blood mounted into his cheeks, and his brow lowered, as he stood irresolute—a momentary paroxysm of rage struggling in his bosom, against his native good-humor and habitual politeness.

Colonel Hendrickson saw his embarrassment, and with ready politeness endeavored to remove it.

"Mr. Lee," said he, "I must show you a few acres of fine tobacco, as we ride along. I suspect you are a

good judge of such matters; your father, if I recollect, was a famous tobacco raiser."

George bowed, and silently walked with his host towards their horses.

"Cousin George," said Miss Pendleton, with one of her sweetest smiles, as he was stalking sulkily by her horse's head, "will you have the goodness to arrange that rein for me?"—the cloud passed from his brow, as he placed his hand on the bridle—"not that one George, the other—thank you—there—that is exactly right—you are going with us, cousin George?" and, bowing gracefully, she rode off, escorted by Mr. Fennimore; while George Lee, completely conciliated by this little manœuvre, swore, internally, that she was the sweetest creature in the world, and that Fennimore deserved to be shot.

As the gay company filed off in couples, Mr. Lee and the Colonel lingered in the rear; the latter pointed out his tobacco crop, his corn, and his turnips, talked of his horses, and then turned the subject to hunting, and told some stirring anecdotes of backwoods adventure. George listened until he became interested, and, before the ride was over, had recovered his usual spirits. But still he was not satisfied. To give up Virginia was sufficiently painful, but to see another carry off the bright prize was more than his slender stock of philosophy could bear.

They found a large party assembled to dinner. We shall not stop to count the roasted pigs and turkeys, the juicy hams, the fat haunches of venison, the bowls of apple-toddy, and the loads of good things, on which they

were regaled. More important matters lie before us, and urge us forward to the sequel of this history.

After dinner, when the gentlemen were strolling in the open air, Mr. Lee whispered to Mr. Fennimore, that he wished to converse with him in private, and led the way to a retired place. Fennimore noticed his discontented air, and an expression of defiance on his features, and followed him in silence, wondering what was to be the subject of their secret conference. When entirely out of hearing of the rest of the company, Mr. Lee demanded, in a haughty tone,

"I wish to know, sir, whether you intended to affront me, by your conduct this morning?"

"Most certainly not," replied Mr. Fennimore, in a cheerful tone. "I am even ignorant of the circumstance to which you allude."

George had invited his rival to this conversation, in the determination to quarrel with him at all events. The conciliatory tone of Fennimore disarmed him for a moment; but having, like most men when acting under the influence of passion, predetermined not to be satisfied, he returned to the charge.

"Do you say, sir, that you do not consider it an affront, to have stepped between me and a lady that I was about to conduct to her horse?"

"If I had done so intentionally, I should say I had been guilty of great rudeness."

"Then you assert that you did not do it purposely?"

"I do, sir," replied the officer composedly; "and I will add——"

"Well, sir?" exclaimed George, pricking up his ears,

and expecting to hear a defiance which would lead to the result that he wished to provoke.

"I will add, with great pleasure, that if unintentionally I was guilty of such seeming rudeness, it is due to my own character, and to your feelings, that I should ask your pardon."

A soft answer turneth away wrath. George was too much of a gentleman, and had too much native good-humor, not to be reconciled by the politeness and good sense of these replies. He gave his hand to Fennimore, and then walked up and down for some time, in great embarrassment.

"And so you won't quarrel with me?" said he, at last.

"Not willingly, Mr. Lee," replied Mr. Fennimore, laughing; "I have seen such evidences of your prowess, lately, that I would much rather fight by your side, than against you."

"Would you do me a favor, Mr. Fennimore?"

"With a great deal of pleasure, sir."

"Then just insult me, if you please; say any thing that I can ask satisfaction for; do any thing that I can take offence at, and I will thank you as long as I live."

"I am sorry I cannot gratify you, Mr. Lee," replied Fennimore, much amused; "but really I like you too well, to feel any desire to forfeit you friendship."

"Well, if you will do nothing else to oblige me, will you go to the woods, and let us shoot at each other, for amusement?"

"Excuse me, Mr. Lee," replied Fennimore in the best humor possible.

"Tell me one thing, if you please, sir, and I have done—are you in love with Virginia Pendleton?"

"How shall I answer you?" replied Fennimore; "to say I am, might argue presumption; to say I am not, would show a want of taste."

"Well, sir, allow me to put you on your guard. It is useless to court her. She will not have you. I have been courting her these ten years, and have offered myself fifty times. It is perfectly useless, sir, to court her. I know her well—she is determined not to marry. She is the finest woman ever raised in Virginia—but she will not marry any man—I have ascertained that."

"I thank you, Mr. Lee, for your friendly warning; and should I be unsuccessful, I shall recollect that I have ventured contrary to a friend's advice."

"Recollect another thing, if you please, sir—I have a prior claim to that lady's affection, which I will maintain at the risk of my life."

"Nay, but, Mr. Lee——"

"Excuse me, sir,—I have made up my mind on that point; any man who marries Virginia Pendleton must fight me first."

So saying, Mr. George Lee walked off, leaving Fennimore a little provoked, and very much amused; though upon reflection, he felt only sympathy for this amiable young man, who, with an excellent heart, and the most gentlemanly feelings, was betrayed by the weakness of his intellect, and his perseverance in a hopeless passion, into the most extravagant absurdities.

## CHAPTER XXV.

The Harpes had heretofore escaped punishment, in consequence of a variety of peculiar circumstances. The scene of their barbarities was still almost a wilderness, and a variety of cares pressed on the people. The spoils of their dreadful warfare furnished them with the means of violence and of escape. Mounted on fine horses, they plunged into the forest, eluded pursuit by frequently changing their course, and appeared unexpectedly, to perpetrate new enormities, at places far distant from those where they were supposed to lurk. More than once were the people lulled into security, and the pursuit of the ruffians abandoned, by the supposition that they had entirely disappeared from the country—when the conflagration of a solitary cabin, and the murder of all its inmates, awakened the whole community to lively sensations of fear, horror, and indignation.

Miss Pendleton heard of these atrocities with shuddering. Thrice had she seen one of these assassins, under circumstances calculated to excite the most dreadful apprehensions. On each occasion his hand was raised against her life, and his malignant scowl seemed to announce the existence of some deadly feud against her. But why she should be thus an object of vengeance and pursuit, she was totally unable to discover, or even conjecture.

In the meanwhile, the outrages of these murderers had not escaped public notice, nor were they tamely sub-

mitted to. The governor of Kentucky had offered a reward for their heads, and parties of volunteers had pursued them; they had been so fortunate as to escape punishment by their cunning, but had not the prudence to fly the country, or to desist from their crimes.

On the morning after these wretches had been seen by Mr. George Lee, the intelligence arrived of their having murdered a woman and all her children. The vengeance of the whole community was now roused to the highest pitch, and it was determined to raise parties, and hunt down the murderers. Horsemen were seen traversing the woods in every direction, eagerly beating up all the coverts, and examining every suspicious place where it was supposed the outlaws might lurk.

A man named Leiper, who had some renown as an active and successful hunter, and who was both muscular and brave, headed a small party. The ruffians were encamped in the woods, at an obscure wild spot, distant from any habitation; and were seated on the ground, surrounded by their women and children, when the hunters came so suddenly upon them, that they had only time to fly in different directions. Micajah Harpe, the larger of the two brothers, sprung upon a fine blooded horse, that he had taken from a traveller but a day or two before, and dashed off, pursued by the whole party; while his brother, not having time to mount, stole silently away among the brushwood, and escaped notice.

Micajah, who was kept in view by the pursuers, spurred forward the noble animal on which he was mounted, and which, already jaded, began to fail at the end of five or six miles. The chase was long and hot, and the

miscreant continued to press forward; for although his pursuers had one by one dropped in the rear, until none of them were in sight but Leiper, he was not willing to risk a combat with a man as strong, and bolder than himself, who was animated by a noble spirit of indignation, against a shocking and unmanly outrage. Leiper was mounted upon a horse of celebrated powers, which had been borrowed from the owner for this occasion. At the beginning of the chase he had pressed his charger to the height of his speed, carefully keeping on the track of Harpe, of whom he sometimes caught a glimpse as he ascended the hills, and again lost sight of in the valleys and the brush. But as he gained on the foe, and became sure of his victim, he slackened his pace, cocked his rifle, and deliberately pursued, sometimes calling upon the outlaw to surrender.

It was an animating, but fearful sight, to behold two powerful and desperately bold men, armed, and mounted on gallant steeds, pursuing each other so closely as to render it almost certain that a mortal struggle must soon ensue. At length Harpe's horse, having strained all his powers in leaping a ravine, received an injury which obliged him to slacken his pace, and Leiper overtook him. Both were armed with rifles. When near enough to fire with certainty, Leiper stopped, took a deliberate aim, and shot the retreating ruffian through the body; the latter, turning in his saddle, levelled his piece, which missed fire, and he dashed it to the ground, swearing that it was the first time it had ever deceived him. He then drew a tomahawk, and waited the approach of Leiper, who, nothing daunted, drew his long hunting-

knife, and rushed upon his desperate foe, grappled with him, hurled him to the ground, and wrested the weapon from his grasp. The prostrate wretch, exhausted with the loss of blood, conquered, but unsubdued in spirit, now lay passive at the feet of his adversary.

Leiper was a humane man, easy, slow-spoken, and not quickly excited, but a thorough soldier when his energies were aroused into action. Without insulting the expiring criminal, he questioned him as to the motives of his late atrocities. The murderer attempted not to palliate or deny them, and confessed that he had been actuated by no other inducement than a settled hatred of his species, whom he had sworn to destroy without distinction, in revenge for some fancied injury. He expressed no regret for his bloody deeds. He acknowledged that he had amassed large sums of money, and described some of the places of concealment; but as none was ever discovered, it is presumed he did not declare the truth. Leiper had fired at Harpe several times during the chase, and wounded him; and when Harpe was asked why, when he found Leiper pursuing him alone, he did not dismount and *take a tree*, from behind which he could have inevitably shot him as he approached, he replied that he had supposed there was not a horse in the country equal to the one he rode, and that he was confident of making his escape. He thought also that the pursuit would be less eager, so long as he abstained from shedding the blood of his pursuers. On the arrival of the rest of the party, the wretch was dispatched, and his head severed from his body. This bloody trophy was then carried to the nearest magistrate,

before whom it was proved to be the head of Micajah Harpe; after which it was placed in the fork of a tree, where it long remained, a revolting object of horror. The spot is still called *Harpe's Head*, and the public road which passes near it is called the Harpe's Head Road.

Colonel Hendrickson and his friends had ridden out to join in the pursuit, and had been scouring the forest some hours, when they met a party who informed them of the death of Harpe, and they turned their horses' heads homewards. They were passing over a high but level tract of country, whose surface was undulated by gradual swells, and covered with a thick growth of timber; to their right was a hilly, broken tract, called "*the Knobs*," in which these villains had often harbored. In front of them was a region of open brushy land, destitute of trees, and which seemed to have been lately a wide prairie, with no other covering but grass. Mr. Lee, whose feelings seemed to be less social than usual, was riding by himself in advance of the party; when at a spot where two roads crossed, he was surprised to see Hark Short, leaning against a tree, in an attitude of fixed attention. He was so completely absorbed as not to be at all conscious of the approach of Mr. Lee, until the latter spoke to him.

"What's the matter, Hark?" said he: "have you found a big rattle-snake?"

Hark started as he heard the voice, and looked timidly round. His features, usually melancholy, now wore an expression of fear and horror. Without answering the questions of Mr. Lee, he raised his eyes wildly; and

George looking upward in the direction indicated by the glance of the boy, beheld the bleeding head of Harpe! For a moment he felt his own faculties bewildered, and a shuddering sensation crept over him, as he gazed at this shocking spectacle; but a recollection of the crimes of the delinquent, who had been punished in this summary manner, changed the current of his feelings, and he exclaimed sharply,

"Is the boy mad?—is it so strange a thing that a murderer should be put to death?"

Hark only groaned, and looked perplexed.

"This wretch was an acquaintance of yours, it seems—you appear so much concerned about him, that I am inclined to have you taken up as an accomplice."

"No, don't—don't, if you please, stranger," exclaimed Hark.

"Then tell me why you seem so much interested in the death of that murderer."

"Who—that gentleman?" inquired Hark stupidly, pointing to the mangled relic.

"Yes, that miscreant, who has been put to death for his crimes,—what do you know about him?"

"Well, I don't know *nothen*, in *peticklar*."

The other gentlemen now rode up, and on learning the subject of conversation, insisted that the boy should disclose all the particulars that he knew respecting the ruffians, of whose history little was known.

"I never saw that gentleman," said Hark, "till since I came out here to Kentuck."

"But I understand," replied Colonel Hendrickson, "that a lad who I have reason to believe was yourself

assisted these ruffians in escaping, when arrested some weeks ago, and went off with them."

"Anan!" exclaimed the lad.

Colonel Hendrickson repeated, and explained what he had said.

"'Spose I did cut the strings—was there any harm in that?"

"Certainly—aiding in the escape of a prisoner, is a criminal offence; and it is my duty, as a magistrate, to bring you to punishment for it."

"Would you punish me for cutting the strings, when the Indians had *you* tied to the pole, to be roasted?"

This was an appeal which was not easily parried. The Colonel acknowledged his obligations to Hark, and at once disclaimed any intention of arresting him, but on the contrary offered him his protection.

"And now," said he, "I want you to tell me all that you know about Harpe."

"Will you let me go, arter that?"

"Yes."

"Won't you beat me, afore you turn me loose?"

"No, my lad, nobody shall touch you. You did me a good turn, at the risk of your life, and I will repay it, at the risk of mine, if necessary."

"Well—I never seed Harpe, as I know on, in peticklar, till that night."

"Had you never heard of him?"

"Well—not in peticklar—only what mammy said."

"What did she say?"

"She told me that 'Kage Harpe was a powerful bad man. She used to get mad, and curse him a hour."

"Did she ever tell you anything that he did?"

"Not in peticklar—only that he killed every body that he got mad at—and that he would kill her and me, if he got a chance."

"Why should he wish to kill your mother?"

"I axed her that myself, but she wouldn't tell me."

"Why then did you release Harpe, when you saw him for the first time, in custody?"

"I couldn't help it."

"Why not? Come, tell us all about it—nobody shall hurt you."

"Well—Harpe told me that he was my father!"

"And then you cut him loose?"

"Yes—wouldn't you cut your daddy loose, if anybody had him tied?"

"Hark," said George Lee, "you must go with me to Virginia, and live with me—I will take care of you."

"I reckon, I can't go."

"Why not?"

"'Cause I don't want to."

"Would you not like to live in a fine house, and have plenty to eat, and nothing to do?"

"I don't like to live in houses."

"You don't! what is your objection?"

"Well—I can't say, in peticklar—only I'd rather live in the woods. I can do just as I please in the woods, and be as happy as a tree-frog."

So saying, Hark began to move off. He cast a look of terror towards the remains of his inhuman parent, as he retired. It was not affection, nor regret, which chained his glance to this revolting object; but a kind of

instinct—a superstitious reverence for the only remaining being whose blood was kindred to his own, mingled with a dread of human punishments, that seemed to have been instilled into him in infancy, and which was the master-spring of all his actions. He quickened his pace on finding himself at liberty, walked rapidly away, and never was seen again in that region; nor is it known, with any certainty, what ever became of Hark Short, the snake-killer. It is most probable that he perished in the wilderness; although it is altogether possible, that he may still be killing reptiles, on some distant frontier of our vast country.

A company of people now arrived, who had in their possession a number of articles which had been found in the camp of the Harpes. Among the rest, was a small tin case, which was filled with papers. Mr. Fennimore having hastily looked over this, expressed a wish to examine it more at his leisure; and it was, accordingly, placed in his charge. The fatigued woodsmen separated, and Colonel Hendrickson conducted his friends once more to his hospitable mansion.

Their arrival was joyfully welcomed by the family, who had been under great apprehensions during their absence. Miss Pendleton, though much shocked at some of the particulars which they related, could not but feel relieved, when she heard that the enemy of her peace was no more. Fennimore, who had concealed from his friends, as they rode home, an interesting discovery which he had made, advanced to her, with a face beaming with joy, and, presenting to her a parchment, remarked,

"I am happy, Miss Pendleton, to have it in my power to restore to you this document. It is the will of my uncle Heyward, and places you in full possession of all his estate. Allow me to congratulate you on your good fortune."

"I do not know, Mr. Fennimore, whether I ought to accept the bounty of my uncle, which, by making me rich, deprives you of your natural inheritance."

"Happily for us both," replied the officer, "that is a question which need not now be argued; Major Heyward, who had the undoubted right to dispose of his own property, has made the decision, and we have only to acquiesce."

Mrs. Hendrickson, who seldom spoke, except when spoken to, but who, with the sagacity peculiar to her sex, in matters relating to the heart, had made some shrewd observations on the deportment of these young people towards each other, now remarked, in her quiet way,

"If there is any difficulty about the property, perhaps you had as well let *me* keep that instrument, until you can devise some plan for holding the estate jointly."

Virginia blushed deeply; and Fennimore, very gaily, handed the parchment to Mrs. Hendrickson.

"On those terms, madam," said he, "I most cheerfully deposit this document in your keeping, and shall, on my part, submit the controversy to your decision."

George Lee, when he heard that the *will* was found, danced and capered about the room, like a boy, wished his cousin Virginia joy a hundred times, and shook Fennimore cordially by the hand, swearing that he was the

cleverest fellow in all Kentucky; but when he saw what he considered proof positive, that Fennimore was a successful candidate for the hand of her who had so long been the object of his affections, he left the room, and began to make immediate preparations for his return to his native state.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

### THE CONCLUSION.

Several years had passed away, since the occurrence of the events recorded in the preceding pages. Captain Fennimore and the fair Virginia had been married, and were residing near to Colonel Hendrickson. William Colburn was united to the Colonel's only daughter, and was settled in the neighborhood; and as no evidence to the contrary is before us, we are authorized in believing that both these couples were enjoying the most uninterrupted matrimonial felicity.

The best friends, however, must sometimes part; and Captain Fennimore found it necessary to leave his pleasant home, and his agreeable wife, to attend to the affairs of their joint estate in Virginia. The farm formerly occupied by Major Heyward, was rented out; but the tenant had erected a house on a part of the land distant from the spot where the former mansion had stood. Captain Fennimore, feeling a desire to revisit the place where his uncle had resided and his wife had

grown up from infancy to maturity, rode over, one day, to the ruins of the old house. The lane was still kept open, but was grown up with weeds and briers. The lawn around the house preserved something of its former verdure and beauty; but the garden was overrun with bushes, whose wild and tangled limbs were strangely mingled with the remains of a variety of rare and ornamental shrubs. Indigenous thorns, and domestic fruits, grew side by side, and wild flowers mingled their blossoms with those of exotic plants. There is nothing so melancholy as such a scene, where luxury and art are beheld in ruin, and their remains revive the recollection of departed pleasures. There has always seemed to me to be something peculiarly desolate in the appearance of a deserted garden, where the spot, once adorned with taste, and cultivated with assiduous care, has been suffered to run into wilderness. Nowhere are the efforts of nature and art so harmoniously blended, as in the garden; nowhere does embellishment seem so appropriate, or labor so productive. There is something quiet, and innocent, and peaceful, about the beauties of a garden, that interests the heart, at the same time that the senses reap enjoyment.

While Captain Fennimore was strolling pensively about, he discovered a horseman riding up the avenue towards the same place. On reaching the large gate which opened into the lawn, the person halted, and remained sitting on his horse. Fennimore, supposing that it might be some one who had business with himself, walked slowly towards the gate; but before he reached it, and while concealed from the stranger by a cluster of

bushes, he was surprised to hear the voice of the latter, as if in conversation with another person.

"She is not at home, eh?" said the voice; "well, tell her I called, boy, d'ye hear?—tell her Mr. George Lee called."

Fennimore, curious to know to whom Mr. Lee was speaking, advanced a few steps, so as to see, without being exposed himself; and was surprised to find, that no person was within sight but themselves. Mr. Lee was mounted on a fine horse, and completely armed, with a sword, a pair of large pistols, and a rifle. He wore his father's revolutionary uniform coat, buff waistcoat, and cocked hat, and, thus accoutred, formed an imposing figure. His countenance wore the flush of habitual intemperance, together with the mingled wildness and stupidity of partial derangement After sitting silent for a few minutes, he drew his sword, and exclaimed,

"Gentlemen, I pronounce Virginia Pendleton to be the most beautiful woman ever raised in the Old Dominion, and I am ready to make good my words. You understand me, gentlemen! There she sits at her window—she has made a vow that she will never marry, and I stand here, prepared to cut any gentleman's throat who shall dare to pay her his addresses. Gentlemen, shall we hunt to-morrow? Pass that bottle, if you please, Mr. Jones—no heeltaps. My compliments to Miss Pendleton, boy, d'ye hear? and tell her, I called to inquire after her health."

Then drawing himself up, he saluted with his sword, and sheathed it, took off his hat, bowed towards the spot where the house had been, and kissed his hand;

after which, he wheeled his horse about, and rode with a slow and stately pace down the avenue.

Poor George! he had fallen a victim to the evil example of an intemperate father, and the intrigues of an ambitious mother. With a heart tenderly alive to the best charities of human nature, and a disposition easily moulded to the purposes of those with whom he associated, he might readily have been trained to respectability and usefulness, and although he could never have become a brilliant man, he might have been what is far more important, an amiable and worthy citizen. But his weak intellect, assailed by the seductions of pleasure on the one hand, and by dazzling schemes of ambition on the other, became unsettled, and at last totally destroyed. His vigorous constitution enabled him long to outlive the wreck of his mind, and he continued for many years to visit the ruins of Major Heyward's mansion, dressed in the fantastic habiliments which we have described. He remembered nothing which occurred after his ill-starred journey to the frontier; and the events of his early life were mixed up in his memory in the most singular confusion. He continued to be the devoted lover of Virginia Pendleton, and nothing ever ruffled his temper except the mention of her marriage, which he always denied with indignation, as an insult to her and himself; while the recollections of his early love were mingled with visions of bacchanalian orgies, and with hideous dreams of bloody encounters with the savages. Many years afterwards, when his cheeks were furrowed, and his hair gray with premature old age, he might still be seen, mounted on his sleek

hunter, clad in his ancient uniform, with his hair powdered, and his long queue neatly tied, riding with stately grace, every day, along the old avenue, paying his imaginary morning visit to the idol of his heart. He was followed by an old negro valet, as gray and nearly as stately as himself, who humored all the fancies of his master, until it was supposed that the faithful black began to be tinctured with the madness which he had affectionately humored, and spoke of Miss Virginia Pendleton with the most unaffected gravity, long after that lady was the mother of a numerous and thriving colony of young Kentuckians.

Mrs. Lee mourned over the disappointment of all her hopes, in the bitterness of unavailing repentance. When our errors affect only ourselves, the pang of remorse may be borne with patience; but when they have extended to those we love, and our own conviction comes too late to restore peace to the bosoms we have ruined, the cup of wretchedness is fatally poisoned for the remainder of a miserable life. She never smiled, and was never seen to weep; and bore the sufferings which only a woman's love can know, with a dignified resignation, of which woman's fortitude alone is capable.

THE END.