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# KENTUCKY CHRONICLE

JOHN · THOMPSON · GRAY

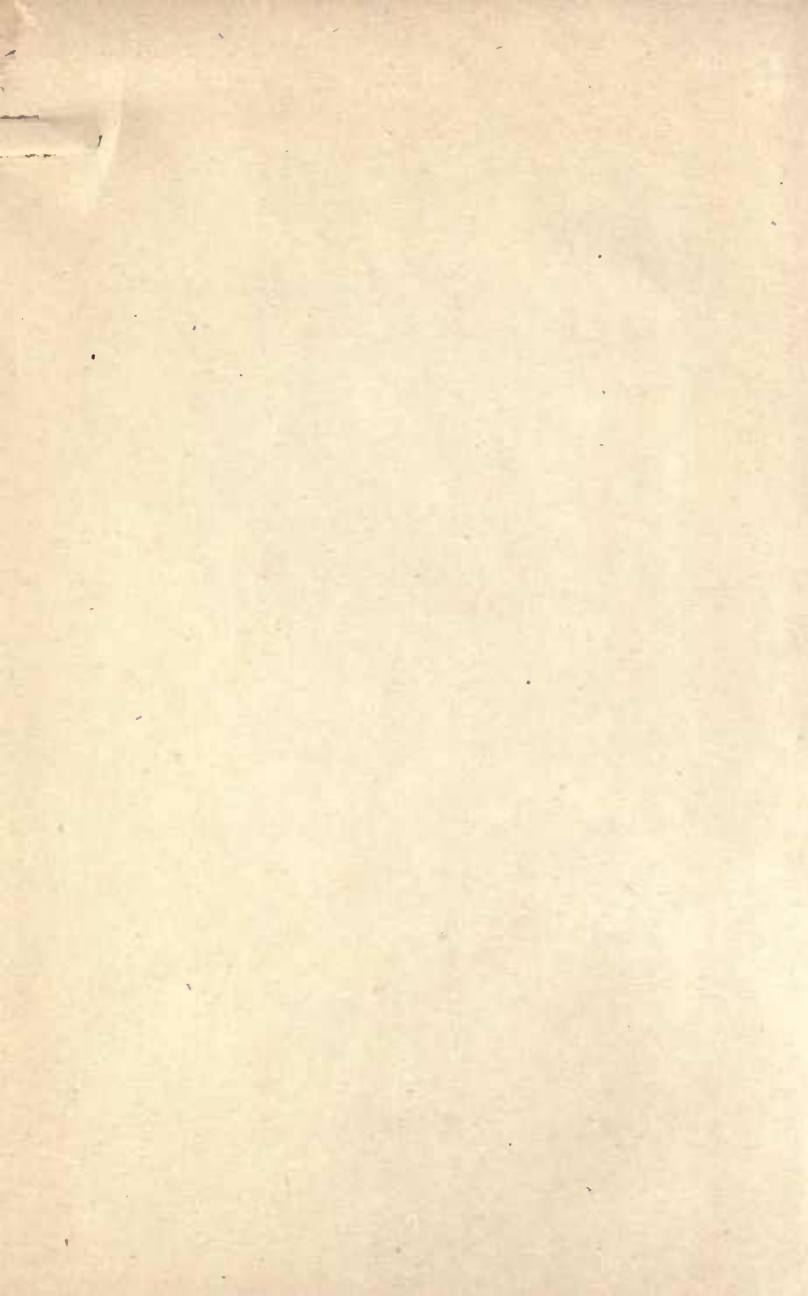
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A KENTUCKY CHRONICLE



# A KENTUCKY CHRONICLE

BY  
JOHN THOMPSON GRAY



THE  
KENTUCKY  
CHRONICLE  
PUBLISHED  
BY  
THE NEALE PUBLISHING COMPANY

NEW YORK AND WASHINGTON  
THE NEALE PUBLISHING COMPANY

1906

# A KENTUCKY CHRONICLE

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## PREFACE.

TO EXHIBIT by sketches from social annals, as by a cross-section, a phase of the early civilization of Kentucky, common in its leading features to most of the slave States, but in some respects peculiar to the locality to which it relates, is the purpose of this book. The incidents recounted are all true, derived from authentic sources or of which the writer may say "*Quorum perexigua pars fui.*" The characters are real people that lived, moved, and had their being. For obvious reasons names have been sometimes changed, but in all else it is a veritable chronicle.

It would be presumptuous to claim for this work the title of history. Dealing with a people of that happy class whose annals are dull, it possesses none of the dignity and concern so often "purchased to history at the expense of mankind." Yet when faithfully done such writings are not without value. Mr. Burke, speaking of books that depict the manners of a people, says, "We possess at this time very great advantages toward the knowledge of human nature. We need no longer go to history to trace it in all its ages and periods." Nay, of historians it has been long complained that they have dwelt too long in senate houses, and on battle-fields, and even in kings' ante-chambers, forgetting that

far away from such scenes, in a thousand remote valleys, a world of existence was blossoming and fading, whether the famous victory were won or lost.

One of the early English poets says,

“Stories to read are delitable,  
Suppose that they be nought but fable,  
Then suld stories that suthfast were,  
And they were said in good manere,  
Have double pleasance in hearing.”

Neibuhr says, “He who calls departed ages back again into being enjoys a bliss like that of creating.” This the writer has verified. If the reader shall get from this chronicle a tithe of the pleasure it has given the author in recalling, both may be well contented.

A PIONEER.



**A KENTUCKY CHRONICLE**



## CHAPTER I

### A HASTY BIRD'S-EYE VIEW

IN ITS primitive state no more delightful region ever invited adventurers within its borders than that which now constitutes the Commonwealth of Kentucky. Under a genial climate it possessed a vast area of fertile land shadowed by the undisturbed vegetation of centuries, a surface diversified by every form of natural beauty, where "blue rivers ran undammed between hills unhewn, into far forest solitudes primeval, odorous, and unexplored." Though coveted by all the savage tribes that dwelt upon its borders, and the cause of cruel wars among them, it was never possessed by any: a virgin land engirdled as with a silver zone by a chain of bright rivers, chief among them the Ohio, characteristically named "The beautiful river." Its fame was soon spread abroad and drew within its borders hardy adventurers from many quarters:

"A motley band: the bearded man,  
The eager and ambitious boy,  
The fugitive from fallen Troy,  
The Old World knight with stainless name,  
The man with heritage of shame."

When the war for independence was ended a new and distinct class of emigrants turned their steps to Kentucky. Soldiers of the Revolution, who, to maintain themselves and their commands through the war, had mortgaged their lands and slaves, finding their fortunes seriously impaired by the financial stress that followed the war, with little left but their swords and their tattered uniforms, gathered together the remnant of slaves and chattels, and with these,

and their wives and children, and their household gods, made their way to this new region.

The easier route by the Ohio, in flatboats, attracted most of these. No route was safe from the lurking savages, and the annals of the State are full of details of frightful disasters on the way. Such points as were provided with a fort, or had gathered sufficient strength to resist the inroads of the Indians, were naturally favorite places of destination. The settlement at the falls of the Ohio, known as "The Falls," having at an early day built a fort, and become a strong post, was a favorite point for landing. Hither came large numbers of these new settlers, if not to abide, at least to make a temporary lodgement until they should have fixed upon a place of permanent abode. In the year 1784 our annalists tell us that three hundred and eighty-four "family-boats" landed at The Falls. The greater part of these immigrants settled permanently there or in the neighborhood. They had come chiefly from Virginia and Maryland, but much the greater part from Virginia. To these last, proverbially noted for love of their native land, it was some consolation to know that Kentucky was a portion of Virginia, and that they were still leal subjects of the "Old Dominion."

Thus at an early day all the elements of refined life were brought together at The Falls, and in its vicinity. Its society was not the result of the gradual growth of frontier life developed by slow degrees from rude pioneers and hunters, but an integral portion of whatever was best in the civilization of the older States, especially of Virginia and Maryland, bodily transplanted thither, and under new skies, and in a fresh soil, striking deep its roots, and bearing rich and abundant fruit.

Besides the large immigration from Virginia and Maryland, there was a notable accession to the settlement of many French families, fugitives from revolutionary France, and from St. Domingo; people of culture and refinement, and many of them possessed of wealth. They were notable not only in these respects and for their considerable number, but also for their influence upon the manners of the people. "In founding new colonies," says Chateaubriand,

"our navigators tell us, that the Spaniards build first a church, the English a tavern, the French a fort, and I say also a ballroom." And then in illustration of the universal and invincible passion of his nation for dancing, he gives an account of a little Frenchman, one Violet, who had come to America as a scullion in the army of Count Rochambeau, and who, having conceived the idea of introducing French dancing among the aborigines, when the French went away remained behind in New York, and afterward made his way to the then frontier of that State. There Chateaubriand found him installed as dancing-master to the Cayugas, a branch of the great Iroquois nation, receiving his pay in beavers' skins and bears' hams, and saw him in the middle of the forest, arrayed in the regulation costume of a French dancing-master, apple-green coat and ruffles of lace, and cocked hat, take his little fiddle from his pocket, and crying out in the Iroquois language to a large band of scholars, men and women half naked, with feathers in their heads, "Take your places," strike up "Madelon Friquet," and send them "jumping like a band of devils." The Frenchmen at The Falls were true to their ancient traditions. There was no need of a fort when they came, and the old fastness had fallen into disuse and decay, but they set up at once a ballroom, and organized a dancing-school, which was soon overflowing with scholars, and was the means of disseminating among the people much of that gaiety and graceful politeness that belong to the French nation, softening and enlivening the stately manners of the old Virginia school.

The master of the dance, Monsieur Guibert, had not been bred a dancing-master. In France he had been a lawyer, but finding this profession not likely to avail him to maintain a wife and child at The Falls, with that practical philosophy which distinguishes his nation, he became there a dancing-master. People used to relate as a joke against the lawyers, that one of these asking him how, having been in France a lawyer, he could stoop to teach dancing in Kentucky, was answered, "It is verra true in France I was an avocat, but w'en I come to Kentucky I find ze law no respectable, and I take to ze dance."

It is proper to say here that at an early day a large district, embracing many square miles about the falls of the Ohio, was known as "The Falls District." This was gradually narrowed until it embraced only the town there and its vicinity, and at last the town alone. On the map this soon bore another name, but in this chronicle it will be known only as The Falls, to which name its old inhabitants always adhered.

The little settlement prospered and grew rapidly, and became in a few years a busy river town. Even before the advent of the steamboat, the extensive and cheap transportation on the rivers, by means of keeled barges and flatboats, had made its commercial interests very considerable. It was by natural position a distributing point for commodities, in all directions, and was the official distributing point for the public mail. It was not long before there were set up there large flouring mills and a distillery.

The coming of the first steamboat was a notable event in the history of The Falls. It is coldly related, after the manner of historians, in our annals, but this chronicler is happy to be able to give from contemporaneous testimony a brief particular relation of its effect at the little town. It was in the fall of 1811, a year of portents, a comet in the sky (a baleful omen), earthquakes at hand, war impending, and hostilities already begun by Great Britain, while Mr. Clay, then in the flower of his life, was urging with stormy eloquence the declaration of war. The public mind was wrought to such a pitch that no ordinary occurrence could interest or disturb it, when an event occurred which for a brief time aroused and perplexed its people to their wits' end. In the middle of the night, when everybody, even its one watchman John Ferguson, was asleep, there was heard from the river a loud unearthly screaming, loud beyond the capacity of any living creature to utter; now bass, now treble, now grunting, now whistling, now roaring in a voice of supernatural power! People flew out of doors half clad into the street, gathering in groups and wondering what horror was at hand. An old revolutionary soldier, calling up his factotum, an Irishman long in his serv-



ice in peace and war, said, "Run down, Jimmie, and see what is making that awful noise at the river."

"Yes, sir," he replied; "I will go, Captain, but I am thinking it's that comet that has fell in the river and is a-sizzling there."

As the reader has doubtless anticipated, it was the letting off of steam by a steamboat then landed at the shore, the *New Orleans*, the first that ever stirred with its paddles the waters of the Ohio, or stained its skies with smoke. There it lay for months, the river continuing too low to permit a passage over the falls, a wonder and a show to hundreds that came from all quarters to see it.

With the steamboats, which now multiplied rapidly, and brought about easy communication with New Orleans, and thence with the West Indies, came a great extension of the commercial business of The Falls. Large wholesale houses in all the branches of trade were soon established. Among these were wholesale auction houses, with vast warerooms filled with every variety of commodities, attracting to their periodical sales buyers from all parts of the growing West and South. Except the manufacture of flour and whisky, the business of the town was almost exclusively commercial, and was carried on upon a scale that seemed strangely out of proportion to the narrow area of the place.

As The Falls advanced in prosperity, as with all people of English descent, luxurious living kept pace with their growing fortunes. Spacious dwellings of brick, modeled for the most part after those in Arch street, Philadelphia, or St. Paul's lane in Baltimore, with which cities The Falls had always maintained close business relations, were now put up by the more prosperous citizens; houses with wide halls and broad easy stairways and landings, with marble doorsteps, and handsome doorways, decorated by painted mouldings in lead having all the effect of elaborate carving. In the interior were ample chambers and spacious parlors, with floors and wainscoting of narrow ash or walnut strips waxed and polished.

The society of the country about The Falls kept even pace with that of the town, planters rich in land and slaves even out-vying the people of the town, reproducing

in their new homes the ancient mansions of the Old Dominion and of Maryland, and dispensing the same traditional, liberal, and graceful hospitality. Abundant testimony could be adduced to the truthfulness of this account of the society about The Falls, but this chronicler will here refer to only one witness of paramount authority. Charles Bernard, second son of Charles, Duke of Saxweimer, a major-general in the army of the Netherlands, who fought at Wagram and received the Cross of the Legion of Honor from the hand of Napoleon, visited The Falls in 1825, and in his book of travels testifies to the refinement and politeness of its society.

A second eventful year in the early history of The Falls was 1822, when in the summer succeeding a wet mild winter, a fatal "pernicious fever" prevailed there, not unlike a mild form of yellow fever, which carried off about one-third of the inhabitants. This was a sore trial to the little community, but it was met with unflinching courage and fortitude. In the midst of the common calamity all worldly distinctions were forgotten, all secular and religious animosities ignored, and the hearts and the purses of all freely opened to the necessities of the sick. Laymen and physicians, men and women, who might have fled from the pestilence, bravely stood at their posts and many died there. For years this experience of a common suffering, and the spirit revealed by it, bound together in the strongest ties the survivors of this fatal epidemic, hardly any one of them being without some remembrance of service rendered that could never be forgotten.

There was no abject poverty at The Falls, and beggary was unknown. Skilled labor was well paid, and the necessities of life abundant and cheap, and this begot a spirit of sturdy independence in all the walks of life; a spirit like that which prompted the reply of the early Californian when offered a dollar to carry a trunk to the tavern, "Why, I will give two dollars just to see you carry your own trunk there." Menial service was confined to slaves. Every other form of labor was honorable. To excel in his calling, and to be a gentleman within that calling, was the aspiration of every proper man. Even the fine gentlemen, spite of



their aristocratic leaven, were true to this principle of democracy. When one of their number insulted a tailor, and was challenged by him, and it was suggested that the gentleman was not bound to give the tailor satisfaction, this suggestion was indignantly scouted, and the rule distinctly expounded by one whose authority none would then dispute, that "A gentleman is bound to answer for an affront given any reputable man, whatever may be his calling, provided his message be borne by another reputable man, and they come upon the ground in clean shirts." And this has remained always the rule in Kentucky.

Still, a strong leaven of aristocracy surviving from Colonial days subsisted about The Falls, and was especially apparent in the country. In legal instruments the parties were still described as yeomen, gentlemen, etc., as the case might be. Wealth indeed gave a certain importance, especially wealth in land and slaves, but wealth alone even in this form could not insure social position. Vulgarly or an opprobrious calling, as negro dealing, was refused recognition always.

For a long time, as in England, the social and political aristocracy all over the State had its home in the country. Thence came most of the members of Congress, and of the State legislature, and thence for the most part came also the judges of the higher courts of law. The leading lawyers who aspired to the public service and from whose ranks these were taken, were accustomed to make a compromise between agriculture and trade, and fix their habitations on the edge of the county towns, where they enjoyed at once the dignity of agricultural life and the convenience of proximity to the courts.

There was nothing invidious in these distinctions in society. Unsupported by any legal sanction, and subsisting only by public sentiment and custom, they were yet on all hands tacitly acknowledged; prevailing more by the intrinsic merit of those to whom a seeming privilege was accorded than by anything else; a tribute to the small virtues of politeness and courtesy. In fact, people took pride in their fine gentlemen. And be it remembered that the fine gentlemen of that day, besides their stateli-

ness, were most distinguished by invincible politeness to all men, and seemed, at least, to defer always their own convenience or interest to that of others. A fine old manner, potent in its day and commanding respect everywhere, diffusing itself and carrying refinement and good manners into every walk of life. But now!

The wise man has said, "Say not thou, 'what is the cause that the former days are better than these?' for thou dost not inquire wisely concerning this." And some will now say, that the politeness of that day was a sham, a graceful mask worn for a purpose. Not so. It was not a day of shams, but quite the opposite. Disguises and shams belong to our day. There were fewer affectations then, and fewer disguises, and no euphemisms to hide or to dignify the occupations of life. A tavern had not become a hotel, nor a grog-shop a sample-parlor, nor a barber-shop a saloon, nor a slop-shop a palace of trade. There were no sugar-coated pills, the doctor making up his bolus between his finger and thumb from the raw material in his saddlebags. No man in any walk of life would then wear a shirt in four or five pieces, body, bosom, collar, and cuffs. This chronicler well remembers when the separate collar first came into vogue, and was called opprobriously a "dickey." It is not meant to be implied that there was in all this anything essentially commendable, but only to show the open, fair and square spirit of the time. People did not carry concealed weapons either. Any honest man would then as lief be found with stolen goods, as with a pistol or a dirk hid about him. In going long journeys it was not unusual to carry pistols, but they were borne openly, in holsters on the saddle. Quarrels were settled among gentlemen by the code, and, among those that did not acknowledge its authority, by fisticuffs. And in this case any foul play was always resented by the bystanders, and the cry, "He's got a knife," would instantly turn every hand against the offender. The love of fair play inherited with their English blood was everywhere abroad there.

Of course the many professors of religion did not recognize fighting in any form as proper. Yet there were many of these, especially "Churchmen," who reconciled their

consciences to the code, and even among the ministers were some who, in a strong case, would have thrown off their canonicals and taken the field. Outside of all these, as in all communities, there were a few that did not recognize any social law, but stood out against all, and were a law unto themselves; men who respected nothing human or divine but their own self-interest; whose chief study in life was always how to hold this secure, and to keep the law on their side. With these it was not safe to meddle, and people avoided them as honest dogs avoid a snapping cur.

In the circle of trade at The Falls wealth was not without its intrinsic strength; and as the trade of the town increased, it asserted itself more and more. But it never attained there that wide sway it now bears everywhere. And verily, when its possessor can say unto a man "go," and he goeth; nay, when he can say unto a man "vote," and he voteth, who can any longer despise riches? For, are not the character and conduct of our Government determined by votes? And are not now the votes of the populace as cheap as sparrows in Jerusalem? Are not seats even in the Senate of the United States bought and sold? Is not the want of riches everywhere a barrier to political preferment? Have we not had before the country but yesterday a plea in bar against the best man for the highest place in the new President's Cabinet, that he is not rich enough for the place, and that it must be given to some man less capable but richer? Shades of Washington! Jefferson! Madison! But who does not hear the rising laugh at this invocation? More potent agencies must be invoked, and will be, nay, have been. Their shadows are already here, and the grim demons of Communism and Sansculotism are behind, steadily advancing.

The municipal government of The Falls under seven trustees was "slow" and inexpensive. Those ingenious cracksmen that now infest all rich municipalities, and crowd the lobbies of legislative halls, were then unknown. Everybody knew of their prototypes, the robbing barons of the dark ages, but no man dreamed that these would reappear in the light of modern civilization. But, as the

poor are with us always, so also are the robbers, in different guise, "The viler as underhand not openly bearing the sword." The public robber of the dark ages, whose simple formula was, "Give me money and I will get soldiers; give me soldiers and I will get money," clad in steel, with armed followers, openly plundered whom he pleased. With the same formula, changed by only a single word, "Give me money and I will get voters; give me voters and I will get money," the modern robber, clad in broadcloth and fine linen, thick-necked and red with whisky, plunders everybody; robbing safely under the forms of law.

**"He makes a trust of charity a job,  
And gets an act of Parliament to rob."**

It cannot be said that there was ever at The Falls any golden age of municipal government; for we learn by tradition that the large space extending through the twelve cross-streets of the town, donated by its citizens for a public park, was sold by the trustees, to pay their whisky bill at the tavern. And though this tradition shall prove unfounded, the mere fact of its existence is still significant. "Ancient traditions," says a distinguished philosopher of our day, "when tested by the severe processes of modern investigation, commonly enough fade away into mere dreams, but it is singular how often the dream turns out to have been a half-waking one, presaging the reality."



## CHAPTER II

### REGINALD THORNTON

**"This man began to build and was not able to finish."**

AMONG the Virginian emigrants to The Falls was Reginald Thornton, a stately, kindly gentleman of the old school. He had served as a captain of a troop of horse in the war for independence, and, like many others, had encumbered by mortgages his large estate in land and slaves. Before this he had acquired in the neighborhood of The Falls a large body of rich land, a survey of five thousand acres. He was one of those sanguine men who live in the future, who, while they often miscarry by a too hopeful view of that future, yet possessed of an abiding faith in their own forecast, are apt, in a new country, to be amply compensated in the end. It is they that lay the foundations of great works that require years to complete, project the great highways of commerce, set out the stately avenues and orchards, and

**"Plant the slow olive for a race unborn."**

Of a temperament quite opposite to this was his wife, always despondent and distrustful of the future, and ever expecting the worst. It used to be related of her, that whenever any of their children were missing, she always ran first to look down into the well; while of him it was said, that when kept in doors by stormy weather, a thing very irksome to his active, hopeful temper, he would exclaim with every increase of the sound of rain upon the roof, "Ah! there's a clearing-up shower." As somewhat further indicating his character, for which this chronicler has but scant material, it may be related that once, while

on a visit in town, when his young son Robert burst into his chamber, and with boyish enthusiasm called out, "Father, please come down quickly and see Mr. Jack Sprigg, a man that would rather fight than eat," he replied, "I thank you, sir, but I shall not be in a hurry to make such an acquaintance." It may be further stated that he had received a liberal classical education, had been abroad in his youth, that he loved country life, and had a strong aversion to trade.

After the war for independence, finding his estate in Virginia seriously impaired, he set about transferring what remained to Kentucky. Leaving at the Virginia homestead his wife and three children with the household slaves and taking the plantation slaves and horses and wagons and cattle, he went out to found a new home in the wilderness. Years were passed in this occupation, and in journeying back and forth on horseback over the mountain roads between Kentucky and Virginia. Meantime, the three children, a girl and two boys, were left at home with the mother. The girl and the youngest boy were taught by a governess in the house of a near neighbor, while the oldest boy, Richard, or little Dick, as he was called, was placed some miles away at a boarding-school. There, as he used to declare, he learned nothing, and was almost starved; nay, would have been starved but that every Saturday a servant was sent with a horse to bring him home. Fortified by the bountiful table there and a supply to eke out the scanty board of the school, he went back on Monday provisioned for another week of siege. Of these children the eldest, Susan, was fifteen, Richard two years younger, and the third, Robert, in his eighth year, when the father in 1804 took them all to the new home, "Lastlands." He carried also a schoolmaster, an Irishman named Rogan, who in a log schoolhouse on the "Lastlands" plantation taught these children and others of the neighbors the usual English rudiments. A few years after, the mother died and the cares of the household devolved upon the daughter, who, growing to womanhood, a lovely, sedate gentlewoman, was married to Mr. John Digby, a prosperous young commission and forwarding merchant at The Falls.

Then Rogan the schoolmaster went away to town and his place was supplied by a new man discovered by one of the neighbors.

Rogan had taught very effectively all that he professed, the English rudiments. He was especially noted for making good scholars in numbers. Richard Thornton, now about nineteen, was considered his best scholar, having a natural aptitude for this branch. He soon discovered that the new master was wholly incompetent, a mere pretender; and the new master seeing himself likely to fall into contempt with such an advanced scholar, resolved by diplomacy to effect his honorable dismissal from the school. Accordingly, one day in the full schoolroom, having fixed the attention of all by rising from his seat and rapping on his desk with a ferrule, he ran his fingers through his roach and addressed Dick Thornton in the following words, "Mr. Richard Thornton, take yo' grammar an yo' slate an yo' cypherin'-book, an go home to yo' father. You are as high larnt as I can larn you, an' fittin for any business whatsoever."

On the strength of this, Richard Thornton always claimed to have received one of the earliest diplomas ever conferred in Kentucky. Thus accredited, he went to The Falls, and, young as he was, soon engaged in active trade. He was by nature a trader, born to traffic as the duck to swim. Thrown into the company of the many traders who frequented the office of John Digby, his natural appetite was quickened, and having gone more than once as supercargo of broadhorns with valuable freight to New Orleans, in which business he acquitted himself with credit, Digby turned over to him a part of a trust fund in his hands belonging to Dick, and thenceforth he was regularly engaged in trade. Fitting up an office in the second story of Digby's warehouse, he established commercial relations with the house of Vincent Nolté in New Orleans, through whom he received advices of the market at home and abroad, and made many successful ventures. One of these to Mexico, whither he went with tobacco, accredited to the Spanish government by Judge Sebastian, was known to have yielded a great profit. Afterward, when he had be-

come of age, a large purchase of black furs bought about the time of the death of King George III, which put more than one court in mourning, brought a great profit. By these hits Dick made his mark among the trafficking people of The Falls, and by the last attracted the attention of Mr. McIntyre, an Irish merchant, who had been for some years engaged in buying and shipping abroad certain staple products, especially Tennessee cotton and tobacco. He soon invited Dick into his office, giving him the benefit of much of his correspondence, and of his large experience, and at last formed with him a partnership.

Lastlands thus deserted by the daughter, now married, and by Dick, firmly established in trade, became a lonesome place for the remaining son Robert, then approaching man's estate. The father was full of anxiety lest he too should conceive a distaste for country life, and his scheme for settling his children at Lastlands end in failure. Resolved that at least one of them should succeed him there, he prepared to give Robert such training as would fit him for country life; and a brother in Virginia, a shipping merchant at Norfolk without family, offering to send him in one of his ships to England, and to provide for his maintenance and schooling there for three years or longer, he was sent abroad to pass two years in a technological school, where he should learn all about the principles of domestic architecture; and afterward pass a year with an English farmer and learn the best methods of British agriculture. This was on the very eve of the war, the danger of which the father ignored in his eagerness to put his son away from the seductive influence of trade at The Falls. Thus it happened that Robert Thornton passed the whole period of the war an alien in the enemy's country. The course of this chronicle cannot be turned aside to recount his experience in so novel a situation. It must suffice to state that he was not disturbed in the pursuit of his studies. Some quarrels and fights at fisticuffs, such as occur among boys everywhere, were the most serious results, and in these he was treated with the fair play characteristic of Englishmen. In truth, the war with England, great affair as it was in our eyes, was to her a mere episode in the great war



she was waging against Napoleon, as was shown by the promptness with which she made peace after Waterloo. And for our part we acceded to a treaty that did not settle a single issue upon which we had gone to war.

With the news of peace came news of the arrival of Robert Thornton at Norfolk. There he remained long enough to fall in love with an old sweetheart of his childhood, and having received the approval of his father, though not yet twenty-one years of age, was married, and in the fall of 1816 brought his wife and an orphan girl four years old, bequeathed to her by its dying mother, to Lastlands. There the old father had made all possible preparation for the reception of the young couple. He had put in readiness for occupation two chambers in the unfinished mansion; had caused to be waxed and polished the floors and the wainscoting; had drawn from their chests what silverware he possessed, now black from long disuse; had brought out to Lastlands the little Frenchman Lange, who was at once the cabinet maker and the fine coffin maker of the town, to mend and polish the old heavy solid furniture; had provided new garments for the household servants; had broached and carefully bottled wine that had lain in casks for more than one decade, and strained his slender resources of money to provide something like the liberal hospitality of the Old Dominion.

Spite of its unfinished mansion, Lastlands now presented an attractive sight. But not much of it was to be seen from the highroad. With a strange love of seclusion, these planters buried their dwellings in the heart of their wide domains, shut out from view by primitive woods; and the forests along the highway were always the last to be cut down. Through the large area of woods and fields and pastures the Anser flowed in a tortuous course, winding and sometimes almost doubling upon itself,

"Five miles, meandering with a mazy motion,  
Through woods and vale the sacred river ran."

On the border of the stream, across a stony ford passable at all times except in great freshets, was the entrance to the plantation. On a slight acclivity stood the "big gate"

of oak, supported by two huge posts of mulberry, each surmounted by a heavy stone rudely carved into the figure of an acorn in its cup. The gate opened into a primitive wood through which along the roadway could be seen far off the light of a clearing, and the wood growing thinner and lighter as the road advanced, it led into wide open pastures extending along both sides of the stream. There a distant view was afforded of the mansion, again to be shut out by intervening clumps and groves. Nothing could exceed the care and circumspection with which these primitive woods had been preserved. Many trees were festooned by creepers and grape-vines, these last covering the high tree-tops with a network of vines and tendrils, hanging thence free to the ground, where they were often a foot in diameter. All these were left untouched, and to shield from the blistering sun the trunks of trees along the edge of the woods, the Virginia creeper had been profusely planted, and now enveloped them with its graceful foliage. Except where a patch of cane chanced to grow, there was in these woods little undergrowth; only scattered groups of paw-paws with their cool, shining, lance-shaped leaves, and the flowering bulbs that love the shade, blood-root and Indian turnip and ginseng, enlivening and decorating with foliage and flowers the shadowed woodland. Nowhere was there any tangled brushwood.

Great was the delight and surprise of Robert Thornton to find so much beauty at Lastlands. For a full month there and in the neighborhood was a round of gaiety. Parties of visitors from the country about, and from The Falls, came to greet the young couple, and they were entertained by almost every planter within the compass of the county. Then a grand entertainment was given at Lastlands, when meats were barbecued, and the mild season making it practicable to provide in the unfinished mansion sleeping quarters for a great number, the festivity was kept up for several days; the game which swarmed in the woods and fields, and fish from the untroubled waters of the Anser, making it easy to supplement the abundant supply of substantials from the plantation with some of the luxuries of the table. Great was now the delight of the old father. Already he

saw realized the dream of his life. "Bob will never exchange Lastlands for the stony streets and brick walls of the town. And little Dick will get tired of them after a time and be glad to join us here; I see it all now. It will all come out right. Bob has money enough to finish the house, and with a thousand acres of cleared land the plantation will take care of all." This he said to himself, chanting a kind of "Ca ira" over the prospect.

After almost two months passed at Lastlands the young couple paid a visit to The Falls as guests of Mr. John Digby. There they were kept in a round of gaiety extending through the Christmas holidays and almost to the end of the winter.

The old theater had been torn down to give place to a new house, now building, but private theatricals were inaugurated under the management and direction of Dick Thornton's partner, Mr. McIntyre, who, spite of his devotion to business, had an eye to pleasure, and was full of graceful and agreeable accomplishments. Being an excellent amateur artist, drawing and painting with much skill, and having a practical knowledge of everything that pertains to private theatricals, he was at once scene painter, decorator, and stage manager. These exhibitions were long the staple diversions at The Falls. Among many private journals in the possession of this chronicler, he finds frequent reference to them, and an old lady of high distinction told him that at an earlier day, before they had a theater at The Falls, she saw her husband for the first time in one of these plays, where he enacted Tony Lumpkin in Goldsmith's comedy. But she took care to add that hers was not a case of love at first sight.

The visit of the young couple to the town was not favorable to the plans of Reginald Thornton for his children's happiness. The young people were now in turn delighted with the gaiety of The Falls. Fashion had set up there one of her many vice-regal thrones, and all the tinsel and glitter that belongs to her courts everywhere was now there, drawn directly from the imperial court at Philadelphia; whatever was "de rigeur" there being at once adopted at The Falls. Young Mrs. Thornton was a country-bred

young gentlewoman, and the novelty of this gay and fashionable life, so unexpected in the Kentucky wilderness, filled her with surprise and delight. Equally agreeable was all this gaiety to the young husband, who saw, as he thought, a bright commercial future in the little town. With great public spirit he set about identifying himself with its interests, liberally sustaining, by subscriptions of money and by personal services, all useful public enterprises. Among these last were certain public buildings for which he furnished plans and specifications, and gratuitously superintended their building. His faith in the future of The Falls was manifested further by the laying out of considerable sums in the purchase of lots in the central part of the town, and also a considerable area in the extensive commons that lay around it.

Richard Thornton looked with much concern on these investments of his brother. Inheriting much of the despondent spirit of his mother, he was distrustful of the future. In all his dealings he touched only such commodities as were readily convertible into money; at once accepting a first loss, when he thought he had made an unlucky venture, trusting to recover that in another. To those "long shots" in land, a thing cumbrous and inconvertible, and sold usually on long time, he had an invincible aversion. "*Carpe diem*," was his practical business maxim. On the other hand, the temperament of Robert Thornton, inherited from the father, inclined him to see everything in the future and with the eagerness of youth to discount that future—to realize as near at hand what only the lapse of years was likely to bring about. Having seen in England the great value set upon wood, he looked with dismay upon the wanton destruction of valuable timber by fire and in the construction of fences. It was with difficulty he was persuaded to give up a design he had conceived of buying up large tracts of forest land, to be held for appreciation when wood should become scarce. Both brothers, according to their several dispositions, were soon busily engaged in schemes for money-making; Robert in building stores upon his central lots, and in partnership with Mr. John Digby in steamboats. Then news was re-



ceived by the father of the death at Norfolk of his brother, leaving in equal portions considerable legacies to him and his three children, and with this news came from the father a summons to a family convention at Lastlands, to consult upon their future plans of life.

Never was a family convention less likely to come to a harmonious conclusion. The father undertook to demonstrate that the best course was for all of them to settle at Lastlands. To this end he offered to convey to each one of the children one-third of the estate of five thousand acres. Dick Thornton thought the country would exactly suit Bob, and dreading the future promised by his sanguine temper, used all the persuasion he could command to induce him to accept the father's proposition; offering him as a free gift the third to be allotted to himself. But the excitement of active business and the lively society of the town had captivated Robert, and he declined this. As for Mr. John Digby, he abhorred the country, and would not for any consideration consent to stay there. And so to the great grief of the old father he was left alone, his chagrin alleviated only by the legacy, which enabled him to prosecute with renewed energy his labor of love. His children continued to make frequent visits to Lastlands. Robert and his wife took great delight in the country as a place to visit, and often, in winter even, passed some time there; and "Sister Digby" always carried there her children in the hot months of summer. Mr. John Digby went out also at regular intervals, prompted solely by a sense of duty. Dick Thornton went there but seldom, being now wholly absorbed in business schemes. All looked with a feeling of compassion upon the solitary life of the father, and not without chagrin at seeing so much money expended upon what they regarded as an old man's hobby. Then they all united in an earnest effort to induce him to make his abode with them in the town. But this he refused in a few decided words: "It is out of the question. I will live and die at Lastlands."

Thus for several years longer the affairs of the family went on. At last, having expended on the mansion, still unfinished, and in laying up materials for future improve-

ment, all his legacy, the old father carefully secured the unfinished work from the elements, and retired into his temporary log cabin, to await there some new turn of the wheel of Fortune. He was now an old man. His frame was still straight as of old, but he was growing slim, his neck a scrag, his high marked features sharpened, and the fine curves about his mouth degenerated into unsightly wrinkles. He was fast growing unequal to the active supervision of the work of the plantation. At last, as if suddenly conscious of this, he gave it up altogether. He went now but seldom out of doors, sitting all day in his chamber, reading or nodding over a book. First it was some volume of the British drama, then history, and at last the Latin classics. And strange to say, the knowledge of Latin, which for years seemed to have gone out of his mind, now came back to him, and he read and appreciated these authors more clearly than ever before. Even the old rules of grammar, learned by rote in his youth, now recurred to him, and were constantly rising to his lips. Old Tom, his "body-servant," and the household servants were not a little puzzled and disturbed on hearing him repeating these: "Utor, abutor, fruor, fungor, potior, vescor govern the ablative." Or reciting with emotion,

"Eheu! fugaces, Postume, Postume——"

while they listened with frightened faces, and conferring together, were convinced that the master was either losing his wits or was conjuring.

The friends at The Falls came out now very often to Lastlands, and seeing him fast failing, and struck by the change in his habits, again endeavored to draw him into town, but in vain. Then Robert and his wife again took up their abode with him, tenderly and assiduously ministering to him. Gradually he grew weaker and leaner. One day he rose early, and dressing himself with unusual care, walked out upon the grounds, but soon returned, tired, and lay down upon a lounge, and said to Robert Thornton, "Send for Susan and Digby and little Dick. Bob, I am going to die to-morrow!" And next day he did die, and

was buried in a spot marked by him the day before, by the side of his wife, in the burying ground at Lastlands.

It is to be regretted that no more particular account can be here given of Reginald Thornton. It may be added that he possessed certain traits of character common to the old planters and the patriarchs of old, whom, in their manner of life, in their holding of numerous slaves and in their habit of independent migration into new lands, they much resembled, as they did also in a certain lofty pride and independence of character. These are especially patriarchal traits. They were conspicuously shown by Abraham in his behavior in that first of all wars recorded in history, when the "kings" from beyond the Tigris and the Euphrates invaded Canaan, and, sacking the cities of the plain, carried off Lot and other captives and great spoil; when Abraham, gathering and arming his three hundred and eighteen slaves "born in his house," leaving behind those "bought with his money," followed the spoilers, and, attacking them in the night, beat them and brought back all the captives and the spoil; and then, though by the law all this spoil was his, would take nothing. Nay, when the king of Sodom remonstrated, saying, "It is all thine," Abraham cut off further parley by saying, "I have lift my hand to the high God who possesses heaven and earth, that I will not take from a thread to a shoe latchet—that I will take nothing that is thine." And why? "Lest thou should say, 'I have made Abraham rich.'" It was for him to bestow, not to accept benefits. *Noblesse oblige*.

Of a like proud and independent temper were these old planters. When from the decline of the land, or by reason of too generous profusion, or from any cause, one of them found himself no longer able to keep his state at home, he gathered together his slaves "born in his house," and, if practicable, those "bought with his money," and with these and his flocks and herds sought in new lands a new home. They knew nothing of coöperative schemes, "syndicates," and what not, but were each a syndicate in himself, ready with well-ordered household to cope with all the savage elements of the wilderness. By a continuous series of such independent migrations they redeemed from its savage

state and made to blossom as a rose, not only Kentucky, but that vast area beyond, now constituting in itself an agricultural empire; earning for the "Old Dominion" the new and nobler title, "Mother of States."



## CHAPTER III

### DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

IT WAS not intended to give any particular history nor any analysis of the characters of persons presented in this chronicle, but to allow each one to unfold himself, in talk and in the incidents and *res-gestæ* of the narrative. But some of them the chronicler finds to be undemonstrative in such a degree as to make some particular account of these necessary.

Of Captain Shelby and Mr. Joe Sterrett it may be said that Captain Shelby had come from Maryland, that he had got his wife in Virginia, that she had died at The Falls, leaving one child, a daughter; that he had been the guardian of Mr. Sterrett during his minority, and on his coming of age had given him his daughter in marriage.

The Captain had a fine plantation half way between The Falls and Lastlands, and a furnished house in town, and living together they dwelt alternately in town and country. In Maryland Captain Shelby had been addicted to the turf, which had proved an expensive amusement, the cost of breeding and training never having been compensated by his winnings. But he loved the turf not for the hope of profit, but for the sport and because of his fondness for beautiful thoroughbreds themselves. Before leaving Maryland he had sold all his pets except one gray mare, which, with a filly foal by her side, he brought to Kentucky. He took great pride in this mare, often brought out for exhibition to visitors, when he delighted to rehearse her performances and her pedigree; "Rose of May by—dam by—grand-dam—by—," etc. "Look at her outline—it is all Arabian, and she has the oriental countenance, now rare, and the strength and bone given by English breeding to

her race. See how her eyes blaze even in old age! Feel her coat; it is soft as satin. Don't mind her laying back her ears. She won't bite; she always had a proud, dainty way, but was never vicious."

The Captain had forsworn racing, but at considerable expense had more than once sent this mare to Virginia to be bred, and had now some of her produce in his pastures and in ordinary use on the plantation, and for the saddle, and for both, he maintained, they were superior to ordinary horses. After the marriage of his daughter he had given up the management of the plantation to Sterrett, and the young couple lived there in great happiness, the Captain considering himself foot-loose to go when he pleased on camping expeditions, then favorite diversions, while Sterrett addicted himself to the rearing of domestic animals, horses and dogs, and to the sports of the fields, of which he was very fond. He was in a fair way to subside into that aimless, harmless, useless character described as a "hunting, hawking, fishing, country gentleman," when he was persuaded to put into training a colt of the old mare. This was done while the Captain was away, camped out on a deer hunt, and when he returned the horse was in the course of preparation for the next spring races at Lexington and The Falls.

Spite of the Captain's resolutions against the turf, strong as they were, they weakened under the extravagant praise bestowed upon the colt by Beard, the trainer. Then recalling his own experience, when in the beginning he had been successful, and how near he had come to being infatuated by the sport, and how hard he had found it to break off from, he had painful misgivings of its effect upon Sterrett. But in the course of the training, when he saw the colt at exercise, with sinewy limbs and strong, easy gallop, reminding him of the old dam in her best days, he abandoned all remorse and was filled with pride and gratification at seeing a scion of the old stock on the highroad to fame and fortune. Soon he found himself holding long consultations with the trainer about the conduct of the racing campaign, examining the saddles and bridles that Sterrett had got from Philadelphia, sending them to be

altered, substituting for buckles, wherever that was practicable, strong stitching with waxed silk thread. "The fewer buckles the better," said the Captain. "The loss of a buckle is apt to be the loss of a race. Stitches are the best fastenings."

All patrons of the turf know something of this horse Ormus and his brilliant career. It was short, but long enough to fix Sterrett permanently on the turf, and he soon had a "string" of colts in training by Beard, under whose direction Ormus had always borne Sterrett's colors to the front.

A demon seems to take charge of men in the beginning of all forms of gambling, and to lure them on by success. Mr. Joe Sterrett's career was in accordance with this. His early winnings had sufficed to put his stables on a good footing, but afterward bad fortune followed, beginning with the disabling of Ormus, cut down by an accident in a race, and withdrawn from the turf, just when he had reached the age for his greatest triumphs. Then Sterrett found himself returning from meeting after meeting without having won a race. Meantime the expenses were consuming his substance, and with an occasional loss, when he backed his favorite, in the course of time threatened him with serious embarrassment.

Mr. Ould was an unmarried lawyer of middle age, highly distinguished at the bar. He was proud and diffident, and had served a long novitiate before he obtained or even desired practice, studying meantime diligently his profession in all its departments, and practicing various forms of literary composition, in order to acquire facility of expression. His first case, an important one for Mr. John Digby, was managed with such ability as brought him at once to the notice of the bar, and soon after he accepted an offer of partnership from an older lawyer in full practice, a quick-witted man, with a showy power of declamation, very effective with juries, but indolent, and neglectful of the necessary preparation of his cases. These defects Ould made good, by preparing the cases and making such a summary of the argument as made it easy for his quick-witted partner, conning this, to deliver himself with great

effect. Ould took great delight in thus vicariously addressing juries, and spoke with a freedom and power of which he would have found himself incapable in his own person, giving his partner a great reputation with the public, who often thronged the court-room to hear him. The astute lawyers were not slow to discover Ould behind the mask, and the honest partner attempted no concealment of this. It was, perhaps, a fair and proper division of labor, but not proper to be advertised to the public.

After some years Ould's partner died owing him several thousand dollars, for which he had mortgaged to Ould his dwelling and a few slaves—all he possessed. This debt Ould generously acquitted to the widow and children.

To this good character it irks the chronicler to add that Mr. Ould was at long intervals addicted to drink, nay, fell into the wildest orgies, ending in a sick bed and necessary medication. Yet at such times he was possessed of a strange cunning unknown to his normal condition, by which he kept out of view of his ordinary associates, so that hardly any one of them had seen him in these unhappy moments. He was an intimate friend of Digby and the Thorntons.

Stackpole was a young gentleman who had come to The Falls with a company of New England men from Providence and Boston. He was a son of a Boston merchant. He had passed much time at sea, according to his own confession, to avoid being sent to Harvard College. In his various voyages he had pretty nearly circumnavigated the globe. He had acted often as supercargo of his father's vessels, and thus acquired much mercantile experience. He seemed to have capital at hand for any promising venture, and had more than once put money with Dick Thornton in his early venture in furs. He had an interest in the great "Hope" distillery, but gave little personal attention to this, leaving the management to his partners, while he amused himself with horses, of which he was very fond, and by taking a part in all the gaities of the town; not with the heartiness of others, but in a strange apathetic way peculiar to him. He was a skilful musician, with a fine baritone voice, and sang uncommonly well.



He had a serious impediment of speech—not being able to sound the letter *r*, and was also near-sighted. The last was not known to himself until after he had been some time at The Falls. Standing one day with others at the great door of Digby's warehouse, looking at a coming steamboat, he was surprised to find that while others could see to read the name of the boat on its side, he could only see indistinctly the boat itself. Expressing his surprise at this, Russell, a young friend of the Thorntons, who sometimes used glasses, said, "Try my glasses"; and putting these on he was filled with amazement at the revelation they made. Afterward, having procured glasses better suited to his defective vision, he went about everywhere gaily surveying the new world opened to him, hailing his friends across the wide streets, and crying out to them with uncommon emphasis, "I am happy to see you," which at that distance he had not been before able to do with distinctness. He found also new delight in the theater, where before he had not seen the play of the actors' features, but supposed everybody else to see in the same imperfect way.

As to sounding the letter *r*, he could never do this. In vain did he go, like the great Grecian orator, along the river beach, practicing; repeating selected passages in which that letter often occurred, "Round the rugged rocks the ragged rascals run their rural race." "Unrestricted, unrestrained, free!" What he made of the first of these the reader may imagine, when told that for half an hour every day he could be heard repeating the last in this fashion, "Unwestwicted, unwestwained, fwee!" pronounced with such an emphasis as to imply the belief that he was rolling his *r*'s in good style. At last he gave up all effort to overcome this impediment, but managed by slurring the sound of this letter to make the defect little observable. In singing, except with such songs as required distinct articulation of the words, he was at no disadvantage. Once, however, in a later part of the period embraced in this chronicle, when at a musical entertainment given for a benevolent purpose, he sang, in sailor costume with a harpoon, "The Sea." Russell declared that the effect was in the highest degree farcical, bringing into contempt by gross caricature

that fine dramatic song, then new; and he earnestly implored Stackpole never to sing it again. Stackpole good-naturedly promised this, provided Russell should continue always on good behavior toward him; often afterward threatening Russell with this song, a menace which Russell pretended to consider inhuman and by which, humoring Stackpole, he always suffered himself to be brought to terms.

The love of music had brought these young gentlemen into association, and they had now become fast friends. Together they made the most important part of all the musical entertainments in the society of the town, and often on summer nights treated the belles to charming serenades. Robert Thornton had a good tenor voice, and McIntyre a strong nasal basso, and they often sang together. In the church choir they figured also. Often Russell and Stackpole went together to the Methodist church, where the singing was of a hearty, vigorous style, and where they delighted to swell with their fine voices the lively hymns. "Brother Stackpole" and "Brother Russell" were always welcomed with a smile from the leading singers there, who rejoiced in such a powerful reinforcement, and always placed them where their voices would do the most good. These good people were not without a feeling of rivalry with the Calvinists opposite, and their last hymn was always sung *at* them. "Come around next Sunday, Brother McIntyre," the leading singer would say, "and we will blow those Presbyterians over the way clean out of the water!" And when with this powerful reinforcement they sang

"Where are now the twelve Apostles,  
(*Crescendo*)    Where are now the twelve Apostles,  
                  Where are now the twelve Apostles?—  
(*Fortissimo*)    Sa-f-e in the promised land."

they did metaphorically do this.

Tom Long was an ingenious mechanic, who had made an improvement in the steam engine, and many useful and ingenious inventions, among these the strong hoisting gear in Mr. John Digby's warehouse. Like many men gifted with some special faculty, he preferred another vocation



to that for which he was best fitted, and was better known at The Falls as a "quidnunc" than as a mechanic. While it might have been said of him, that he was fit to stand by Archimedes and give direction, it was said of him that he knew almost everything that occurred about The Falls, and that what he did not know he suspected. At his home was a workshop with forges and lathes and all sorts of mechanical appliances. But he seldom did any hard work after having achieved a moderate competency. He was one of the kindest of men, and was always at the service of such as were embarrassed by mechanical difficulties—except the seekers after perpetual motion, to whom he would never listen. He was one of Digby's clients, and a grateful friend of Robert Thornton, who, in the financial stress of 1819, had saved his home from sacrifice. He dwelt on a half-acre lot on the edge of the high plateau on which the town stands, overlooking the falls. Having no children, all the care of Long and his good wife was to dress these premises, which with garden and flowers were made to look like a section of Eden.

For another character, also a friend of Digby and Thornton, and still more undemonstrative than these, a whole chapter will be required.

## CHAPTER IV

MR. JACK TAYLOR

*"Studentesque a non studendo,  
Ut lucus fit a non lucendo."*

MR. JACK TAYLOR was a student in Ould's office. He did not purpose ever to practice law, but only to acquire such knowledge as would avail him in business transactions. He was a bachelor, with a modest establishment, keeping a negro man-servant and a dog. The business of the man was to saw wood, clean the office, look after his master's wash, brush his clothes, polish his boots, and make fires; getting his board at the tavern, in consideration of services as waiter at the table there twice a day, and sleeping at "his wife's house." Mr. Taylor constantly maintained that no negro in Kentucky could make a fire or blacken boots "like Dennis."

The dog was of a type very common in that day, both in Virginia and Kentucky; a brown and yellow dog with a white breast, and a white circle about the neck. On every plantation, and about every farmhouse and cabin throughout the two States, specimens of this race of dogs were then to be seen, all bearing a strong general resemblance to each other, and all named "Ring." Though Mr. Taylor never hunted, he constantly maintained that there was not in Kentucky such a 'coon and 'possum dog as Ring. He was fed with scraps from the tavern table, and slept under Ould's office.

The greater part of Mr. Taylor's time was passed in his room next to the back office, lying on a lounge reading novels and newspapers, meditating, and chewing tobacco. In the summer these employments were diversified by the exercise of a strange dexterity he had acquired in spitting

on flies. In this he was a wonderful marksman, being sure of his aim three times out of five, at a distance of twenty feet. During the season he was in constant practice, looking out keenly for the game, and losing no opportunity, except where it was too plentiful, when he passed it by, like a true sportsman, scorning to shoot at a swarm. He could readily adjust his charges to the distance and size of the game, from the lightest pellet to such a flood as would whelm a grasshopper or even a mouse.

The full enjoyment of this sport began in midsummer, when first appear those undersized flies which unthinking people take for flies not yet grown, those pestiferous small flies which alight always on the inner edge of the nostril, or on the margin of the lip, or adhere to the corner of the eyelid, and, when brushed away, settle instantly back on the same sensitive spot. Certainly an aggravating insect!

A little later in the season there comes another fly, a biting fly that seldom attacks man, but subsists for the most part upon cattle and dogs; a gentle phlebotomist possessing something of the soothing power of the vampire, taking tribute of blood without disturbing his victim. On the legs of cattle they feed unnoticed, dropping off when filled, affording a delicate repast for fowls and birds following after. From sleeping dogs they draw blood, interrupted only by a tremulous motion of the sleeper's ears. These also were game for Mr. Taylor. He knew the haunts of these flies as Mr. Joe Sterrett knew the haunts of partridges and snipes. "The undersized fly," he said, "has no well-defined haunts, consorting with the mob of flies; but the biting fly is somewhat exclusive." Fond of the full blaze of the sun, these are usually found on the warm sides of fences or walls, and later in the season they resort only to sunny sheltered places. In some bright little angle they then gather in small parties, and, with wings spread apart, like the coat-tails of plethoric men buttoned too tight about the waist, they quarrel and fight over the narrow warm territory; buzzing about each other in lively conflict, "the briskest insect," as Mr. Taylor expressed it, "this side of a mud-dauber," and wary in a degree beyond the common fly.

Still later, "in the very wrath of the summer," when the dog-star rages, there comes "new hatched to the woeful time," another fly, a small gray fly with a soft, noiseless flight, and a fair, benevolent face; but, alack! with a mouth of fire, liquid fire, with which he touches your ankles and scorches them, even through the stoutest stockings. These were particularly annoying to the few old gentlemen that still adhered to short-clothes, touching them through their hose, and interrupting often their stately speech with sudden exclamations and hasty, undignified slaps on the legs; for no human fortitude can for a moment withstand the fiery quality of their touch. These flies have no known haunts, but prey singly, like lions and tigers. They appear in almost all places and under almost all circumstances. Inconspicuous in color, and noiseless in flight, they "come like shadows, so depart," manifesting their presence only by the terrific smart they inflict, heightened always by that potent element—"the unexpected." They had often applied the cautery to Mr. Taylor's ankles, interrupting his meditation and making him slap, and stamp, and sometimes swear! Against them he was always on the warpath. It was a treat to see the look of triumph on his face when, on the wing, or at twenty feet away, he put a charge of tobacco juice upon one of these, and saw the insect vainly struggling in the mess!

Odious as this gray biting fly was to Mr. Taylor, it was even more hateful to his humble servitors, the man and the dog. Many an "ouch!" and many a slap in vain (yet sometimes successful and greeted with a scalp-halloo) were heard from the man. And the dog often sprang to his feet out of a sound sleep, and shaking his head until his ears were wrong side out, and standing fixed a moment with a glare of horror in his eyes, rushed into darkness and safety beneath the office. Seeing the dog behave in this manner, Mr. Ould asked Dennis:

"What is the matter with the dog?"

"Bitin' flies, sah."

"Horse flies?"

"No, sah; wuss 'an horse flies."

"Bald-faced flies?"



"Yas, sah; dat's him; got a high forehead like a nigger trader."

It will be seen that in the pursuit of Mr. Taylor's sport there was a vein of sentiment; and this was made more apparent by the fact that the harmless blue-bottle, in gorgeous enameled vest, was always allowed to pass by on his sounding wings unharmed.

Mr. Taylor was a native Virginian. He was sure to let everybody know this—"Bawn in old Virginia." He did not count as Virginians those born in Kentucky when it was a part of Virginia; and he even made a distinction between the tide-water Virginians and all others, and by his own confession had often, in his boyhood, quarreled and fought with other boys only because they came from "over the Ridge." This narrow spirit subsisted a long time in the Old Dominion, and was the fundamental cause of that movement in the public mind in Kentucky which threatened, at a very early day, a severance of the union, and has reconciled the people of West Virginia to the separate station they now maintain.

Mr. Taylor's education was very defective. Beyond the rudiments of the English branches taught in the schools of the day, he knew little. For a time, being ambitious of an accomplishment, he took lessons in the French language from one of the old emigrés at The Falls, but finding himself unable to master the difficulties of the pronunciation, and having practiced the word "moi" for six weeks, and continuing still to pronounce it "moy," and finding other like difficulties, he abandoned the study, declaring his belief that if he had been born in France he would have been dumb.

His indolence was a thing wonderful to contemplate. He had chosen the law because it was a sedentary occupation. Sitting he could endure to any extent. The punishment of Theseus, condemned to sit forever, he would not have comprehended. "Sedet, æternumque sedebit," would have raised no image of horror in his mind. Most men of sedentary habits are story-tellers or singers, but Mr. Taylor had neither song nor story for any company. Nor was he, like the Irishman in the same category, "ready to foight

with anny gintleman for the amusement of the company," being eminently good-tempered. He had a cheerful countenance, and often smiled, but very few people had ever heard him laugh. Once, and once only, was he ever known to laugh aloud. It was late at night, when he and other young men were assembled for Christmas festivity, and being pretty merry, and curious to know if it were possible to make Mr. Taylor laugh aloud, and having tried many ways without success, his companions fell to tickling him. The result was tremendous! The chronicler laments that he cannot describe it, or find in history or romance a parallel by which to give the reader some just notion of the burst of laughter thus extorted from Mr. Taylor. He has in mind that extraordinary fit of laughter recorded of Dr. Johnson, when he came out of Temple Bar, after hearing of the last will and testament of his friend Bennett Langton; how "he continued it all the way out of the Temple gate, then burst into such an explosion that he seemed in a convulsion, and in order to support himself, laid hold on one of the posts of the sidewalk, and sent forth peals so loud, that in the stillness of the night his voice seemed to resound from Temple Bar to Fleet Ditch." Nor is he unmindful of that burst from Herr Teufelsdröckh, the great clothes philosopher, excited by hearing Jean Paul's proposal for a cast-iron king: "Like the neighing of all Tattersall's, tears streaming down his cheeks, pipe held aloft, foot clutched in the air, loud, long, continued, uncontrollable." But these bear no resemblance to what he would describe. No, no; if anything may be found like it, it must be in the great Homer; and hardly there, except there be found some description of the Cyclop, Polyphemus, in a convulsion of laughter. So he must try to give a faint notion of this fit, not of merriment (for it should not be called that) but of genuine "Homeric" laughter, invoking on the part of the reader the liveliest exercise of his imagination.

As has been said, the result of the tickling was tremendous; a noise so loud, so unusual, so unearthly, that they that were engaged in tickling instantly released him, "and back recoiled" at the sound they had evoked; a sound



ghostly and indescribable. Like that thrilling scream which the horse, at other times mute under pain, is said to utter in some desperate strait—in a ship on fire at sea, or other like extremity. People with pale faces, running from all parts of the house toward the room from which the sound proceeded, were met by Taylor's companions hastening out to explain, that what had made their "fell of hair to rouse and stir" was "only Jack Taylor laughing." No one who heard him then was ever again inclined to excite him to laughter.

Mr. Taylor had a certain awkwardness of speech, not uncommon. Oysters he always called "oyschers"; challenge he called "channelge," and corner "cornder." Common hackneyed Latin phrases he was sure to have ridiculously wrong. This is not uncommon, either; for we know that from "hoc est corpus," words used in the Sacrament of the Eucharist in the Roman Church, has come the phrase "hocus pocus;" and from these words of an invocation to St. Martin, "O mihi bea'te Martine!" has come that common saying, "All in my eye, Bettie Martin." Further, the Latin phrase, "nolens volens," has been called "snolus bolus," and we know not what else. But it was left for Mr. Taylor to make a wider departure from the original than any of these. In his mouth "nolens volens" became "bolus noxious."

He was greatly puzzled to understand what is a pun. The present chronicler undertook to expound this, and illustrated it by an example furnished on the spur of the moment. Being himself a man of small stature, he told Mr. Taylor that if he, the present chronicler, were unhappily addicted to punning, it would be a pun to call him a "pun-y man"; Mr. Taylor seemed to understand the point, but long afterward, when sitting together, while Mr. Taylor was reading *Prentice's Journal*, he called out, "Pioneer, here's a pun or—something"; and then read out from the paper the following: "Colonel Quitman caned the editor of the *Natchez Free-Trader*. The editor of the *Natchez Free-Trader* caned F. E. Plummer. We suppose F. E. Plummer will now cane some nigger."

So Mr. Taylor was not yet clear upon what constitutes

a pun, and the chronicler, thinking this a case in which ignorance is bliss, did not attempt further to enlighten him.

It must not be inferred from all this that Mr. Taylor was wanting in sense; he was far from that. Though lacking such learning as young gentlemen of his opportunities usually possessed, he had a fund of practical sense, commonly known as "horse sense," which enabled him to take good care of a small patrimony he had brought to Kentucky in cash, and to invest it safely; and from which he derived a revenue sufficient for his modest way of life. Indeed, he had added something to his capital every year since he came to The Falls. He was a firm believer in the potency of interest. "Six per cent. compounded," he used to say, "will devour the world." So he always backed the tortoise, Interest, against the hare, Speculation. The subject of interest occupied Mr. Taylor's mind at all times. They that wondered what were his thoughts, while he sat so perseveringly meditating, with a faint smile often on his face, would have been surprised to know that he was then exercising himself in mental arithmetic—solving problems in interest. He was full of such illustrations of the power of interest as that statement, now going the rounds of the newspapers, that the sum originally paid to the Indians for Manhattan Island, compounded, would buy the city of New York and the whole State to boot.

Exclusive dealing with money is said to harden the heart, making it insensible to the suffering of others. Doubtless it does have this effect as to one form of suffering—suffering from want of money—from mere familiarity with that ailment. But it does not follow that it makes the heart insensible to suffering in other forms. Mr. Jack Taylor had, from long commerce with borrowers, grown callous to their distresses, but he was by no means hardened to other forms of suffering. The metal had not entered his soul. While he did not without a struggle give up money, even in aid of the sick, yet in the time of the pestilence no man was more constant than he in personal attendance upon the afflicted. Though not so efficient as others in such service as required active movement, he was always to be relied on

for any sedentary service. To sit up with such as required unremitting attention he had no superior. He was not of a somnolent habit, nor ever so preoccupied as to be unconscious of what went on about him; but was easily attracted by a call, and his patience and gentleness were invincible. With a supply of tobacco, and an open window where he might spit out at the fire-flies, he would sit through the night without winking, "out-watching the Bear." And no base fear of contagion ever disturbed his mind.

## CHAPTER V

### MAJOR THROCKMORTON

"Dr. Johnson: No, sir; there is nothing yet contrived by man by which so much happiness is produced as by a good tavern."

THE year 1825 opened with great commercial activity and prosperity, and closed with disaster, all over the commercial world. Nowhere was this disaster greater than at The Falls. The financial stress that had followed the peace in 1815, though short-lived, was disastrous, but this was still more destructive. Robert Thornton had come home in the midst of the first, and the investments in town lots then made by him had proved in the highest degree profitable. When in 1818 a branch of the Bank of the United States was established at The Falls, and immediately afterward one hundred independent State Banks, with an aggregate capital of eight millions of dollars, were chartered by the Legislature, and the State filled with paper money, there was an advance in the value of every kind of property. In real estate at The Falls this advance was, in some instances, more than three hundred per cent. Robert Thornton, having then conceived a project that would involve the expenditure of a large sum of money, had sold the greater part of his town property, and at the suggestion, and through the address of his brother Dick, placed the money in the United States Bank. In the following year, when all the hundred State Banks failed, and property of every kind declined even below its former value, he was one of the few that escaped loss, and was considered a marvel of sagacity and foresight. He came also to be considered a marvel of generosity and beneficence; for not only did he refuse to take advantage of the general disaster

to drive bargains, but often without interest, and sometimes without security, he gave to those in distress the use of his money. With the spirit of a knight-errant he sought out cases of oppression and distress, and in many instances interposed his strong arm between the usurer and his prey; paying the usurious loan and substituting himself as creditor, at lawful interest; enjoying in this work the keenest sense of happiness, and winning golden opinions from all sorts of men.

The project Thornton had conceived was in accordance with the traditions of his English blood. As the Frenchmen at The Falls, true to their national traditions, had built a fine ballroom, Thornton resolved to build a fine tavern; one that should be in harmony with the advanced civilization of the day, and give to the many strangers, tourists and others that now visited The Falls, a just notion of the refinement and culture of the community. The tavern was built and furnished, and, no responsible tenant offering, it was put in charge of a popular man accustomed to the business, to be managed by him on Thornton's account. This had proved a losing business, and now, in 1825, after the lapse of a few years, he found this tavern, having consumed the greater part of his capital in the building and furnishing, likely to consume the remainder in his proprietorship.

The financial panics of that day sorely perplexed the people of The Falls. They had seen them in the past come on at intervals, always without any intelligible warning, like summer gusts. And now the only recognized prognostics were the movements of the Branch Bank of the United States. When this bank began to call in its credits, pressing its debtors and refusing to make new loans, everybody apprehended a money crisis. One thing more they came to know, that if there was money trouble in London, it would soon reach them here with aggravated force; that what was there, as a sailor would say, "a lively gale off the land," would become, when it reached America, a destructive hurricane blowing ashore, and in the interior a desolating tornado. McIntyre and Dick Thornton, either by reason of their constant foreign correspondence, or because of their



constitutional caution, had gone safely through all these storms, and were now safely moored to the land in this.

The prognostics of a financial storm had now for some time been observed. The Branch Bank at The Falls had long been quietly and steadily contracting its loans, and throughout the South gathering up coin; sweeping away even the "cut money"—triangular bits of silver made by the shears of the coppersmiths for necessary change, and sending these off to strengthen the mother bank at Philadelphia. It was soon manifest to the dullest financial understanding at The Falls that a financial cyclone was afoot. Property of every kind began rapidly to decline in value, and soon no man in debt, no matter what might be the extent of his possessions, was safe from bankruptcy. And here it is curious to observe how in this case the conduct of the people differed from that exhibited by them in a former general calamity, when the hand of pestilence was upon them. There was now none of the courage and magnanimity then shown, but a wild panic and a cry of "sauve qui peut"—the devil take the hindmost. Creditors flew to the courts, and all the enginery of the law was remorselessly put in motion against the unfortunate debtors. Why was the conduct of this community so different in these cases? Is there in money some poisonous element, having relation to the heart of man, which deadens all its finer impulses, and rouses all its selfishness? And was now the conduct of the people of this little town but another illustration of that invincible maxim in trade, "Business is business"?

In this financial crisis Robert Thornton was deeply involved. For a time his well-known integrity, and his large possessions in land and slaves, and his splendid tavern, with costly furniture, gave confidence to creditors, and they forbore to sue. But as the panic increased, some suits were brought against him, and the affairs of the whole community seemed in the way of complete liquidation.

Thornton still had faith in the value of his property. He thought the storm would soon blow over. Two friends, Captain Shelby and Mr. Joe Sterrett, both possessed of money, and free from business complications, offered the



use of their money to rescue his property, but he declined to accept their generous offers, and resolved to bide the issue alone. Mr. John Digby was involved in the general disaster, and could give no help. Dick Thornton urged his brother to let every town lot and the tavern go to pay his debts, insisting that the storm had not reached its height. But Thornton held his opinion, firmly convinced that the tavern, if only a proper manager could be got, would, in a reasonable time, pay all his debts. Possessed of this opinion, he resolved to visit Major Throckmorton, then proprietor of the Blue Lick Springs, and induce him to take charge of it. That the reader may have relief from the contemplation of these painful scenes of financial trouble, some account of the Major, and of Thornton's visit to the Blue Licks on this mission, will now be given.

The reputation of Major Throckmorton as a host was spread, not only over the State, but over the whole South, from which quarter a great many people came, every year, to spend the summer in Kentucky, the Blue Licks being their favorite resort. The Major belonged to that class of tavern-keepers, peculiar to Kentucky and Virginia, who carried into their business all the grace and courtesy that marked the fine gentlemen of that day. He seemed more like a grandee dispensing magnificent hospitality than the keeper of a public house. In his social relations he was on a footing of equality with the most distinguished people of the State. Mr. Clay, Mr. Crittenden, Hon. Robert Letcher and other distinguished gentlemen were at some time during every summer the Major's guests. A game of whist made up of these three and the Major was an everyday thing. They played whist "with the aggravations," as the phrase went: besides the interest excited by the stake there being great personal rivalry as to skill in the game, and lecturing and scolding went on pretty much *ad libitum*:

"Sir, I protest, were Job himself at play,  
He'd rave to see you throw your cards away;  
Not that I care a button—not a pin  
For what I lose; but we had cards to win.  
A saint in heaven would grieve to see such hand  
Cut up by one who will not understand!"

They could all scold in a high key except Mr. Letcher, who had a fund of humor with which he parried all assaults, and turned the laugh against his adversaries. Infinite amusement was afforded the privileged few who were permitted to look on at this game.

It was observable in the association of these gentlemen at the whist table and elsewhere, that the Major, though defective in education, having had but scant facilities for instruction in his youth, and having no pretensions to more than ordinary mental endowments, was yet among these men so highly distinguished for talents and public service, so far as manner and carriage were concerned, the equal of any of them. Indeed, it is not unlikely that to a casual observer he would have appeared the finest gentleman of them all. He had some grave foibles. He was as irascible as Sir Anthony Absolute; but then he was as benevolent as Uncle Toby, and never let the sun go down on his wrath. In these heats he often made blunders that were almost bulls, which always put his audience in good humor. Had he been born in Ireland, it is likely that he would have been as famous for bulls as Sir Boyle Roche. He was almost universally popular. Such a man Thornton believed would be able to put his tavern on the footing to which its location and its superior accommodations entitled it; a journey in the fine October weather was a pleasant thing in itself; and he at once put the project into execution. Attended by old Tom Strother, his former body-servant, well mounted, with portmanteau, umbrellas, and great-coats, he was soon upon the road, and, without any event worth recording, reached at nightfall a tavern within a few miles of the Blue Licks, whence, by an early start next day, he might arrive at his destination by breakfast time.

On the road next morning he overtook two horsemen riding in the same direction. One was a large portly man, mounted upon an Indian pony. He was of a ruddy complexion, with yellow-red hair, worn long, hanging about his neck, and covering his ears. He was clad substantially in blue cloth, with brown leggings tied below the knee, a drab beaver hat, sound but much sunburned, and a black satin waistcoat, behind which showed a frill of ruffled

lace, much rumpled and soiled. From a watch pocket in his trousers hung a heavy gold chain, with a very large bunch of seals. The other traveler was a well-dressed, clean-shaven little man, mounted upon a handsome, blood-like bay horse. Both had portmanteaus and the usual appointments of persons going a journey. As Thornton came within ear-shot of them, he discovered that they were discussing the political issues of the day, and were in the midst of a hot dispute; the big man being an original Jackson man, of the fiercest type, and the other a zealous follower of Mr. Clay. The dispute grew warmer every moment, the big man growing violent and abusive, while the other, though maintaining his opinion, was still courteous. At last the big man, pulling up his pony, proposed to dismount and settle the matter by a fight. This the little gentleman declined, saying: "No, sir; by no means. I am not in the habit of settling political disputes by fist-cuffs. The road forks here, sir, and I bid you good-morning." And then he turned away upon the right-hand road.

Thornton, not caring to join such a belligerent character as the big man, put his horse into a gallop, and, followed by old Tom, was soon out of sight of him. Keeping up a pretty good gait, they arrived at the Blue Licks just as the Major and his family and a single guest, Mr. Isham Talbot, ex-United States Senator, were about to sit down to breakfast. All other guests had flown away with the summer, leaving the ex-Senator, who was in the habit of taking the waters there as long as good weather lasted. They had a venison steak for breakfast, a party of hunters having gone away, after a week of sport at the Licks, leaving their guns, and promising soon to return, having provided the Major with an abundant supply of venison.

After breakfast, while the gentlemen sat on the porch, talking and smoking, in the October sun, a large man, the belligerent whom Thornton had passed on the way, rode up to the stile and dismounted. Hitching his pony to the rack, and carrying his saddlebags on his arm, he walked in. The Major advanced, offering him a chair, and asked:

"Will you have breakfast, sir?"

"Yes, sir."

"Will you have your horse fed?"

"No, sir."

Then the Major went into the house to give orders for the breakfast of the traveler, who was now looking about him with a surly, dissatisfied air. By-and-by the Major came back, and said: "Sir, breakfast will be ready in a few minutes."

The big man made no response, but continued to look about in a surly way, and at last said: "Don't you take the newspapers here?"

"Oh, yes," replied the Major, and Mr. Talbot, who had a paper then in his hand, rose and courteously handed it to the traveler. He took it without a word or a gesture of acknowledgment, and swinging one of his legs over the other, and turning himself on the chair so as to present his back to Mr. Talbot, he began to read, and was soon absorbed in the newspaper. A moment after, he wheeled about on his seat, and flinging the paper far away from him, cried out:

"Damn that paper! I don't read that lying paper, that *Observer*. You keep a house of public entertainment here, don't you?"

"Yes, sir," responded the Major.

"Then why don't you take papers on both sides? Ain't you got the *Argus*?"

"Yes, sir; we take the *Argus*," said the Major, his eyes shining like a copperhead's, and mincing his words, and speaking with very great precision, as he was apt to do when his wrath was rising; "the boy has gone for the mail, and I look for him back at any moment."

Soon the boy came with the mail, and the Major handed to the traveler Mr. Amos Kendall's *Argus of the Western World*, then the leading Jackson paper, and he was soon absorbed in its columns.

Meantime, who should ride up to the stile but the little man with whom the big traveler had quarreled on the road! He walked in, passing near his late antagonist, who, appearing not to see him, continued intently reading the *Argus*, his lips moving, as if spelling his way through it. Then the Major made the usual inquiries of the new guest:



"Will you have breakfast, sir?"

"Yes, sir; if you please."

"Will you have your horse fed?"

"Yes, if you please."

And then the big man turned aside from the paper and said:

"Have my horse fed, too."

A moment after, breakfast was announced, and the big traveler, followed by the Major, walked into the breakfast-room, while the little man was washing his hands. The Major was carving a venison steak, and the big man was stirring his coffee, when the little traveler entered and took a seat opposite his late antagonist. That gentleman immediately bounced from the table, and pointing to the guest opposite, said:

"I will not eat with that man. I won't sit at the table with him!"

"Why, gentlemen," said the Major, "what is the matter?"

"Well, sir," said the big man, "I ordered my breakfast first, and I tell you I won't eat where that man is."

The little man smiled, and rising, said:

"Major, you shall have no trouble on my account. Let the gentleman eat; I will wait."

"No, sir," said the Major; "keep your seat, if you please." Then turning to the big man, he said: "Sir, I don't know either you or the gentleman to whom you object. He seems to be a gentleman. Can you give me any reason why you won't breakfast at the same table with him?"

"Well, sir, I won't sit at the same table with him, and that's enough."

"No, sir, it is not enough. We are not in the habit of setting a separate table for each guest, and if you won't eat your breakfast with this gentleman, or give some good reason why you should not do so, you cannot sit at my table at all."

"What, sir! Do you keep a public house and refuse to accommodate travelers?"

"Yes, sir; when travelers don't behave like gentlemen I refuse to entertain them at my house."

The big traveler was now moving toward the door, the



Major following, and keeping a vigilant eye upon him. Flouncing out upon the porch, where Mr. Talbot was sitting, he raised his voice to a high pitch, so that Thornton, who had gone in to see the Major's family, was attracted to the scene. Having an audience seemed to excite the big man still more, and he stormed about at a great rate. The Major did not make any reply to his storming, but walked to the bell rope, and sounded the hostler's bell.

"Get this man's horse," he said, when the hostler came; "that little Arkansas pony."

"I let you know," shouted the big man, "that I am not from Arkansas, and my horse is no Arkansas pony, either!" And then in a still louder key he called out, "I'll let you know that I am a gentleman!"

The Major had abstained from answering his declamatory speeches, well knowing how that inflames the temper, though it be mere vociferation, with little meaning, like the bellowing of bulls or the clamor of game cocks, but now his blood was rising, and he answered:

"And I'll let you know that I am a gentleman!"

"And I'll let you know," yelled the big man, "that I am Colonel Wilson, of Woodville, Mississippi!"

"And I'll let you know," vociferated the Major, "that I am Major Aris Throckmorton, of the Blue Licks!"

"And I'll let you know," screamed the big man, "that I run for the State Senate in my deestrick last summer, and that I was beat FOUR VOTES!"

"And I'll let you know," shrieked the Major, "that I ran for the State Senate in this district last summer, and that I was beat FOUR HUNDRED VOTES!"

The Major enunciated this as if it were a "settler," and it seemed to settle and absolutely to overwhelm Colonel Wilson. He recoiled a step, and stood silent, with his mouth agape, completely dazed. His condition was further aggravated by seeing ill-suppressed laughter on the face of Mr. Talbot, and the Major eyeing him with an air of triumph. But Colonel Wilson rallied after a time, and drawing himself up to his full height, and expanding his chest, threw back his coat so as to exhibit two pistols, which he wore in a belt about his waist, and informed the Major

and the audience generally that he knew his rights, and knowing, dared maintain them, using expletives which it would not be proper to put upon this page.

The moment the Major saw the handles of the pistols he wheeled about, and went rapidly toward the office, where four double-barreled guns had been left by the late hunting party. Seizing one of these he came forth, with both barrels cocked, calling to the big man to come on with his pistols. But Colonel Wilson made no further hostile demonstrations. Then the Major said to him: "Get on that Arkansas pony and leave here!"

The hostler was now coming with the pony (which moved reluctantly), dragging him along by the bridle, his head and neck in a horizontal line, grains of corn spilling from his mouth. Colonel Wilson had no more to say, but walked out to his horse, and mounting him, rode slowly away.

Everybody felt a sense of relief when he was gone. Two negro men in the yard, and Sam the hostler, who had brought out the pony, went away holding their faces and shaking with suppressed laughter, until they got into the stable lot, where they were heard yah-yahing and jabbering at a great rate, celebrating the master's victory.

Thornton took the gun from the Major's hand, and opening one of the pans, found no priming there; and trying the other, found that also empty; and sounding the barrels with a stick, discovered that the gun was not loaded.

## CHAPTER VI

### DIFFICULTIES

"This is the fool that lent out money gratis."

THORNTON failed to induce Major Throckmorton to take charge of his tavern, and returned to The Falls to find the sheriff with writs of execution in his hands against him for large sums, more than he deemed he owed; for, like many men sanguine and loose in the management of their finances, he had not kept an accurate list of his debts, dreading at last to look the sum total in the face. His first inclination was to interpose whatever means of delay the law permitted, in the hope of better times, but on reflection he resolved to let everything go, and be free from the annoyance of debt. Accordingly, all his property except his slaves was sold, and his debts satisfied, McIntyre, for Dick Thornton, buying his interest in Lastlands, and an interest in an iron foundry. The first effect was great mortification and distress of mind, but his hopeful temper soon rallied, and the sense of freedom, inspired by relief from the burden of debt, filled him with positive happiness.

But there was yet in store for him further tribulation. Three years before this, just as he was about to set out for Virginia, whither he went to collect some money belonging to his wife, a claim had been sent from Philadelphia for carpeting and other furniture for his tavern, with instructions to sue if not immediately paid. A writ was served upon Thornton, and when he returned an execution was in the hands of a deputy sheriff. This he satisfied at once, taking the deputy's receipt. Soon after this the deputy died without, as it appears, having made any return on the execution; and now, after the lapse of three years,

the writ was renewed, and to satisfy it the sheriff offered to make a levy upon Thornton's slaves, now the only property that remained to him. Ould at once took charge of the case, and, finding no return of the execution on the books, and Thornton not being able to find his receipt, the matter gave them great uneasiness. Having searched diligently, turning over all his papers more than once, and taking up all his bank checks, which he had been in the habit of making receipts, and not finding this receipt, the sheriff meantime waiting with what seemed not only reasonable but considerate forbearance, that officer levied on the slaves, and they stood technically in his possession. This occurred at a time when it chanced that all Thornton's confidential friends were away. John Digby was absent on business somewhere down the Mississippi River, Captain Shelby and Joe Sterrett were away on a hunting expedition down in the New Madrid region, McIntyre was at Nashville, and Dick Thornton at New Orleans, whither he had gone suddenly; all except Joe Sterrett and Colonel Shelby drawn away by the stress of the financial crisis. Ould was at home, but not being possessed of any real estate he was incompetent as a surety on the required bond. The sheriff still used forbearance, agreeing to await the close of the day before taking the slaves, already technically in his possession, to the jail for safe-keeping.

Thornton thought it would be easy to find someone whom he might with propriety ask to become his bondsman, there being no likelihood that the slaves would run away, and therefore little or no risk, and he set out to find such a person. He had tried several conventional friends, men for whom he would at any time have been glad to render a like service, but they had all refused, pleading their own embarrassed condition. Then he met one other, notoriously free from all money complications, and always free in expression of friendship for him, but he also refused, lest, as he said, if he should not lose anything he might yet be "annoyed" by the future proceedings on the bond. Then Thornton resolved to ask no further. But chancing to meet a young lawyer whom in many ways he had obliged in the past, when he was needy, and who having married a



young woman with some fortune was now considered a solid man, he determined to solicit him. He felt less hesitation in making this request because, besides many social favors, he had obliged this young lawyer more than once with loans of money, in one instance to the extent of several hundred dollars. Accordingly, after having explained his condition, he asked this gentleman if he would be willing to become his bondsman. "Certainly I will," he answered, to Thornton's gratification and relief. Nothing could have been finer than the cordiality with which he expressed himself as they walked over to the clerk's office to make the bond. But finding the clerk away from the office, at dinner, and there being no other person there competent to take the bond, they went away, having agreed to meet again at an hour named, when the clerk should have returned. Thornton was promptly at the office, but found not his promised bondsman, but only a note from him stating that he was unexpectedly called away by business out of town, and would not be able to comply with his promise; treating the matter lightly by saying that doubtless Thornton would easily find another bondsman. It was a plain evasion suggested by sober second thought, as Thornton believed, and he then resolved to make no further solicitation. He went immediately to see his slaves at home, explained to them their situation, that they were to be taken into custody by the sheriff, and confined until the return of Mr. McIntyre, who was now expected at any time, and exhorted them to bear this painful trial with patience.

At the close of the day the sheriff went to Thornton's house, where, except two old crones, superannuated cooks of his father and grandfather, he took into possession all the slaves, to be placed for safe-keeping in the jail. As they went along, a melancholy band, men, women and children, there were many people on the street. The sad faces of the slaves, due as much to sympathy with their distressed master as to their own uncertain fate, excited the sympathy of most of the throng of spectators. Yet—meekly as Thornton had borne the factitious honors that wealth and high social position had brought him, and



generously as in the past he had succored others afflicted in mind, body, or estate—there were now some who secretly rejoiced at his fate, and others ready even to taunt him with his misfortunes! Alas for human nature! Can it be true, what the French philosopher says, “There is in the misfortunes of our best friends always something that gives us pleasure”? And is there a natural hatred of the poor for the rich? However this may be, there were in the throng that witnessed this sad procession some who expressed this unworthy feeling, almost in the very words of Slater’s psalm, uttered in the nasal tone that best befits them:

“The righteous shall his sorrow scan,  
And laugh at him, and say, ‘Behold  
What hath become of this here man  
That on his riches was so bold.’”

But as the procession moved away most of the people looked after with sorrowful faces, while some were full of indignation, and there were not wanting imprecations upon the remorseless enginery of the law.

There was now no hope of relief until McIntyre should return. As to the ultimate result of the controversy—whether Thornton should be compelled to pay a second time an execution already once satisfied—all hung upon the proverbial uncertainty of the law. The question was mooted among the lawyers and among laymen alike, and Thornton’s spotless character was now a tower of strength. Compromise had been suggested by the lawyer on the plaintiff’s side, which he had rejected with scorn. Ould breathed only indignation and defiance. With the details of the legal controversy which was soon afoot in the courts the reader shall not be troubled. The lost receipt Thornton had now come to think must have been carried off by some thieves who, in a time of flood, had robbed Digby’s warehouse, and, besides the plunder belonging there, had carried off a tin box of Thornton’s containing only deeds and other papers, but having a lock suggesting contents of value. He had no remembrance of having put the receipt into this box, though he paid the execution at Digby’s office and took the deputy’s receipt there. Yet, as he said, he had

never before lost a paper, though he had often misplaced them; he was now confident that it had been put into this box. After a visit to his slaves at the jail, where he found them in better spirits than he expected, owing altogether to the cheerful talk of a leader among them, Charles Fetter, he went home, in better spirits, to console his afflicted household.

Next day at an early hour he was again at the jail, and afterward went down to Digby's warehouse, where, going into the former office of Dick Thornton, he lay down upon a lounge to ruminate upon his troubles in solitude. After the lapse of an hour or more he heard old Mr. Anderson, Digby's cashier, come up and take his accustomed seat by the great door, that looked out upon the river. Soon after came another person, who began at once to talk of Thornton's misfortunes, and told Mr. Anderson that some negro traders had gone in company with McCrae, the sheriff, to the jail to inspect Thornton's slaves, and for this purpose had separated and privily examined them, men and women, stripping them as was usual with slaves that were to be put upon the block for public sale; that he, the informant, had gone to the office of Ould to apprise him of this, but not finding him, had come down to let Mr. Anderson know, etc. And then this bearer of evil tidings went quickly away. Thornton arose at once to follow him, but being a little delayed putting on a part of his apparel, when he got upon the street the man was out of sight. He then went at once to the office of Ould, and not finding him there, went to the jail to inquire of the truth of what he had heard. The jailer was away, but his deputy told Thornton that he understood that McCrae had visited the jail with two negro traders, and had examined privily some slaves, but what slaves he did not know. Then Thornton, impatient to know the truth, resolved to go at once to the office of the sheriff, to confront McCrae and catechise him as to the facts.

McCrae had come to The Falls at an early day. He came in humble guise, representing himself as a man that had lost his fortune, and was seeking in the new country some means of livelihood. He was familiar with the pro-

ceedings of courts of law, and soon, through the influence of some of the board of magistrates, was made a constable. When Robert Thornton saw him, he recognized him as a defaulter in Virginia for a large sum of money, which he was believed to have still in possession. His offense was not then technically a crime, and as he kept his money concealed, his creditors had no remedy. Informed of his whereabouts, they had instituted suits at law against him, but were baffled by his ingenuity. Afterward they employed Ould, who, by diligent and persistent efforts, quietly made, got such knowledge of his affairs as enabled him to force a settlement satisfactory to the creditors. This was effected without further proceedings at law, in a private conference, in which Ould convinced him that further resistance was vain, and would only be attended by public disgrace. Meantime, by the use of the money in usury and negro dealing, he had made vast profits. He had also for many years farmed the sheriffalty, though always in the name of another, taking himself the place of a deputy, and though called sheriff, this was his posture now. Having, as he thought, condoned his offense, he now aspired to consideration in the community, and as money, of which he now made ostentatious display, smooths all paths, he had in a considerable degree attained this. Finding himself, on one occasion when he approached Thornton, treated with contempt by that gentleman, and anxious to conciliate a man of such social influence, he had sent a gentleman favorably known to Thornton to deprecate his hostility. This gentleman had earnestly deplored Thornton's animosity, representing McCrea as an active, influential and wealthy member of the community. To all of which Thornton had replied with two lines from Pope:

"A knave's a knave to me, whate'er his state,  
Alike my scorn if he succeed or fail."

Thenceforth McCrae hated him as Haman hated Mordecai sitting at the king's gate.

McCrae was reputed to be a man of courage; not aggressive, and careful to keep the law on his side, but one that would strike; and in some contests, into which he had been

drawn in the course of his official duty, was said to have behaved with much spirit. He believed that misfortune would break the spirit of any man, and when he saw from the window Thornton approaching his office, he made sure that his fortitude had given way, and that he was coming to ask some concession or favor at his hands. But struck by Thornton's face as he entered the office door, he quickly drew to himself a heavy lignum vitæ ruler, and took in hand his penknife that lay open on the table. Further, this chronicler can give no clear relation of an encounter which quickly followed between them, except that McCrae was knocked down by a blow from Thornton's fist, falling against the wall and carrying down with him a large United States map that hung there; that Ould then came hurriedly into the room, and seeing McCrae's deputy take a pistol from the drawer of a desk, sprang upon him and wrested the weapon from his hand; that McCrae, rising from the floor, did not look to Thornton, but seeing Ould with the pistol in hand, asked if he had come to aid an attempt to assassinate him, for the discharge of his duty; that Ould answered that the pistol was McCrae's own, and had been taken from the hands of his deputy, and then opening the pan and emptying it of priming, and casting the pistol contemptuously upon the floor, laid his hand on Thornton's arm and led him from the room.

This affair became at once a subject of talk for the whole town, and many different versions of it were spread abroad. To the office of Ould, whither Thornton and he had gone, came many acquaintances to inquire about it, each bringing a different version, but all agreeing that McCrae and his deputy were industriously giving out their own version, to Thornton's discredit—that he had suddenly and unexpectedly assaulted McCrae, for no other cause than the discharge of an official duty. This greatly annoyed Thornton, and made him bitterly repent having acted with such precipitation. He went at once in search of the person who had related to Mr. Anderson the transaction at the jail, and finding him, learned that he had heard the story from another, and this other from still another, and so on *ad infinitum*.



"Hiram McQuilly told my uncle Billy  
That old Mr. Patton had said  
That Jimmy McFadden told Billy McHadden——"

Hopeless of finding a responsible voucher for the story, Thornton went back to Ould's office oppressed by the apprehension that he had acted upon no better ground than a popular rumor, and that he was now under an obligation to make amends to a man whom he despised. "He shall have the customary satisfaction, if he desires that," he said.

"Bah!" exclaimed Ould, "he will never dream of that. He has always been ready enough with his fists, for he is a big-boned, powerful fellow, but he has no stomach for a deadly fight. I know him. I found him out while I was after him for the money he embezzled in Virginia. He is a craven at bottom."

"Still," said Thornton, "I must make him amends."

"Well, don't be in a hurry about it. We don't know yet how far he deserved all he got. I know that he has been in league with these negro traders, and long a partner in their transactions. Tom Long will be here after a while, and we shall then know how much truth there was in what you heard at the warehouse. Then you can act advisedly." And soon Tom Long came, and reported the facts to be as follows: McCrae went to the jail with the negro traders. The negro traders asked to be shown Thornton's slaves. This the jailer refused, saying that they were there for safe-keeping only, and that their privacy should not be disturbed except by order of their master. McCrae said nothing *pro* or *con*. Then the negro traders asked to be shown other slaves confined there and advertised for sale, and accompanied by McCrae they had privately examined these slaves, for that purpose separating them, and that this was a common practice there with slaves in their circumstances. Hearing this statement, Thornton said at once: "I have nothing except on my own account to regret. By going with these men to the jail, and saying nothing when they asked to be shown my slaves, he gave countenance to this request, instead of interposing for their protection, as it was his duty to do. But for the manly



conduct of the old jailer they also might have been turned over for inspection. I am going to let the matter stand as it is." To this Ould and Tom Long nodded emphatic approval. Then Thornton broke out in denunciation of the negro traders, and of the practice of permitting them to examine privily men and women, for this purpose stripping them to the skin. To which Ould replied, that he ought rather to denounce the system that made such things possible and even proper; for so long as men and women were bought and sold as merchandise, it would be wrong to deny the buyer the means of knowing if the commodity offered were sound and merchantable. Then Thornton, unable to deny so reasonable a proposition, denounced in turn the system of slavery, expressing the hope that soon some solution might be found for this perplexing problem. To which Ould heartily agreed.

This sentiment was then common in Kentucky. The policy and the duty of emancipation were then freely and openly discussed before large popular assemblies. Mr. Clay was its open declared advocate. And Mr. Bascom, the most eloquent divine of his day, drew immense audiences when he spoke, as he often did, on this theme. It was but a few years after this that Mr. Clay, while addressing a popular assembly in Indiana, was handed from the audience a paper that proved to be a petition to him to emancipate his slave Charles, then in attendance upon him. Mr. Clay read aloud the petition, and said: "Gentlemen, here is Charles, at your service. Take him aside and talk with him. If he shall concur in this petition I will cheerfully grant what you ask, on the spot." Then turning about to Charles, he said: "Charles, go with these gentlemen"; resuming his speech, while Charles went aside with the petitioners. The conference had no practical result. Charles told them that he knew he might be free at any time if he so desired, but that he did not wish to change his relation to Mr. Clay; that he found great happiness in serving him; answering their arguments and suggestions with a stately politeness and a manner not unlike that of the great man himself. This filled the petitioners with disgust and indignation, to which they gave expression

in terms like those of Mr. Canning's Radical in his colloquy with the "needy knife-grinder."

Emancipation was at this time freely and openly discussed, not only by popular orators, but was canvassed everywhere. At every family hearth it was a subject for anxious consideration and discussion. The popular heart and the public conscience had been deeply touched. Most of the leading minds in the State agreed that slavery in Kentucky was in a fair way of extinction. It is not to be denied that the depression in all branches of industry, especially in agriculture, in which slaves were chiefly employed, and their consequent decline in value, had much to do with this. The same cause had brought about emancipation in other States where slavery had prevailed, and not even a Kentuckian will claim for his people immunity from the dominating power of self-interest. It is enough to know, that only some feasible plan of emancipation was then wanting, and this becoming known to the Abolitionists, was a signal for those agitators to renew and embitter their attacks. They rose in their demands. They would not listen to any scheme of gradual emancipation. In a dictatorial tone they demanded immediate emancipation. Then Kentucky began to draw back. Her people were not used to doing anything on compulsion. Many that were most zealous for emancipation resented this rude interference. Then the law of 1833 which forbade the further bringing of slaves into Kentucky, except in the case of the owner coming there to abide, was repealed, and thereafter the parties were arrayed in hostile lines, the fight went on all along the lines, and Kentucky was permanently fixed within the slave border.

"Why introduce this subject here?" Only to give the reader a complete view of the times this chronicler aims to depict. He cherishes no spark of the resentments of the past—not even against the Abolitionists. Nay, he can now regard these as having been friends in disguise. Slavery in the Great Republic has been extinguished forever. Kentucky, in common with the whole South, thanks God for this consummation, though reached through a sea of blood and tears.

As for the slaves, they are back in friendly relations with their former masters, who can never forget their fidelity in the war. They are fortunate in not having to deal with strangers, who would never have understood them, nor have been tolerant of their ways. For this chronicler's own part, his old cook is in his kitchen, and all her children that are living serve him for wages; all the better for having been taught in the public schools; all happier in this new relation, they for the sense of freedom, and he for relief given his conscience.

"Would he stand by them now as in the days of slavery?" Oh, don't talk!—you that know nothing of the old relation of master and slave. "Woo't fight?—Woo't drink up eisel?"

"Better not stir this exciting topic again?" That recalls an incident. After the war the Kentucky soldiers came home, and Federals and Confederates, except some malignants—politicians—clasped hands, and all was peace and amity. In the midst of this good feeling one man demanded of another two dollars and a half due him, and was answered: "Great Scott! What kind of a man are you, to come, while we are all harmonizing and trying to homologate, stirring up strife by dunning me for two dollars and a half!"

We don't want to stir up strife, but we do want what is due us—justice. We don't want to go down to posterity in your innumerable books as man-eaters; and we won't, if truth be indeed omnipotent and public justice certain. There!

You an old Abolitionist? Shake? Certainly—with all my heart. Shake!

And now to our chronicle. Next day McIntyre came home, and bond was given for the forthcoming of Thornton's slaves, and they were released, and went home.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE REMOVAL TO LASTLANDS

"She maketh fine linen and selleth it, and delivereth girdles to the merchants. She looketh well to the ways of her household and eateth not the bread of idleness."

IN THE first hours of depression following Thornton's misfortune he had thought of going away from The Falls into some new field, to begin there a new career among strangers, to advertise himself as architect and technologist, and make his living by professional work. But this his friends combated, insisting that for such work the new country afforded no sufficient field, urging him to go with his slaves to Lastlands, and there engage in the work for which his training abroad had best fitted him. His sister Digby and her husband offered to give him all their interest in Lastlands, and McIntyre informed him that Dick Thornton, expecting him to take this course, had authorized him to offer the free use of his interest there, and further to furnish whatever money might be required to put the house and plantation in complete order. But swayed by his love of independence, made morbid by misfortune, Thornton declined to accept these generous offers. Yet, being now bound by the proceedings at law which had laid hands on his slaves, and obliged to stand by these faithful dependents, as well on his own account as theirs, and having received a letter from his brother Dick at New Orleans, announcing his contemplated departure for England, and urging him to go to the country, he resolved, for a time, at least, to betake himself with his slaves to Lastlands. Somewhere he longed to go at once, away from the community by which, in his morbid humor, he thought he had been ill-used.



The fall from high estate or the simple decline from wealth to poverty is not always distressing. To those who have never possessed either wealth or high estate it seems a grievous thing. But to those who have possessed both, who know that neither wealth nor high station can of themselves bring happiness, that this is not a purchasable commodity, nor dependent upon social position, that it cannot come at all from without, but springs only in the heart, and, diffusing itself outwardly, "doth make the meat it feeds on"—to these this decline often gives positive relief. Some pain Thornton felt from a change observed in the manner of people he met. His intimate friends were not altered. They had never congratulated him upon his accession to wealth, and they did not now pull a long face over his loss, these things having no relation to their friendship. To them, rich or poor, he was the same "Bob Thornton." He did not care for the coldness he met from many. But he was sorely annoyed by those conventional friends who saluted the broken gentleman with such solemn and uncommon courtesy as advertised at once his misfortunes and their own under-breeding. It was a positive pleasure to meet such as treated him just as before.

In the first flush of indignation at the rebuffs he had met while seeking a bondsman for the relief of his slaves, he had felt the bitterness of misanthropy in his heart, and had made harsh speeches against mankind; and these being by some conventional friends, advertising their shallow sympathy, reported to Ould, that gentleman said: "This will do him no harm. These bitter feelings are natural, and they are wholesome. They are moral tonics that brace up the soul. This experience of the world will do him good. There is no danger about the future of any of these Thorntons. They have indomitable pluck and a noble pride. They are of the true Antæan breed, half celestial, half terrestrial. When in full feather they are apt to soar toward the empyrean and beat their wings to tatters in the thin ether there, and fall back to the ground. But when they touch their mother earth they are invincible. I know their history through many generations. Their career is not unlike that of their mansions in the town,



which, elbowed by trade in its encroachments, and abandoned for other quarters, fall into a purgatorial state. First, recommended by their spaciousness and an odor of gentility, these become best-class boarding-houses, thence they lapse into second, thence into third-class, thence into demolition; and then, after temporary obscurity, from behind a veil of scaffolding and the fumes of lime and dust and mortar, they come forth massive temples of Mammon or splendid palaces of trade. Don't waste your sympathy on the Thorntons. They are bound to rise somehow, and they will do it without asking mortal man to give them help."

Before this financial crash Thornton had been a happy man. Even the loss of his property had not brought unhappiness. He could say:

"Let lands and houses have what lords they will,  
Let us be fixed and our own masters still."

Only the seizure of his slaves had given him positive pain. Impulsive and sensitive, he had enjoyed all the innocent pleasures of life unalloyed by vice, and, as yet, without satiety. He had felt in an uncommon degree that highest of all earthly pleasures: the sense of having done good to his fellow-man. He had never before felt the need of help from others, and as all men are ready to offer service to those who do not need it, he had seen nothing of the true face of the world. He had seen it only masked and dressed as for a carnival. He did not know that to every individual man it is a foe, biding its time:

"A foe close veiled in soft deceit,  
Smiling, and smooth, and bland;  
A foe that steals our inmost heart  
With warm and kind embrace,  
Till suddenly the maskings part  
And show the foul, fierce face."

Thornton's wife had seemed as happy as he, but this was only seeming; for she was childless, and what wife was ever happy without children? In all history or story is there anything more piteous than that brief scene described

by Pepys, of the childless queen of Charles the Second in delirium during her last illness? "This morning about five o'clock the physician feeling her pulse, thinking to be better able to judge, she being asleep, waked her, and the first word she said was, 'How do the children?'" Poor Queen! She had found in delirium what she most craved, as the fevered sleeper finds in dreams the cold fountains. Some noble women find solace in the care of the children of others. The wife of Thornton found much of this in the young orphan girl, Barbara Peyton, who was all-sufficient to the husband. But nothing save offspring of her own could fill the void in the heart of the wife. Many mothers of her age, with beves of children tugging at their apron-strings, envied the careless lot of the gay Mrs. Thornton. They did not know that this gay life was but a vain device to elude the one black care which sat at her board, and waited on her everywhere, and wrung from her again and again the heart-breaking cry of Rachel, "Give me children or else I die!" But we must not linger on this delicate sorrow.

Thornton soon went out to Lastlands, to ascertain what would be needed to make it a comfortable home for his household. Since the death of Reginald Thornton the place had been left in charge of some slaves of Dick Thornton. Most of the older slaves of his father had, at his choice, been assigned to him, and, at his request, left at Lastlands to make such crops as might be necessary for their own support, with instructions to bring the surplus to town for market and for the supply of the families of Digby and Robert Thornton. For a time, at intervals, a wagon was accustomed to bring in fowls, and melons, and apples, and sweet potatoes, and an occasional supply of bacon hams. But the intervals grew gradually longer, and after a time the wagon brought only apples. Dick's slaves consulted their own ease, and gave no thought to anything beyond their own necessities. Only one had been faithful to the particular task assigned her, to open and air the house at intervals, to make fires there in damp weather, to sweep the fallen leaves from the verandas, and to look after the peafowls and domesticated Canada geese. Thornton

found the place in great disorder. Most of the beauty evoked by the art of the landscape gardener is evanescent, requiring constant care to defend it against the encroachments of Nature, ever pushing her wild, restive forces against his factitious ornamentation. With uncommon power in the rich soil of Lastlands these forces had been at work. The broad graveled roads were now overgrown and hidden by weeds. The wide fields were covered by a level growth of horse weeds and nettles as high as Thornton's head as he rode by them on horseback. The fences and gates were twisted and broken. Over the mansion, with its closed shutters and smokeless chimneys, brooded silence and solitude, intensifying the dismal air that always rests upon the abandoned habitations of man. But this only stimulated Thornton's desire to take possession of it at once.

When he scolded a little at the slaves for neglect they made but poor excuses. Only old Rachel, whose task had been to take care of the mansion, made a reasonable excuse for those who could make none for themselves.

"'Tain't good, Mars Robert, to leave niggers by der-selves to take care of nothin'. Dey can't take care of der-selves. Dey'd all starve if it warn't for me and Uncle Adam. We got to tell 'em every day what dey got to do, an' den dey wouldn't often do it. But coase dey couldn't keep dis place like it was in ole Marster's time. You comin' out here to live, Mars Robert? I heard you was."

"Yes."

"De Lord be praised! You gwine to bring out all de hands fum town?"

"Yes, everybody. We'll soon put everything in order."

"Bless de Lord! It looks like a ole wild prairie now, but you gwine to make it shine ag'in, I know. Uncle Adam an' me cut de briers over ole Marster's and ole Mistuss's graves, all de time. But all de other part of de buryin' ground is growed up in sprouts an' weeds. We couldn't keep it all cut, de hooks is so dull, an' de grindstone is broke; an' one hook's broke."

"Well, never mind, Rachel, we'll put everything in order soon. There will be plenty of time this winter to get

everything straight. You have done your part. I will see that the others have enough to do when I come out to live here."

"Shall I get you some dinner, Mars Robert? I got some beef, a nice little roast Mr. Vaughn gi' me. I was over thar yistiddy helpin' em wid sausages an' dey had killed a beef. Dey put up sausages and salt beef in barrels, an' sends dat an' de sausages down de river to sell. I got plenty of sweet potatoes, too, an' Uncle Adam can ketch you a fish—if he ain't already got some."

"No, no, Rachel! I met Mr. Vaughn as I came here, and promised to dine with him."

"Well, I could git you about as good a dinner as Mr. Vaughn, but I'm glad you're goin' to see him. He likes all ole Marster's family, an' he's been mighty good to us all here, an' gives us work often, an' pays us. Some of the women here used to go over dere to help, an' some of 'em knows how to spin an' weave, an' if you git spinnin' wheels an' weaving machines, can make heap of stuff for clo'es for de men an' women—if you gits some sheep. Dey's better'n store goods; heap warmer, too. I got some of it now. Dis frock I got on come from over dar."

"I've been thinking of that, and will try to take up with many of Mr. Vaughn's ways."

That day Thornton dined with Mr. Vaughn. The old farmer was very cordial, though he had given his invitation with a modest and shy manner. He had known well Thornton's father, but had seen little of the son. Devoted to work all the year round, he kept out of the circle of the neighborhood, and led almost the life of a recluse. But his proximity to Lastlands had thrown him into the company of the elder Thornton, and the old Pennsylvania farmer had been captivated by the Virginia planter. Of Robert Thornton he had seen little, even in his boyhood at Lastlands, and knew him now only as a fine gentleman associated with the visitors to Lastlands from the town. He felt a natural embarrassment in inviting him to his plain house to dinner, and this had been a subject of discussion in his household. But it was a question soon settled. To leave him to dine in the negro cabins at Lastlands



would never do, and they would just do their duty, giving the best the house afforded, and take the consequences.

The dinner was a novel and delightful scene to Thornton. Three stalwart sons of the old farmer and one lad were at the table, all dressed in substantial home-made cloth. A young, fair-haired, blue-eyed daughter, the child of old age, waited on the table. The viands were excellent. The table napery was all of home-made flaxen fabric, and, though not as white nor as fine as English or Irish linen, had a substantial character in keeping with everything around. Thornton's appetite, always good, now sharpened by the ride to Lastlands and by the fresh country air, was ravenous, and he did ample justice to the savory country dinner and to the dessert of the good housewife. His unconventional manner soon put his host at ease, and his interest in the details of farming, now fairly awakened, gave his experienced host ample material for talk in answering his various questions. Thornton had observed in all the rooms except the dining-room, and on the large porch in the rear of the house, the ceilings hung with clouds of yarn, and on the floor of the long back porch piles of woven stuff of flax and wool, and a group of spinning wheels and weaving machines, manifestly set aside for this occasion, all suggestive of the thrift and industry of the household. But what he felt most concerned about were the details of the farm. After dinner, on his asking the old farmer to show him something of these, he was taken to the barnyard.

The harvest of the year had been unusually large, and Thornton found the barn full in all its compartments with grain and hay and straw, and overflowing into the barnyard, where a space had been fenced off, within which stood many thatched stacks, looking like quaint habitations, all ranged on the north side to keep off the cold winds. Spite of their formal array they had a certain picturesque beauty like that of the teepees of the Indians. In the barn he found the hay and straw in mows conveniently placed near the stalls of the cows and the horses, and the byres for fattening cattle in the English fashion. There were loose stalls for sick animals, a large littered room for colts,



and another for calves, where these were handled and made gentle. In the second story, over the wagon-way, was a novel corn-crib made altogether of open slats, from which the shattered grain fell to the ground below, to be eaten by pigs and fowls. Such economical expedients Thornton had never seen except in England, and asking where the old farmer had learned them, he answered, "In Pennsylvania." Accustomed all his life to look for whatever was best of its kind to Philadelphia, a Philadelphia lawyer being proverbially the sharpest-witted of all lawyers, knowing that to Philadelphia The Falls looked for whatever was new in fashion, and remembering an old set of silver-mounted harness of his father, preserved and still often polished by old Tom Strother, upon which was wrought in threads of silver the name of the makers, "Ogle & Watson, Philadelphia," he was yet surprised to find Pennsylvania furnishing also models for such homely thrift as was here displayed. If there occurred to his mind the trite reflection, that this homely thrift is the basis of the mighty fabric of wealth, and luxury, and vanity of the world, that these are all dependent upon the toil of the agriculturist, he did not repine at his choice of this calling, preferring the independence it assures to anything promised by that other life which he had weighed and found wanting.

Ruminating on what he had seen and heard at Vaughn's, Thornton went back to The Falls full of enthusiasm for a life at Lastlands. He would not accept the generous offers of his brother-in-law and sister, and take their interest there as a gift, but he would live there and try, by imitating the thrifty methods of old Vaughn, to save the means of buying a part of Lastlands, and pass his life there, realizing in some measure what had been the earnest desire of his father. As for the interest of his brother Dick, he knew he might command that, if he chose, by the asking, and that only the use of it had been offered lest the absolute ownership should stir him to some scheme by which it would be lost. That night at his fireside in town he related his experience at Lastlands, and described all he had seen of the industry and thrift of Vaughn's household, communicating his own enthusiasm to Barbara, and

inspiring in his wife a desire to remove to the country, thinking, as she said, that it might improve her health, never of the best, and her spirits, of late sorely depressed. The one stumbling block to his scheme had been the fear that the change would not be agreeable to her, and this removed, Thornton's spirits rose, and he descanted at length upon the happy lot of the Vaughns. There was not much beauty there. Indeed, a few shade trees near the house, and on the porches some climbing roses, brought from Lastlands and set out at the instance of Thornton's father, were all that indicated any attempt at ornamentation. But there was much of the beauty that comes of order and neatness, and there was an air of abundance and substantial wealth in cattle and horses and sheep, which gave to the place an aspect in the highest degree respectable. He told them of the details of the farming, and the methods of old Mr. Vaughn. How he made it an inviolable rule to make no outlay of money for supplies; that if anything was needed some product of the farm was sent to market to supply it. How at regular intervals whatever was ready for market was sent in a wagon to The Falls for sale; how in his boyhood he had seen this wagon loaded with cotton and woolen and flaxen fabrics, and fatted fowls, and butter, and eggs, and beeswax, and tallow, on its way to town. How this was always now an occasion of great interest in the household, each member of the family, even little Phoebe, sending with the general cargo some special private venture. How the old farmer then put on his best clothes and his waterproof beaver hat, well known to all the shop keepers at The Falls for many years past, and likely to be known for many more, and early in the morning, taking in hand his long black leathern whip, well oiled against this day, he mounted his stout wheel-horse and drove away, the yellow and white dog Ring trotting beneath the wagon, the whole family following to the big gate, where Phoebe threw her slipper after them for good luck, and then watching the wagon till it was hidden by a turn in the road, when the good mother, heaving a sigh, went back and set going with unusual vigor the work of the household, the

hum of the spinning-wheel and the clack of the weaver's shuttle making homely music.

Thornton had been struck with the homely thrift under the exclusive management of the good housewife, and made of it a lively picture. Contrasting the life of the Vaughns with his own gay and, as it now seemed to him, almost purposeless career in the town, he had something of the thought of Lear at the sight of Edgar in his blanket—all other life was "sophisticated, this was the real thing." "You know," he said, "it was the habit of our British ancestors, when misfortune overtook them, always to go to the country. Ministers of state when out of favor at court, and gentlemen when they lost fortune, always betook themselves to their country homes: the Earl of Chatham to Claremont, Sir William Temple to Skene or Moor Park, and unhappy Lord Bacon to Gorhambury."

"Yes, Uncle," added Barbara, "and you know the Percys, when they were poor, went to 'The Hills.'"

"Yes, Barbara, and Lastlands shall be 'The Hills' to us. We will all do our part there, and learn to live by work. You shall have hens and keep us in eggs and chickens, and you may learn to spin yarn, and to knit stockings. Mr. Vaughn's Phoebe is only a year or two older than you, and she can spin, and looks as graceful at this work as a lady at her harp. We shall have sheep, and spinning-wheels, and weaving machines, and make everything we wear. And we shall have cows and plenty of milk and butter, and you and your Aunt shall drink all the cream you please, and both grow as stout as your Aunt Digby."

Thornton's idea of poverty was the poet's idea, an idyllic vision. How should he, who had never known what it is to have a desire ungratified, form any conception of the degrading cares and the mean shifts of this "real thing"? In high spirits he now chaunted the song of Amiens:

"Under the greenwood tree,  
Who loves to lie with me,  
And turn his merry note  
Unto the sweet bird's throat.  
Come hither, come hither, come hither,  
Come hither, come hither, come hither.

Here shall he see  
No enemy  
But winter and rough weather."

And then the bitter mood recurring:

"Freeze, freeze, thou bitter sky:  
Thou dost not bite so nigh  
As benefits forgot;  
Though thou the waters warp,  
Thy sting is not so sharp  
As friend remembered not.  
Heigh ho! Sing heigh ho! unto the green holly:  
Most friendship is feigning, most loving mere folly.  
Then, heigh ho the holly!  
This life is most jolly!"

Soon the household was full of enthusiasm for the contemplated removal, which passed by contagion from the servants in waiting to the kitchen among the slaves.

Two of John Digby's sons, one in his fifteenth year and the other three years younger, the first named after his father but always called John D., and the other named Horace, but always called Buttons, were present at this family conference, and partook of the feeling so rife in the household. They were members of a classical school in the town, John D. a zealous student but a more zealous sportsman, and Buttons rather an idle fellow with a passion for the theater and shows in general. John D. anticipated fine sport in fishing and shooting at Lastlands, and Buttons thought he might forego the shows at times, and enjoy the wildwoods there.

It was not long until many wagons stood before Thornton's door, among them old Vaughn's great farm wagon with four stout horses, the yellow and white dog beneath it, and the work of removal was begun. Three days afterward more wagons were there to take away what remained. "Little Dick" was getting the carriage in readiness, and old Tom Strother was grooming Thornton's horse and getting all things in readiness for the journey. John D. rose early that morning. He threw up the window to look out at the sky, when Buttons broke into the room crying, "The pigeons are flying!" and John D. saw the air filled with



great masses of these birds. The sound of an occasional shot was heard, and then a heavy fusillade in the direction of the river. "They are shooting down at the bridge over Beargrass," said John D. "I hear the lumbering of Mr. Ormsby's old 'Queen Anne.' Mr. Sands is down there with it. The town will be blue with pigeons' feathers."

"Aren't you going down?" said Buttons.

"No, I am going over to Uncle Rob's, but they'll all be over here to breakfast. Aren't you going over to help them to get through packing?"

"No, not now. I'm going to take the dogs down to fetch out the birds that fall in the water. I bet I get more birds than some of the shooters." And then Buttons hastened away with a number of white water spaniels at his heels.

John D. and Buttons had been at Thornton's house until a late hour the night before, helping to pack the remaining light movables that accumulate in a household, things of little value but kept because they have been long in possession, and the boxes required to hold these trifles now made almost a wagon load of themselves. John D. and Barbara and Buttons had been very jovial while engaged in this packing, and many a merry outcry had been made over old forgotten things that were now turned up, and the evening had been a very jolly one. But now that the hour had come for leaving the old home, and the wagons were at the door for the last time, and Barbara stood in the doorway in her shawl and hood, her cat in her arms, and a tear in her eye, ready long before the time, and eager to have the parting over, the sight smote John D.'s heart with sorrow. People that passed along the street looked askance at these final preparations for removal, many with a shadow of feeling on their faces. Thornton's public spirit and active benevolence, and generosity, were known to all, and there was now felt general compassion for his misfortunes. It is an old saw that will bear repeating, that only when we are about to lose, or have lost, our friends, do we know their value, and there is no pang sharper than that which often comes then, a sense as of having entertained angels unawares.

The wagons soon rolled away with their burdens. At a



later hour Mrs. Thornton and Barbara and John D. and Buttons set out in the carriage, Thornton with old Tom Strother accompanying them on horseback. The cavalcade was no sooner in motion than the spirits of the young people rose, and their merry cackle and laughter was incessant, stimulated afresh by the snow which soon began to fall, whitening the heavy capes on the great-coats of Thornton and his old body-servant.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE PIGEONS

"Onward they came, a dark, continuous cloud  
Of congregated myriads numberless,  
The rushing of whose wings was as the sound  
Of some broad river headlong in its course."

THE FALLS was for many years a compact town. The early habit of concentration against incursions of the Indians, continuing long after this danger was past, prevented it from assuming that form peculiar to new towns, length without breadth. It had been laid out with five wide streets running east and west, and twelve narrower streets intersecting these at right angles, but the dwellings were at an early day all within a narrow area. The business center remained for a long time at the intersection of the fourth of these cross-streets and the first of the wide streets on the high plateau on which the town lay, called Main street. There on the southeast corner stood a famous retail store, above the door the sign of a spinning-wheel, the headquarters of the country trade. Hither came all the farmers of the surrounding country to buy or to barter, exchanging country fabrics, woolen and cotton yarns, and flaxen and woolen fabrics, knitted stockings and home-made cloth, and country products, honey and bees-wax and ginseng, for printed calicoes and other "store goods." Long wooden racks for horses extended along two sides of the intersecting streets, with blocks sawn into steps, for the convenience of female equestrians. Directly opposite stood the great wholesale auction house of Mr. Robert Ormsby, whose periodical sales brought throngs of country merchants from all quarters. Here was thus concentrated the

bulk of the wholesale and retail trade of the town in dry-goods; and as that portion of the street leading to the river, ambitiously named Wall street, was for a long time the only paved avenue to the wharf, here was to be seen in all its forms the entire current of trade: slowly toiling up the acclivity from the river, and diffusing itself through the town, or pouring tumultuously down, and brawling noisily over the paved wharf, and losing itself in the greater stream of commerce which then flowed in upon the river. Yet all the noise of this traffic did not drown the roar of the water on the falls, whose deep monotone sounded above its petty din.

As the town grew it elongated, stretching westward, drawn thither by the strong current of trade with the towns of Shippingport and Portland at the foot of the falls. As the steamboats that plied to New Orleans could not, except in times of high water, ascend to The Falls, this town was for a great part of the year handicapped by a portage of some miles, and the towns below were for the same time practically at the head of navigation. Many people inclined to believe that one of these places, or both united, would at some future time become the chief seat of business about the falls; and among the proprietors of lots in these towns were some who would not have been willing to exchange their property there for like possessions at The Falls. Two brothers, Frenchmen, Jean and Louis Tarascon, were in this category. They were the proprietors of large flouring mills in Shippingport, and the owners of much land there already laid off in lots, and were possessed with strong faith in the future of that town. But after the canal was projected and seemed likely to be made, Jean lost faith, and resolved to sell all his property in lots. He was a bachelor, a large, plethoric man of easy temper, while his brother Louis was a married man, small in stature but possessed of all the spirit and fire of the Gallic race, and habitually dominated his milder brother. Louis had unshaken faith in Shippingport, but failing to convince Jean that there was no danger to their interests from the canal, or to control his conduct in this case, all Jean's property in lots was put up at auction, and the sale was attended by a vast

crowd of people. Louis attended also, and proved himself equal to the emergency. Bidding with a high defiant politeness over everybody, he bought in all the lots. Mr. Russell, a mischievous young gentleman at The Falls, being present, bid for one of these lots to such an extent and so rapidly that Monsieur Tarascon got almost into a frenzy, advancing often upon his own bid, and when Mr. Russell bid two hundred and fifty dollars for this lot, not rated by anybody at more than one hundred dollars, the little French gentleman screamed out, "Five hondre dollaire!" and when Mr. Russell gave up the contest, grinned at him and triumphantly exclaimed, "Ah hah! Mussieu Spec-ula-teur!"

Out of the rivalry of these towns sprang two hostile factions at The Falls, the "Uptown" and the "Downtown" parties, which, like the Big-enders and Little-enders in Laputa, for a long time divided the town. Only they that possessed lots in both ends, those prudent people who always cast anchors to leeward and are apt to be found astride of fences, kept out of this fight. Strange to say, many who did not own property in either end, nor anywhere, were among the fiercest combatants! The digging of the canal at last terminated this quarrel, so far as it concerned the towns below the falls, relegating the fight to The Falls alone, where it continued between the opposite ends of that town an intestine war, waged with increased vigor, demoralizing the municipal government by injecting into its council individual interests, which over-slaughed the interests of the public. Meantime the town, pulled at opposite ends by these parties, became in time a veritable "string town," of great length and little breadth.

But at the time we are now considering the town was compact. The main business quarter was about the locality indicated heretofore and was surrounded on all sides by residences of great comfort and some elegance. Fashion had not set up her court in any particular quarter, but in all directions were distributed the dwellings of the wealthier citizens. Most of these were surrounded by extensive grounds, embracing often several acres, with fruit and flower gardens, and handsome lawns and graveled

walks, presenting an aspect of much beauty. But the crowning glory of the town in this regard was in the gardens that lay along the declivity to the river. Thrown into terraces, and planted in fruits and flowers, these presented to the view of the visitor coming by the river a delightful prospect. Nowhere was to be seen anything more charming than these flowery parterres, in spring or early summer, in bloom along the river front. There the little town, looking out upon the wide expanse of the river and the falls, was not unlike one of its beautiful maidens looking out of her dunstable bonnet trimmed with roses.\*

Upon the wharf, conspicuous by its isolation on a wide area of stone pavement, stood a massive warehouse of four stories. The first story, liable to be overflowed in times of flood, was built of heavy stone laid in hydraulic lime, with a solid floor of concrete. The upper stories were of brick and were all strengthened by solid hewn columns of walnut placed at intervals in line, and the structure was buttressed and girdered like a castle. Across the side fronting the river was a broad white band bearing in large letters the legend, "John Digby, Commission and Forwarding Merchant." In the dull season of low water this warehouse was a place of resort for many people. Hither were accustomed to come as to headquarters, for information concerning the river and the prospects of a rise, the magnates of the fresh-water marine, the captains of the New Orleans

\*Captain Basil Hall visited The Falls in 1827-8, and in his book of travels in the United States thus speaks of it: "We found excellent accommodations at the tavern, which was the best-ordered one we had met in America, though the attendants were all slaves. Nothing delighted us more at this beautiful spot than the rich, fresh greensward—the honest grass—upon which we could sit down with comfort. The trees also about the town were incomparably finer than any we had seen elsewhere. They were not only taller, but, having plenty of space in which to spread out their branches, they had grown up with singular beauty and effect. The various bends and reaches, also, of the magnificent Ohio, just at this spot, covered over with steamboats and rafts, and fringed with noble forests and numberless gay villas, added greatly to the enchantment of the scenery at this most interesting station of all the back-woods."



steamers, then idle, their crafts lying housed from the sun and weather below the falls, awaiting the moving of the waters. The only steamers then plying the river were small vessels of light draught, carrying before their bluff bows a great mass of curling water and foam, popularly named the "boom," firing always in advance of their arrival at a landing, a small cannon from the lower deck; swelling over the many keeled barges and flatboats, making the most of a temporary importance.

To this warehouse came also at intervals the few old pioneers remaining in the settlement, some of whom had known Boone and fought and scouted against the Indians, and marched with George Rogers Clark. They all wore a strange air of abstraction, a look of invincible repose, singularly contrasting with their past stirring lives—a happy expression like that seen often on the faces of the deaf. And they were in one sense deaf, deaf to the clamor and contention of the competing newcomers, which they regarded as men regard the contention and squabbles of children. Isolated among the many new men with new methods and new purposes, they had kept aloof, yet in view of the throng, and within earshot of the din of traffic, regarding it as something in which they were incapable of taking a part, but which at last they welcomed for their children's sake. A foreign writer who never saw a pioneer, but evolved one, after the German fashion, from his own consciousness, thus describes him: "One who had to fell impenetrable forests, and battle with innumerable wolves, and did not forbear strong liquor and rioting, and even theft; whom nevertheless the peaceful sower will follow, and as he cuts the boundless harvest, bless." Theft! forsooth. Why, they had not thrift, nor care enough for pelf, to preserve their own hard-earned possessions in lands, but most of them were stripped of all by cunning Jacobs. Strong liquors they did often take in the settlements, making easy the work of the spoiler. And "the reaper of the boundless harvest bless!" Alack! what cant is this! These men bore themselves with rare dignity and modesty. Possessed of that fine carriage taught always by military training, but especially in that day, when the stately manner im-

parted by the Baron Steuben still subsisted in rank and file, these old soldiers were on all ceremonious occasions noticeable figures. They were possessed also of strong religious feeling, and a wide charity which embraced even the savage foe that had so often lurked in deadly ambush on their path; grounded not on dogmas, but on a simple faith in the divine benevolent government of the world, born of no human teaching, but instilled, in their far wanderings, by solitary communion with nature; whispered in the aisles of the pathless woods or sounded in anthems of the storm through their high arches; written on the face of the great river flowing unruffled, resistless, and across the rolling seas of verdant prairie, and everywhere over that wide watered region where

"The long light shakes across the lakes,  
And the wild cataract leaps in glory."

One of these men lived to a late period, and is still well remembered by some. He passed his long, peaceful old age at his home a few miles below the falls, on the bank of the river, along which he had scouted and watched for the canoes of marauding Indians; dispensing there the simple hospitality of the primitive days. In youth he had been noted for prowess, and as "the bravest are ever the tenderest," he was soft-hearted as a woman. An epitaph made for him at his request, by Johnson, the rhymer of the wilderness, when they were boon companions, but not inscribed on his tomb, nor, as this chronicler believes, ever put in print, may now be given:

"Here Johnny lies beneath this sod,  
Good Lord, his sins excuse!  
As he would do were he Lord God,  
And you were Johnny Hughes."

The warehouse was also a general rendezvous, in the dull season of low water, for many of the friends and acquaintances of the proprietor, and for his clients—for he was a patron in the Roman sense and had many of these—and there they were accustomed then to assemble daily to gossip and to tell stories. The Falls had always a full comple-

ment of gentlemen of leisure in that day, when public opinion justified every man possessed of a competency in abstaining from all forms of labor. This opinion was grounded in the minds of most of the old Virginians, and as for the Frenchmen, it was a part of their philosophy of life. Moreover, there were then many army officers attached to a recruiting station there, and these made a part of this agreeable coterie. Every fine day in the season of low water, a goodly company was to be found in the second story, sitting on splint-bottomed chairs provided there for their comfort. The place of rendezvous was in itself delightful. The fresh air from the river was inspiring; the view of the stream, a moving panorama, was always interesting; and the steady rhythm of the water on the falls disposed the mind of a solitary idler there to pleasing contemplation. At the wide door was the favorite seat for old Mr. Anderson, the cashier, who often passed there his hours of leisure, in solitary meditation.

The impression made upon strangers visiting The Falls varied essentially with the season. To all that came in time of high water the town appeared to be full of industry and energy, and its people possessed of a mania for money getting; while to those that came in the time of low water, especially such as chanced to fall into this warehouse coterie, it seemed a place of luxury, and its people Sybarites or Lotus-eaters.\*

On a fine day in November when the Indian summer had been protracted until almost the end of the month, at the very time when Thornton was about to go to Lastlands to live, there was an unusually large assembly at the warehouse. It was a typical Indian summer day. A fresh

\*Dr. McMurtrie, of Philadelphia, who published, in 1819, an account of The Falls, unconsciously records these opposite impressions. On one page he complains of the eagerness of the people in pursuit of money, and on another gives the following high-flown description of the society there: "There is a circle, small indeed, within whose magic rounds abounds every pleasure that wealth regulated by taste can bestow. There the red-heel of Versailles may imagine himself in the emporium of fashion and, while leading beauty through the mazes of the dance, forget that he is in the wilds of America."

southerly wind was blowing; the river, a mile wide, was curled all over with light waves, and shone and sparkled like molten silver, while the bright sun tempered the air into the most delicious of all weather. This and the return home of Captain Shelby and Mr. Joe Sterrett from a hunting expedition to New Madrid, and the expectation that they would be present and give an account of their hunt, caused this unusual concourse. The talk of this expectant assembly was now chiefly of the weather and its prognostics, especially of one of these, recognized as indicating an impending change, the flight of the passenger pigeons. Since daylight these birds had been coming, in a continuous line a mile wide, from the northeast. This was said to indicate that snow or cold rain would soon come from that quarter. The coming of these birds in such numbers, hardly conceivable by those who do not remember that time, was always a matter of interest, attracting attention as do storms or other atmospheric phenomena. Most interesting indeed was their flight when moving across the land in quest of food; traversing the continent with celerity beyond the reach of any contrivance of man! At first they came in small bodies, feeding mainly on pokeberries and the fruit of the gum, scouts spying out the land. Soon larger detachments were seen, far apart, too far apart for even telescopic vision, yet following day after day in the same line, as if the route were traced in the air or along the earth. Coming in increasing numbers and at last congregated in such force as to become of grave concern to the agriculturist, whose supply of nuts from the beeches and oaks—the “mast” upon which he relies to sustain his stock of pigs—was all swept away by these voracious birds. In all the phases of their life they are interesting, especially in their second appearance, when through the forest, poised in mid-air, they feed upon the wild grapes, fluttering suspended beneath the clusters, emitting an eager cry, *pate-pate*. Afterward they swarmed along the ground, covering acres in the untrodden beechwoods, tossing the fallen leaves abroad, and rising with a sound like thunder. But above all they impressed the mind when at last congregated in numbers that defied computation;



in their flight obscuring the sun, and requiring many square miles of forest-land for their roosts or their nests. At all times their movements were marked by peculiar grace, comparable only to that of mists or the clouds, movements so harmonious that, like the tiny insects that make Eiffel towers in the winter air, though myriads in number, they strike the mind as a unit; and men spoke of "the pigeon" as they speak of "the people," or "the army," with no thought of individuality, but only a vast aggregate—"distinct as the billows, but one as the sea."

They were now in great force, casting a perceptible shadow over the river and the ground, and filling the air with the continuous murmur of their wings. Suddenly there was an intermission in their flight, and it seemed at an end. But after a short interval there came what appeared to be a vast rear-guard, whose flight was pitched at a lower level. As these approached the river there was a movement in their body that instantly arrested attention. The pigeons were about to drink at the river. They slackened their flight and began to lower their pitch, and when the head of the column came over the "suck" of the falls, where the swiftness of the current preserves always on the water a smooth glassy surface, they still further slackened their flight, and half closing their wings descended nearly to the surface of the water. Then a large mass in advance, darkening as they came into still closer order, sprang upward again, separating themselves from the main body, and rolling abroad like a vast cloud of smoke, hovered suspended above the river. Meanwhile, the main body descended, spreading themselves far and wide along the river. For a mile or more the water was soon covered and hidden as by a dense blue vapor. Then the hovering birds descended and the vast multitude was fluttering above the water, ascending and descending within a space of ten feet above the surface, in seeming inextricable confusion. Suddenly the whole mass lifted like a mist, and rising and expanding as they fell again into open order, and extending beyond the shores on either side until they reached the height from which they had descended, when in a vast level sheet they sped again upon their course.



There was a shout of admiration from the spectators in the warehouse, and a still louder shout from the many people on the wharf, who had witnessed the evolutions of the birds and gave them a parting cheer. It was thought that in the seeming confusion many birds must have been jostled into the water. But Lieutenant Galt, who had watched them through a glass, and had several times exclaimed, "What marvelous drill!" being asked if he saw any birds on the water, answered, "No, not one. I don't believe there was even a wet foot among them all. They drank against the current, each taking but a single gulp."

Then Mr. Joe Sterrett came in and was received with acclamations and handshaking, and was hardly settled in his seat before he was called on for an account of his bear hunt.

"I have a busy day before me," said Mr. John Digby, the proprietor, "but I must hear the story of two such Nimrods as you and Captain Shelby among the bears. Tom Long, pull up some of those bales of oakum, there are not chairs enough."

## CHAPTER IX

### THE BEAR HUNT

"The blood more stirs  
To rouse the lion than to start a hare."

"THE CAPTAIN and I had an invitation to visit P. at his plantation near New Madrid, and went there on the steamer Vesuvius. The Captain said that he was done with hunting the harmless, innocent deer. He longed to seek the black bear in his home in the wilderness. 'He's a foe,' said he, 'worthy of any hunter's steel. There is some excitement in hunting him, because if hard pressed, he sometimes hunts you. The deer are helpless. They can run away if they see you in time, but that is their only means of escape. When I was out last fall with Floyd and the Club, I got sick of deer-hunting. I hated to see a man come in with red hands, the sure sign that another innocent had died, when we had already twenty hanging on the poles. I saw one of our men shoot a doe fawn, on the ridge that overlooks Knob Creek, and it slid down the hill to the water's edge, bleating all the way in a piteous tone that went to my heart. I don't think, though I may change my mind, but I don't think that I shall ever shoot another deer; certainly never a doe fawn. But a bear! Why, I could drive a knife or send a bullet to his heart and never feel a qualm.'

"I had none of the Captain's sentimental feeling for the deer, but I had an appetite as keen as his for the bears. We had long been preparing for this hunt. The Captain had his large double-barreled shotgun overhauled, the frizen hardened and the touch-hole bushed, and new flints put in. We had molded bullets of all sizes, and tried them at various distances, with different charges of powder, put-

ting in such heavy loads that our arms were black and blue from the recoil. At last we settled upon what we thought a just medium which was still a pretty heavy charge, the Captain not being willing to trust any ordinary charge in shooting a bear. He had contrived a cartridge made of the smooth oily paper from the inside of a box of spermaceti candles, which seemed to answer the purpose of holding the shot together for some distance. He had great confidence in this after some trials at an oak-slab down at the saw-pit, and told me triumphantly, that he could blow a hole as big as a window pane through a bear at forty yards.

"All the way down the river he was reconnoitering the shores, and when we got into the wild district near the mouth of the Ohio, he brought out his spy-glass and scrutinized the tangled brakes there, in hopes of sighting a bear. 'Joe,' he would say, 'that's wild-looking ground! It looks as if it might yield at least one bear to the acre.' In due time we reached P.'s landing. The boat had some freight for him, and had rung her bell to give notice of this as we rounded the bend, and we found two negroes with a wagon awaiting its coming. Into this we mounted and set out for P.'s house. The Captain asked the negroes many questions about the bears. There were plenty of them, they said, and told us of a hog having been, a few nights before, killed in the pen there by bears. At this the Captain gave me a significant look, and said 'Right in the pen!'

"'Yas, sir, right in the pen.'

"'Did the bear leave any sign by which you could judge of his size—any tracks?'

"'Yas, sir; plenty of signs an' tracks. He was a big one sho', an' I believe there was more'n one of 'em.'

"The Captain did not ask any other questions. He had heard enough, and settled himself in his seat with the air of a man who saw within reach what he had been longing for half his life. He had reached the promised land. Soon after this we were at the house, where P. welcomed us with a hospitable shout.

"After supper we had cob pipes and talk for an hour or longer, when P. proposed to invite some of his neighbors to

join us in a hunt. But to this the Captain demurred, saying that he would prefer for a few days quiet still-hunting, until we should get somewhat acquainted with the country. At an early hour he complained of being sleepy, and we were shown to our rooms, where we found two comfortable beds and all our traps. 'Now, Joe,' said he, when he had closed the door, speaking in an undertone, 'I don't want P. to bring in these neighboring bear hunters; they will bring dogs and run the game all away. I want to take home the skin of a bear of my own killing, and have it tanned and trimmed and keep it as a trophy and memento for my grandchildren, as John Digby does the skin of that big panther he killed on Blue River.' Soon after we made a last inspection of our arms and equipments, and went to bed.

"Next morning at breakfast the Captain said little about bear-hunting, assuming a strange indifference. He had told me before going down from our room, that it would not do to show too much eagerness or P. would take us for a couple of greenhorns; which, as far as bear-hunting was concerned, we certainly were. To some suggestions of P. on the subject he replied that we intended to take a little hunt in the direction of the river, not especially after bears, but prepared for anything that might turn up. He smoked a pipe after breakfast, walking carelessly up and down the veranda. P.'s horse had been standing hitched near the door since an early hour, and we knew that he was going away for some hours, on necessary business, and pretty soon after, having excused himself for the second time, bidding us make ourselves at home until we should meet at dinner, he mounted and rode away.

"No sooner was P. out of sight than the Captain began to prepare for a hunt. We had put on our hunting-clothes in the morning. Mine consisted of an ordinary woolen jacket with plenty of good pockets, a pair of strong tow-linen breeches and heavy boots. The Captain's dress was like mine, except that he had two extra pockets in the jacket, which held a pair of short big-bored pistols intended for close quarters. My armament consisted of a double-barrel shotgun of medium size, loaded with the accepted



charge of powder and balls, a pistol, and a butcher knife. The Captain, in addition to his large shotgun and the pistols mentioned, had another pair of rifled pistols of large bore, which hung in a belt about his waist, and an unusually large hunting-knife, double-edged and ground as sharp as a razor. Then he brought out another which he had discovered somewhere about P.'s premises, rough but having a fine edge and temper, and weighing three or four pounds, which he insisted I should carry. To this I objected and he insisted, and we had a dispute over it. But I was resolved not to carry any more weight, and at last finding me obstinate, he buckled it on himself. He wore a light foxskin cap, and now reminded me of Robinson Crusoe when he went out to make his first attack on the savages.

"We set out in the direction indicated by one of the negroes (with whom the Captain had had a confidential talk), as a quarter in which bears were most likely to be found, and we were soon in a very wild region. We now walked with great caution, our guns at full cock, expecting at any moment to come upon a bear. The cracking of a dry stick breaking under our feet more than once brought us into a fighting attitude. Our course was devious, determined by the character of the ground. In some places the cane was so thick and matted as to be impassable, while at others the ground was free from obstruction. We came at last to a point from which we saw ahead of us the light of an opening, which we took to be a clearing. But it proved to be a wide open expanse, without trees, except one lone cypress which grew a short distance from the edge where we stood. It was evidently a tract of low ground covered, except in dry times, by water. The wild growth of weeds and aquatic plants, now dry and of a second mourning color, was of great height, and stood thick on the ground, stretching away on a dead level, in a sinuous course, a mile or more, until it was lost in the woods. This dismal prospect was heightened by a faint odor of carrion in the air, and the rising out of the weeds of a troop of turkey buzzards, which settled lazily upon the solitary cypress. The depressing landscape quickly told upon the Captain's susceptibility. 'Joe,' he said, 'this is a gloomy country. The

general dead flat is bad enough, but that view and this lone cypress with its load, and the death smell in the air, give me the blues. Let's go back and look up a livelier region.'

"Retracing our steps, we had nearly reached the open ground within view of P.'s house, and had dismissed the lively apprehension with which we had set out, and were now apprehensive only that we should find no bears at all, when we saw an open lane cut square through the canebrake in the direction of the river, the ground bearing old marks of wheels and sleds, indicating that once it had been used for a road. Down along this lane we now went, more, I believe, because of the easy walking than anything else, indifferent about bears, though any number of them might lurk in the jungles that lay along its sides. We had gone about half a mile along this roadway when I saw, in a low tree, a quarter of a mile away, two black objects. 'Stop, Captain!' I said. 'What are those black things in that tree?' Instantly he pulled out his spyglass and put it on them. 'By blood!' he said, in an impressive whisper, still holding the glass to his eye, 'they are cub bears!' Then he took down the glass and began to reconnoiter the ground. Then he put up the glass again. Then he said, 'Now, Joe, if we slip along on the left hand and keep that box alder between us and them, we can make a rush from that and get under the tree before they can come down. We'll catch 'em both and take 'em home for pets!' We did do exactly what he suggested, and got right under them before we were discovered. The little bears didn't seem disturbed by seeing us below, but sat quietly on the limbs, looking down at us. 'Now, Joe,' whispered the Captain, 'if you will slip off your boots and climb up after them, I'll keep watch below and catch 'em if they come down.'

"At the word I took off my boots, and laying aside all my arms and accouterments, climbed to the first limbs of the tree. This startled the cubs a little, and they moved farther out toward the end of the limbs. 'Stop, Joe!' cried the Captain. 'Wait till I get off my things,' and he quickly disencumbered himself, as I had done. Then I advanced along the limb upon which the nearer of the cubs rested, the Captain moving around below, keeping under the cub,

his hands stretched out ready to catch it when shaken from the tree. But it did not wait to be shaken. It made a little cry, 'coot-coot,' and dropped from the tree, and in spite of the Captain's efforts to catch it, scampered away into the canebrake. Then I went back to the trunk of the tree, thinking to reach the limb upon which the other cub sat. But at that moment there was a crash in the cane, the Captain stooped to the ground, looked under the cane, and rose running! I leaped from the tree and followed. I was a noted runner at school; hardly anybody could beat me. I didn't know whether I could outrun a bear, but I had no doubt about being able to outrun the Captain. But I was mistaken in my man. I couldn't gain an inch on him. A faster or a smoother racer I have never seen. His shoulders worked like clockwork. I looked at his gray locks streaming behind, and said to myself, 'Is it possible I can't outrun this old man?' and then I put on the steam, but it was no use. Then I glanced behind and saw that the bear was not following. I saw her rise on her hind feet, and look about on all sides, and then run back. Then I called out as loudly as I could, 'O Captain!' but this only made him run faster. He had now gained upon me considerably, and as I didn't like to be left behind alone, lest another bear, perhaps the old 'he,' should pop out of the jungle, I once more put on the steam and gained a little on him. At last, seeing the light of the clearing, where we had entered, he slackened his pace and then stopped. Throwing himself against a sapling, and hooking his arm over one of the low limbs, he stood looking back at me. Coming up I took a similar position against another sapling, and we stood facing each other. We had run at the top of our speed more than half a mile. Neither could speak. Our mouths were wide open, both emitting a sound like the honking of a wild goose; but neither could articulate. We exchanged frequent speaking glances, but were incapable of any utterance but 'honk—honk—honk.' I can't tell how long we remained in this condition. It seemed as if we should never get back our voices. I felt a sharp pain in my chest, as if from a heavy blow. Something seemed to have collapsed within there; and there was

a taste of salt in my mouth, as if from blood. I could not believe but that I was bleeding from the lungs, until I had several times wiped my mouth with my shirt sleeve and found no blood. When I thought I could articulate, I said, 'Captain—don't you—honk—honk—think—we better go—honk—honk—back after the things?'

"He shook his head emphatically. 'No, sir! I bedamfucatch—honk—honk—honk—me—honk—honk—back there—honk—'thout—I—go—on—a—honk—honk—horse!'

"Of course, in due time we got back our wind and our voices. 'Now, Joe,' said the Captain, seating himself on a log, and mopping his face with a red silk handkerchief, and running his fingers through his hair, which was as wet as if he had been dipped in the river—in fact, there was not a dry stitch on either of us—'now, Joe, this is a devilish bad business. I'll tell you what we have got to do. There are two horses in the stable that P. has set aside for our especial use, a little bay pony and a large gray horse. You can't miss finding them. Now, you just slip over there without letting anybody see you, if you can help it, and bring the horses here, and we will ride back and get our guns and things.'

"I 'slipped over,' as he suggested, and got the horses; and we rode back into the enemy's country. We found our guns and accouterments lying under the tree just as we had left them. The enemy had departed and made no sign. The Captain was the first to dismount. He grasped his gun and turned to me. 'Get down, Joe, and get your things together while I stand guard. I reckon you think me a blanked coward, but I should now just like to see the biggest bear in the wilderness come forth. If I don't stand right here and have it out with him my name isn't Jim Shelby.'

"I got my arms and accouterments together, and then I stood guard while he recovered his, and then we rode away, the Captain continuing to talk. 'Joe,' said he, 'we did not behave like heroes, that's certain. But then you know that many great heroes have made a bad showing in their first battles. There's Frederick the Great, he ran clean out of his first fight.'



"‘Yes,’ said I, ‘and you remember that the Roman soldiers ran like scared dogs when they first saw the elephants of Pyrrhus.’

"‘To be sure they did,’ said the Captain, ‘and this is our first encounter with bears. But, Joe, we’ve got to do something to set us up again in our own esteem.’ And then, as we neared the opening, he said: ‘Joe, we must keep this thing a dead secret. It will never do to let P. know it. We should never hear the last of it.’

"‘Of course, I promised.

"‘Well now, hold on,’ he said, pulling up his horse, ‘and let us talk it over awhile. P. will know that something out of the way has happened if you give him the least hint. So don’t let him see you grinning to yourself while you are fixing this thing up, with all sorts of additions and embellishments, to make a good story for the company at Digby’s warehouse. P. knows you like a book, and if he sees you at that he will never rest till he pumps it all out of you.’

"‘Don’t you be uneasy about me,’ said I; ‘if you do nothing to rouse suspicion you may depend upon it I will not.’

"‘The Captain, I forgot to say, was riding the pony. He had chosen him because, in case we should again encounter the bear, the back of the little horse would be the post of danger; the Captain’s long legs being within easy reach of the ground. This was the first step toward setting himself up in his own esteem. As he sat upon the little horse I could not help admiring his fine physique. He showed to manifest advantage mounted upon the pony. To some persons his length of limb might be an objection, but to me, considering only the running points of the man who had beaten me in a race for life, this was a positive beauty. He saw my admiring scrutiny, and was evidently pleased with it. Feeling inclined now to joke a little, I said, ‘Captain, that little pony sets off your figure to great advantage. I think it would be a good hint to painters and sculptors of equestrian figures to see you now. You have not got the form commonly given to ancient heroes, but you have splendid racing points.’

"‘You ought to have seen the look he gave me as he



said, 'There you go, now! By blood! I bet fifty dollars that in less than twenty-four hours P. will know the whole story, and we shall be the laughing-stock of the whole plantation—negroes and all.'

"Pretty soon we were back at the house, when we quickly put off all our dreadful array of arms and seated ourselves on the veranda to rest, and to solace ourselves with pipes. Not long after, P. came home. He hailed at once to know if we had been out, and what luck we had had. 'Well,' said the Captain, in haste to indicate our line of action, we took a little round, down beyond the clearing toward the river, but we didn't kill anything.'

"'Didn't see any bears, hey?' suppressing a grin.

"'No—that is, we saw a couple of cubs, but they scampered away into the cane, and we didn't see them again.'

"'A couple of cubs! Why, the old she must have been near at hand. Did you see nothing of her?'

"'No, I didn't see her,' said the Captain.

"P.'s interest was excited by the news of the old she and cubs, so near at hand, and I don't know what might have been the result of further questioning, but the arrival of a fourth party, Mr. Luke, a neighbor, broke off the colloquy, and soon after we were called to dinner.

"After dinner P. invited us to walk out in front of his house that he might explain some improvements contemplated there, and we walked about listening to him. He had cleared away the greater part of the native forest, leaving groups at intervals, and some lone trees, chiefly pecans. We had to follow him for some time to see all he had to show us, and I observed that the Captain was lagging behind, and I knew was fatigued. At last he sat down under a pecan tree, resting himself upon the trunk of a fallen tree that lay close to the pecan. Then he reclined against one of the forks that sloped upward from the lap, and covered his face with his red silk handkerchief and fell asleep.

"Upon the pecan tree was a large fox-squirrel which had dined there, and now wanted to come down. He would come down pretty near to where the Captain lay, and then fly back up the tree, and turn his head downward and

wriggle his tail, and bark. Then he would slide down again, and the same thing would be repeated. This had gone on for some time, when a new idea seemed to occur to the squirrel. He went down on the side of the tree opposite that on which the Captain lay, and might have reached the ground without coming in view of the terrible object there, but when near the ground, curiosity overcame his fear, and cautiously moving around, he got sight of the red handkerchief, and heard a frightful roaring beneath it, and then a convulsive snort, which threw him into such a spasm of fright, that he fell off by the Captain's head, uttering his usual cry of alarm, 'skirrick, skirrick,' in a shrill key, and rustling among the dry leaves and branches in such a way as startled the Captain from his slumber. He snatched the handkerchief from his face, sprang to his feet, and dashed off at full speed toward the house. Meantime, P. was calling out to me, 'Look yonder! Look yonder! What is the matter with Captain Shelby?' and continued this until the Captain reached the house.

"I have already attempted to describe the Captain's style of running. It was the same now, but in this little 'spurt' he exhibited a 'burst of speed' beyond anything he had shown in the morning.

"It was not long till P. began to suspect that something had occurred in our hunt which we were keeping back. His questions became at last so pointed that the Captain suspected me of having told him the history of our adventure. The fact was that one of the negroes had seen me, in my shirt sleeves, and without my hat or boots, go into the stable and then mount the gray horse and ride away hurriedly, leading the pony. This, and the manner of the Captain, led P. to suspect that something out of the way had happened. A night or two after, when the Captain and I were in our room, he opened the subject by saying, 'By blood, Joe! I can't carry this cursed secret about with me any longer! I know you didn't betray the thing to P.; you have said so, and I know you to be incapable of an untruth or equivocation. But he knows it, or he suspects it, and I can't bear keeping it any longer. It begets in

me a sense of guilt I can't endure. I'm going to confess! Yes, I'll tell him all about it to-morrow morning at breakfast. Then I shall feel easy.'

"'Captain,' said I, 'hadn't you better let me tell the story? I had a better opportunity to observe things, being up in the tree.'

"'No, sir; no, sir; I'll be plagued if you shall. I shall give a plain, unvarnished statement of the facts.'

"'You'll just make a clean breast of it and be happy?'

"'Yes, sir; that's just it. I feel happy already for having made up my mind to do this. You may tell your part of the adventure, if you choose, but be careful not to take any liberties with mine.'

"'Well, Captain,' I said, 'since we are about to get into the confessional, I want to confess to you. I did not see the bear in the cane, it was too close for that, but I heard enough to be satisfied that she was coming, and when I saw you break away, I followed as fast as I could. I didn't think I could outrun a bear; at least, I thought that questionable; but I had no doubt of being able to outrun you, and in the excitement of the moment I made up my mind to do this. In fact, I believe that if the road had been a narrow one, with room for only one person, I would have run over you to get out of reach of that bear! It has made me miserable, thinking how mean and selfish this was!'

"He was listening to this with a strange expression of interest, and when I concluded my confession he walked up to me with glistening eyes, and said: 'Joe, give me your hand! I was meaner than you! You know when you called out to me, "O Captain!"?'

"'Yes.'

"'Well, by blood! I thought the bear had you, and I didn't stop. I believe I ran a little faster. I don't think I could have stopped if my grandfather had been in her clutches. Now, how ineffably mean that was in me! I can't understand it! Why, I would stand by you this minute, in any fight, against any enemy, with any weapon ever invented for the destruction of man or beast, while I have a leg to stand on!'

“‘I know you would, Captain, and I hope you think I would stand by you in the same way.’

“‘To be sure I believe it. I know you would.’ And then, after a pause, he said: ‘I’m mighty glad you told me of your feelings. My mean conduct has been worrying me, but I feel better now. Well, let’s go to bed. In the morning I shall tell P. all about our race and, as you say, be happy.’

“Next morning, at the table, the Captain made a full confession, telling the story of our race in a very simple, amusing manner, making P. laugh heartily. That day at dinner, P. alluded several times to our race, as he called it. At supper he brought it up again. He has no tact, and not much humor, and his jokes and fun are of a rather coarse fiber, and I could see that he was making himself very disagreeable to the Captain. It was hitting a man that was down. P. didn’t see this, and next day, when we had Mr. Luke again at dinner, he launched out into a full account of the affair, embracing a description of the ‘race course,’ as he called the scene of our exploit. I saw a storm gathering on the Captain’s brow, while P. went on unconscious of it, looking only at Luke, and himself choking with laughter. The Captain then fixed his eyes upon P., pushing away his plate and removing his chair a little way from the table. P. caught his eye and began to stammer, and soon came to a dead stop. There was that in the face of the old gentleman which no man could look on with indifference. Then the Captain arose, and in a stately way went out of the room. It was some time before P. recovered from the shock, when he stammered to me apologies and regrets. I said nothing. I felt indignant at his rudeness, and was not sorry to have him punished a little, but I had no idea that the Captain would give him such a spectacle of the Jupiter Tonans as he did.

“After we went out of the house P. walked with me apart and renewed his protestations, and expressed the keenest compunction for his thoughtless conduct. ‘Oh, never mind,’ I said, ‘only be more careful in future. You see the Captain is too good—too noble, and too old, to be



treated in that irreverent way. I joke him all the time, but I am his spoiled boy, and he rather likes it from me.'

"'Why, he astonished me!'

"'So I perceived; he surprised me also a little.'

"'I always thought him the kindest, best-natured man about.'

"'So he is, but he won't be made a butt of.'

"After a while I went up to our room, where I found the Captain walking the floor, a picture of woe. 'Joe,' he said, 'am I a cross man?'

"'No,' I replied, 'you are not a cross man, but an amiable man—a long way above the average.'

"'I have been forty years subduing a bad temper,' he said, 'and here now I break out on this good, hospitable fellow, P., in his own house, where he is powerless to strike back! I shall never forgive myself. What has come over me that I can't take a joke, but must fly off in a passion? Dear, dear! I shall never forgive myself! Where is he? I want to go right away and ask his pardon. Waugh, waugh! I am awfully down in tone. I run away and leave my friend in danger, and insult my host for a little harmless pleasantry. I would go home to-morrow if I had this thing settled with P. to my satisfaction. I will ask his pardon, and beg him to forgive me. I suppose that is all I can do. But I shall never forgive myself, never! Just to think——'

"'Well, now,' I said, interrupting him, 'I think you take too much blame to yourself. P. was much to blame for making you a subject of ridicule in the presence of a stranger, and perhaps you were somewhat too serious in your resentment. If you offer him an apology for your part, it will be a fair settlement. He is full of compunction.'

"'I should like to do it in the presence of Mr. Luke. Is he still here?'

"'No,' said I, 'he has gone away; but that doesn't matter. A word from you to P. will be enough.'

"After this talk the Captain's excitement slowly simmered down, and when P. came home they met in front of the house, and the Captain made him a speech which

set all right. I did not hear what he said, but, from the window I plainly saw the water in P.'s honest, stupid eyes.

"We stayed a week longer. P. soon let us know that while there were plenty of bears in the country, they were not to be killed by 'still-hunting.' Then the neighbors came together with their dogs, and we had many splendid chases, and killed a number of bears. P. kept near the Captain, and with that big knife about which we had disputed, cut away interfering vines, and made a clear path for him. But the sport was too fierce and too fatiguing for the Captain. After seeing a hard fight with a bear that had been shot but not mortally hurt, that made havoc with some of the dogs, and at last, covered with blood and foam, was killed by a thrust through the heart with a sword cane, he would not go out again. Sitting in our room that night, he told me that hereafter he would forego every kind of sport that involved the death or torture of any creature. He pitied even the marauding bears. I told him that I believed he would next be willing to join Burns in his sympathetic address to Old Nick, and I repeated to him the lines:

"'But fare you weel, auld Nickie-ben;  
O wad ye tak a thought and men,  
Ye aiblins might—I dinna ken—  
Still hae a stake;  
I'm wae to think upo' yon den,  
Even for your sake!'

"At this he gave a little laugh, and nursed his knee, and fell into serious meditation. He wouldn't come down here with me. 'Go down, Joe, and tell them how I beat you running,' he said. 'Do your best. Henceforth I am a retired sportsman. My record I leave to the care of my friends, and to the mercy of my enemies, if I have any.'

"He found at home a great pile of the newspapers with which Mr. Ould has always supplied him, and he is now busy reading himself up with the news of the day. He was at them early this morning. In one he made a discovery which he announced to me with great glee. 'Joe,' said he, 'I have found out what was the matter with us on a certain occasion in our bear hunt. Here it is in one word,

in this newspaper. I have often met with the word before, used particularly in relation to military affairs—soldiers. I looked for it in Bailey, and in Johnson, and in Sheridan, but couldn't find it in any of these dictionaries. But the meaning has now dawned on me. It is the word "demoralize." Joe, we were demoralized.' And then he laughed heartily. Then he added: 'And here is another new phrase in the same paper. A man has run away with his employer's money, and this transaction is here announced as a "financial irregularity." Thus you see, by one word, we are taken out of the category of cowardice, and by one phrase this rogue out of that of stealing. "Verily," as Master Shallow says, "good phrases were ever, and always will be commendable."' He was in great glee. Of course, I answered, 'I know not the phrase, but I will maintain the "word" to be a soldier-like word, a word of good speed—a winged word, that gives swiftness to the heels.'"

"He wanted a bear skin, did he, to match my panther skin?" said Mr. John Digby. "Well, he shall have it. I have a fine one, with all the claws and the face on it, dressed by the Delaware Indians, and I will send it to him for a Christmas gift.

It may be worth while to say that Mr. John Digby did send this bear skin to Captain Shelby, and that it is still preserved in the family of one of his descendants. A visitor to this family may now see it, and hear its history, which runs to the effect that the bear was killed by their ancestor, Captain James Shelby, in a hand-to-claw engagement in the forest.

## CHAPTER X

### MIGRATORY BIRDS

"The north wind blows, winter is nigh;  
Far upward in the clouded sky  
I hear the murmuring wings and cry  
Of countless birds."

JOHN D. and Buttons returned from Lastlands in time for breakfast and for school on Monday morning. Two days in the country, while the theater was about to be opened in town, was enough for Buttons. In summer, when the theater should be closed, and the circus away on its circuit through the country, he might go there again, but "no more at present" for him. Nor did John D. give a cheerful account of Lastlands. The household was busy all the time, arranging the furniture in the house; the fishing season was over (though old Adam still caught some "buffaloes"), and Uncle Rob kept in force an old rule of the grandfather forbidding shooting within half a mile of the house. There were many ducks there, but the ripple was their chief place of resort, and this was within the prescribed limit. There were plenty of pigeons in the great woods, and many squirrels, but there were no guns at Lastlands, except a rifle and an old musket belonging to his grandfather's herdsman, Kirby, now returned there, and these were too heavy. At no time, he believed, was sport to be had at Lastlands comparable to that afforded by the falls.

John D., as has been stated, was an ardent sportsman. He had his special crony for this diversion, Master William Bradstreet ("Old B.," John D. called him), a stout, big-nosed youth, the son of a sad-eyed widow who had come to The Falls years before and set up a store for the sale of domestic goods, but of whose history little was ever



known. "Old B." was the younger of her two sons, both of whom went to the same classical school with John D. In the fall, while the river was low, and the islands of the falls accessible by wading, these lads spent most of their holidays there. The diversity of sport afforded, and the variety of scenery, and especially the many forms in which water, that most beautiful element, is exhibited on the falls, and that Crusoe feature, the islands, made this region attractive above all others to the young sportsmen. Every variety of fishes known to the Ohio valley was there found in abundance: bass and pike-perch (the salmon of the Ohio), and rock-bass, and bachelor, or silver-perch, a favorite pan-fish, common to all the streams, but nowhere so beautiful as in the clear water of the Ohio. There, free from the dark spots with which it is flecked in the mill ponds and small streams, it shines like polished metal, and seems a veritable silver perch. There were also great blue catfish, which, resistless, often swept away all their tackle.

The shooting was also excellent on the falls. The passenger pigeons were not the only birds that visited this region in great force. No others came in such prodigious numbers, but in the fall of the year, when the migratory birds make their flight from north to south, many of these, pausing to rest, were to be found in all suitable feeding grounds. At night the upper air was filled with them. This was plainly revealed when the town was first lighted by oil lamps fixed on the tops of cedar posts along the sidewalks. It chanced to be a cloudy night, the wind portending a storm, and the birds in the air above were greatly perplexed by this illumination. Coming from the far wilderness of the Northwest, from the then Ultima Thule, the Lake of the Woods, and that farther region then little known, but, as we now know, dotted all over with crystal lakes; over the forests and prairies of Wisconsin and Illinois and Indian Territory; seeing in their long flight no trace of man, save the sparse teepees of Indians and the scattered settlements of frontiersmen; when this town, The Falls (great affair as it was to its inhabitants), was to these aerial voyagers only a bald patch in the forest, unnoticed by day, and unseen at night—they had passed over

it in silent flight. But when this illumination of the streets was made, when these "fringes of lamplight, stretching upward many fathoms into the ancient reign of night," came in view, they gave voice to surprise, and perhaps alarm, by loud and continuous clamor. The streets were full of people viewing the new lights, and they hearkened with wonder to the sounds that came from the upper air: the resonant honk of wild geese, the harsh croon of the sandhill crane (like a giant gritting his teeth), the loud wild notes of curlews, the clear wavering whistle of winter yellowlegs, and the piping and peeping of innumerable birds unrecognized, filled the clouded firmament. The eyes of the people were turned to the sky, but nothing could be seen of the throngs which seemed to circle about, bewildered by the strange lights. Suddenly upon the new tin roof of a warehouse there fell with a loud thump some object from the upper air, quickly followed by the well-known quack of a mallard duck flying away in the darkness. Then all knew that the bird, mistaking the shining tin for water, had thrown herself upon it. Most of these birds have their habitat far away along the seaboard of the South, and their presence about the falls was due solely to stress of weather; alighting to lie by, as ships at sea, until the storm should pass away. On every tempestuous night they were rained down in countless numbers, and during the whole of the season of migration the north-west winds literally "creaked with the weight of birds."

But fishing was the chief sport of these lads. They did indeed pursue the plovers, and winter yellowlegs, and the various tribes of small delicate-footed waders, but this was a mere accessory to the main sport, fishing. They were but poorly equipped for shooting. John D. had a rifle, but that was impracticable for the falls. Their only available gun was an ancient firearm belonging to Bradstreet, an ancestral piece brought from Massachusetts, an arm that, like its owners, seemed to have known better days and to have undergone serious metamorphoses. It was now a composite weapon. The barrel seemed to have belonged to what must have been in its day a fine gun. It was inlaid with gold, and bore in golden letters the legend,

"London," and the name of the maker, well-nigh worn away, and now illegible. The barrel was probably all that was left of the original London gun. The stock was plainly of domestic manufacture. The touchhole, from long use, was so enlarged that upon every discharge a stream of fire issued from it, by which, on one occasion, when John D. fired it, and Bradstreet stood by within range of the touchhole, his eyebrows and roach were badly singed.

Armed with this weapon, and with an abundant supply of provisions and fishing tackle, John D. and Bradstreet were pretty sure every Saturday, during the low water, to go on an expedition to the falls. Bond, another friend and classmate of John D., and his literary crony, once joined them, but not being a born sportsman, he soon grew tired of the islands, and slipping on the ooze, and getting a ducking, went back home before the day was half over. But John D. and "Old B.," though they often slipped on the ooze and got ducked, never grew weary of the falls. If the sport failed, as in the early fall it sometimes did, when their expedition was premature, and the fish refused to bite, and the game was scarce, they delighted to explore the islands in all their recesses—gathering the flocky grass, soft as down, that grew in the sandy alluvial, and making beds of this; and speculating upon the specimens of grain, Indian corn and oats, sown by chance, and sprouting there in the barren sand only to show a brief fruitless life; and wondering over the various fossil remains, brain-coral, and chain-coral, and encrinites, visible everywhere in these ancient rocks.

These lads had peculiar facilities for access to the islands, afforded by Hare (a tenant of John D.'s father), a dealer in boats, whose shop was near the Basin, and who gladly gave them the use of his skiffs to cross to Corn Island, whence they waded across the wide, shallow channel to Goose Island. Often their sport was continued till a late hour, and night came before they quitted the falls. Then the hearts of the mothers at home grew anxious. John D.'s mother was sure on these occasions to pace the floor, sending often to the kitchen, where the young sportsman always went first with the spoil, to know if he had come;

then, as the hour grew later, going to the rear windows, which looked out upon the river, to see there only the darkness that brooded over the water, and to hear what seemed to her apprehensive heart a hungry and ominous roar from the falls, swelling yet louder as the night advanced. Then the father would say: "You have no reason for anxiety. There is no uncommon danger on the falls in low water. He is as safe there as here on the streets. We must not try to keep him from the ordinary perils of life. It won't do to tie boys to your apron string. He stays late because the birds come to the island at night-fall. When Buttons has another year we shall have to let him go over with John D." And then the lad would come, and the mother's heart would be at ease until the next like occasion, when the same maternal woes would be renewed.

Buttons, it may be well to state, had long desired to join his brother and Bradstreet in their expeditions. Through his father's glass he had often viewed the falls, when Goose Island, far away among the tossing waves, had seemed to him

"Like some enchanted far-off isle  
In some tumultuous sea."

But going there once, and slipping on the ooze, and getting ducked as Bond had been, he had no desire to go again, preferring thereafter the "sweet security of the streets."

When the river rose and Goose Island was no longer accessible by wading, these lads laid aside their fishing tackle and betook themselves heartily to their books. Then Bond became the especial crony of John D., while Bradstreet suffered a partial eclipse, their companionship confined to an occasional foray in the woods with the old fusil and the rifle. Thus these lads had their busy season and their season of leisure, as their elders had, all dependent upon the rising of the river, as Egypt upon the rising of the Nile.

Of Bond and John D. the relations were in one respect so peculiar that it becomes proper to state them here. Though classmates, intimates, cronies, friends, they were accustomed, almost as often as once a month, to fight! Bond was the better Greek scholar, while John D., though



inferior in size, was stronger and more active than Bond. John D. harbored no jealousy of Bond's Greek scholarship, while Bond did harbor the liveliest jealousy of John D.'s strength and agility. Often Bond challenged him to trials, which, begun in sport, warmed into serious battles. These occurred so often that a fight between these cronies came to be looked upon as one of the stated diversions of the school. Yet they caused no permanent estrangement. John D. always got the best of these affairs, but would never push his advantage, and Bond, seeing this, would give in, and often after a fight they quitted the field together, arm-in-arm.

The society of The Falls did not lack the civilizing influence of religion. There had been a period in its history when in this regard its condition was deplorable; when playing-cards brought extravagant prices, while Bibles were hardly salable at any figure; when the booksellers, in order to get off their overstock of Bibles, required every purchaser of a dozen packs of cards to buy also a Bible. But this unhappy state had long passed away. There were now organizations of Methodists, Baptists, Presbyterians, Roman Catholics and Episcopalians, with substantial church buildings and fairly full congregations, and a great deal of religious zeal. But religious zeal, with all its good influence in every society, is not without its ill effects. No partisan is so blind as a partisan in religion, and no enmity is so fierce and bitter as religious enmity. These are trite truths, and need not be enforced by any reference to the wars made and the blood spilled because of a difference in religious faith. The Falls was not without its sacred animosities. While there were no overt quarrels between the members of the several denominations, there was a plain line of demarkation between them, especially those that adhered to the Church of England and the Calvinists. The adherents of the Roman Church, the weakest in point of wealth and numbers, were so modest and unobtrusive, both priests and people, that they drew little attention, though regarded then as little better than idolators. An occasional blast from the other pulpits was all that was thought necessary as to them. Whatever pulpit wars arose were between

the Calvinists and "the Church," as the Episcopalians distinctively called their organization.

In the discussions among laymen Mr. Ould was at all times a staunch champion of "the Church," thoroughly informed of its history and its literature, and able to do battle in its behalf against all comers. He had made also special studies of its distinguished prelates, collecting with care the events and transactions of their lives; corresponding to this end with recognized authorities at home and abroad, and collating information until he had formed a complete conception of each subject of study. In the general convention of the Church where he was often prominent in the discussion of important questions, he surprised the learned clericals by his intimate knowledge of the great lights of the Church in the past, and by the force and aptness with which he cited their conduct or quoted their opinions. Above them all—above even Jeremy Taylor and Hales—stood in the estimation of Mr. Ould, Robert Leighton, Archbishop of Glasgow. As McIntyre made a military hobby of Alexander the Great, so Mr. Ould made a clerical hobby of Archbishop Leighton. Liberal himself, and tolerant of all honest differences of opinion, he delighted to quote the opinion of those prelates in the support of private judgment, and to show their wide charity. Perhaps some veteran churchman still living may remember with what force in a convention he related of Leighton, that a friend calling to see him, and finding him away from home, learned that he had gone to the country to visit a sick Presbyterian minister, riding a horse borrowed of a Roman priest. "This spirit of tolerance, and this respect for the right of private judgment," he would say, when on this topic, "with the strong voice conceded to the laity in its councils, have kept the Church in close and intimate connection with its people, and abreast with every advance in knowledge, and have preserved it from that sullen isolation from man in the ordinary relations of life—in his business, his family, and his innocent pleasures—which is apt to grow up in religious associations; and have made within its fold the worship of God indeed perfect freedom."

But while Mr. Robert Ould was a zealous and able lay

champion of the Church, there were not wanting some that violently assailed it, both clericals and laymen. Puritanism, surviving in Calvinism, was here, as of old, its fierce and implacable foe; that did not give it credit even for "Protestantism," but confounding it with the Church of Rome, applied to both the same opprobrious cant names. Sermons in which the Church was directly assailed were not unusual, and a case of a convert from them to the Church was sure to be followed by a furious onslaught.

"And pulpit drum ecclesiastic  
Was beat with fist instead of a stick."

This asperity between the churches (now happily worn away) had an evil effect: separating the community in their social relations, interfering by factitious incompatibilities with the tenderest relations of life, and even entering the schools, and becoming there a cause of alienation and quarrels among the boys. It was now the direct cause of a quarrel and fight between John D. and his conventional foe, Bond. Hitherto theirs had been in a great degree perfunctory battles, half amicable trials of pluck and skill; always provoked by Bond; without malice, after which they could shake hands and be friends, regarding each other as Sir Philip Sidney regarded "that sweet enemy, France." But in the instance about to be related the ground of quarrel was of a grave character, and the fight a fierce one, in which Bond was summarily beaten. It occurred in recess, was unpremeditated, without seconds, the only witnesses being some small boys, who, shocked by its ferocity, ran with pale faces to spread the news through the school.

At the end of the recess Bond entered the schoolroom with one eye closed and a face like a pudding; but he walked as usual, with head erect, past the master to his seat, the boys all sitting with wide eyes and ears erect. The old master stared with wonder at Bond's face, and said:

"Why, Bond, what is the matter with your face?"

"I've had a fight with Digby," he replied, in a clear voice.

"Why, Digby," said the master, turning to that youth,

now very busy with his slate, "you must be a regular bruiser."

And there the matter ended for the time.

Next day it was known in the school that on his way home Bond had been jeered about his face by some boys of a rival school; that a quarrel had ensued, and that on the following Saturday Bond was engaged to fight one of these boys in a pitched battle. This caused unusual excitement, and furnished to the school matter for earnest discussion and speculation during the week. Meantime, Bond and John D. kept apart. This was observed by the old master, who, though he had never in the past interfered with the quarrels of these lads, yet, seeing them stand so long apart, now resolved to bring them together. Accordingly, he sent to each of them a note bidding him to come to his room at nine o'clock on Saturday. But as Saturday morning was the appointed time for Bond's fight, neither of them so much as thought of obeying this summons.

After the fight John D. went to the room of the old master, who had then but just heard of this affair. Indifferent as he had always seemed to the fighting among his own boys, he was now greatly excited about this.

"You were out at the fight?" he eagerly asked John D.

"Yes, sir; I was there."

"You and Bond had not made friends yesterday?"

"No, sir."

"You wanted him to win, though?"

"Yes, sir; of course I did."

"Who seconded Bond?"

"I did."

"You? What do you mean? You had not made friends."

"No, sir; not until the fight was about to begin."

"Well, now, how did that come about? Tell me all about it—come!"

"When I went on the ground Stewart was his second. I went first among the boys of the other school, because I wanted to get a good look at their man while they were getting him ready. While standing there I saw Bond looking at me with such a sorrowful face, that I thought he was hurt at seeing me stand with the other side, and then I



went back to his side. Then Stewart came to me and said he wished I was Bond's second. 'But,' said he, 'you don't speak.' 'No,' I said, 'but if I thought Bond wanted me I should like to be his second.' Then Stewart went quickly over to Bond, and came back and told me that Bond did want me, and then I went to him and offered myself."

"Ah! What did he say to that—hey?"

"He didn't say anything. He only gripped my hand, but I knew by that grip that he was going to win."

The old master began now pacing back and forth in his slippers, over the floor, whimpering or laughing in that peculiar way of his, as much like crying as laughing. Suddenly turning to John D., and shaking his hand with the palm toward him, he said: "No particulars now, no particulars, mind—but—was it a hard fight?"

"Yes, sir; a pretty hard fight."

"But Bond won?"

"Yes, sir."

And then Bond, with a bandaged head, entered the room.

As the boys quietly clasped hands, and looked into each other's eyes, the old master glided into an adjoining room, but quickly came back, saying in an angry voice: "Clear out, now, you bad, fighting boys, and let me hear of no more fighting, else I shall take a hand myself—away with you! You are more trouble to me than all my money."

And both boys laughing heartily, he hustled them out.

And now what does the reader suppose was the cause of the fierce fight between these boys? Only this: Bond, in speaking of the Church, had called it the "scarlet woman of Babylon." John D. was heartily laughed at by his father and others for his Quixotism, but long after was heard to say that he had never been so stung by any offensive words as by that opprobrious name applied to "his mother's Church."

The friendship of these lads was never again interrupted, and one of the periodical incidents of the school, a fight between Bond and John D., was at an end. Thenceforth in the higher Greek class, made up of these two only, they sat together, and together went through the ponderous collection of Greek literature entitled *Græca Majora*: Bond

distinguishing himself for uncommon accuracy in the grammar, and John D. for what the old master called "a quick perception of meaning, and a happy facility in translation." Side by side they recited their lessons, and often with arms extended over each other, conned them; knit together by the purest and warmest friendship, the friendship of youth, happily compared to "Love, without his wings and arrows."

But while thus associated in study, they were now seldom joined in their amusements. The strict discipline in which Bond had been trained forbade, as a part of the "world" which it was a duty to give up, the idle diversions of fishing and shooting, to which John D. was addicted. As for the circus and the theater, these were a part of the enginery of the Devil, his spring-traps and dead-falls. The fighting had been readily condoned at home, it being easy to find in Puritan history precedents for that, especially with a "malignant," as John D. was considered to be. Happy John D., to have two such cronies, one for the school and the study, and another for the wildwoods and the falls! Both were very dear to him, but Bond was the dearer.

## CHAPTER XI

### THE THEATER

"'Tis sweet to view, at half-past five or six,  
Our long wax candles, with short cotton wicks,  
Touched by the lamplighter's Promethean art,  
Start into light, and make the lighter start."

A FONDNESS for shows, natural to all mankind, was early evinced by the people of The Falls, and had been quickened and cultivated, as has been stated, by private theatricals. In 1818, when the old weather-beaten theater had been torn away to give place to a new building of larger dimensions, the interval had been filled by the reorganization of the private theatrical corps. At the time of which we now speak, this new theater had been again closed for repairs, and the only diversion afforded the public was the circus, or an occasional itinerant show. The Falls public was impatiently awaiting the opening of the theater. The dramatic corps of Mr. Drake, brought at an early day from England, was made up mainly of members of his own family. These were all good actors, and two of them, Mr. A. Drake, a comedian, and his wife, a tragic actress, were highly distinguished in their day. The management of this theater was in all respects upon the most liberal scale. Not only in such bright accessories as chandeliers and wax candles was it abreast with the great metropolitan theaters, but in some respects in advance of these. In the comedy, or after-piece, which then always followed the tragedy, if there was occasion to put upon the stage a table and eatables for a convivial scene, it was never attempted by wooden joints or wooden fowls, or colored water resembling wine, or other simulacra, to mock the audience and the actors by the bare semblance of a feast, but real joints

or real fowls and real wine were set forth; the egg-dressing plainly visible on the cold fowl, and the popping of real corks and the gurgle of real wine audible through the house. This honest treatment of the drama improved both the scene and the acting. But the effect upon the audience was not in all respects a happy one. People, when sitting up beyond their usual hour for bed, get hungry, and to see then other people feasting is sure to whet their hunger. This was a harvest time for the theater refectory. It was noticeable that always, after one of these scenes, the demand for cakes and comfits was very great among the younger portion of the audience, and among the ladies, and the house was odorous of orange-peeling. But to the rougher sex, which constituted always the larger part of the audience, the sight of this stage wassail imparted such a rasping appetite as was not to be appeased by cakes and comfits. These and the oranges were rejected by them in a huff, and they impatiently sat out the after-piece, and then rushed out and away to the popular cookshop of the town, in quest of a more solid repast. There were not wanting persons of a suspicious temper to assert that these appetizing scenes were contrived between the theatrical management and the wily publican of the cookshop, and that the liberal stage repasts were gratuitously furnished by him, with a view to the profit thus indirectly derived. This chronicler knows nothing as to the truth of this, but thinks that both theatrical managers and publicans may find a valuable hint in the facts.

Mr. Drake had now announced that he would reopen, with his fine company, "The Falls Theater." The house had been newly painted and decorated, and supplied with new furniture and new scenery. Soon the night was appointed for the reopening, and announced by placards in all public places. The opening night came at last, when the house was filled from pit to gallery. The old motto over the proscenium, *Veluti in Speculum*, had been regilded, the walls handsomely frescoed, the hangings and curtains and the ornamental woodwork being of crimson and gold. On each wing hung large chandeliers studded with wax candles; others of smaller size being grouped along the circles



of the first and second tiers of boxes. Lamplighters came with slender ladders, upon which they mounted, and touching the wicks saturated with turpentine, the house was at once in a blaze of light. Then as the orchestra strikes up a patriotic air, the green baize curtain rolls up, revealing a new and beautiful scene—"Pocahontas saving the life of Captain John Smith." The house thunders with applause from pit to gallery, and radiates with the light of hundreds of bright eyes and happy faces. Bright eyes are also seen peeping from behind the scenes, and the people are pleased to know that glad faces are there as well as in front.

Mr. Drake's theater was one of the fixed institutions of the town, in which all took great pride. No company of players ever received a heartier ovation. Two new players had been added to the company, and the romantic dramas then popular were put on the stage with new strength. The public did not tire of their performances. In fact, there grew up with the revival of the theater a dramatic mania, threatening bad results. Two or three prominent young business men, stage-struck, proposed to give up their places in business and put on the sock or buskin; but were restrained by the remonstrances of their friends and the firm dissuasion of the elder Drake. This mania spread in a mild form in all directions; the actor's vocation rose in public esteem; people repeated the story of the great Napoleon having taken lessons from Talma. John D.'s old school-master put his whole school, big and little, into one class in elocution, a branch before ignored by him. "Parts" were assigned, and a day appointed for exercise by the whole school in declamation.

The ample stores of material for practice in elocution, furnished now, were then unknown at The Falls, and the scholar was dependent for his part on the teacher. A few hackneyed pieces, time out of mind the property of the forward small boy, were ready at hand, but for boys of fifteen, like John D. and Bradstreet, it was not easy to provide suitable material. From many sources the old master brought together a mass of elocutionary matter, which he undertook to distribute among the scholars, ac-

cording to age or apparent faculty for declamation. These were read over to the school with a view to allow some discretion in the scholar, but it was soon apparent that this plan would be impracticable; for when the speeches of Colonel Barre and the Earl of Chatham were read they were wanted by all. So the master at last assigned, arbitrarily, to each boy his part. They that failed to get Colonel Barre or the Earl of Chatham, contented themselves with Patrick Henry, and that part of the Declaration of Independence in which the enormities of King George are enumerated. Anything pleased, if it only contained good "digs" at the British. The hostile feeling engendered by the war still subsisted. The popular heart had not condoned the burning of the books and archives at Washington by Admiral Cochrane, and that vile watchword at New Orleans, "Beauty and Booty," still made the blood to curdle.

The following Friday was appointed for declamation; meantime, the boys were exhorted to study and practice their parts. Some were shy and could not be got to show up in rehearsal, while others did not hesitate to get up and "speak" whenever an audience could be had. Bond, who had taken from Sallust Cæsar's speech in behalf of Catiline, was eager at all times to speak.

The day came at last for declamation. It was Friday, and the master dismissed the school at an early hour in the forenoon, enjoining every boy to be in his seat at three o'clock P. M., dressed in his best bib and tucker. Promptly at that hour every boy, in holiday attire, was in his seat. The master himself appeared, clean-shaven and dressed in his best black suit, with buff vest and shining black stock. The school was orderly to a degree never seen before—all was silent expectation. The forward boys, who had been rehearsing before audiences, were jubilant and impatient to mount the rostrum, while the shy ones sat with pale faces, "swallowing their hearts."

The master now walks forward, and taking a position near the rostrum, calls out in loud, distinct tones, that send a thrill through all the shy boys, "John Dunbar!" In answer to this summons, the smallest boy in the school

hurries to the platform. He pipes out in a shrill tone, like a little bird, "You'll scarce expect one of my age," etc., going through the piece with a constantly accelerated pace, which leaves him breathless at the end, and bows, and hurries panting to his seat. Then others of the small fry come on, and afterward boys of the age of John D. While some of these last acquitted themselves respectably, others broke down in confusion, and some in tears. These the good master treated tenderly, promising great things for them at another time. To the astonishment of all, John D. broke down in confusion, and so did young Hogan, the Irishman, who gave way under the pathos of Emmet's dying speech:

"As an imperfect actor on the stage,  
Who with his fear is put beside his part,  
Or some fierce thing replete with too much rage,  
Whose strength's abundance weakens his own heart."

The name of the last boy on the roll is now reached, and to close the performance the master calls, "Dudley Bradstreet!" Dudley was the oldest boy in the school, being in his eighteenth year. He was of a very delicate constitution, so delicate that he could not take part in the robust sports of the school, but stood by always a pleased spectator. He was thin almost to emaciation, and his cheeks were colorless and withered. His long, brown hair, which curled about his slim neck, the whiteness of his broad, smooth forehead, and a certain marked delicacy about the temples, gave him a feminine look. He was liked by all the boys, particularly by John D., and others of the same age, to whom he had endeared himself by introducing them to romantic literature, lending them "The Three Spaniards," "Don Raphael," "Rinaldo Rinaldini," and other red-hot romances, of which he had a great store. He walked habitually with his head down and inclined to one side, and often "went smiling to himself." No expectation had been excited in his behalf; the school was getting tired of the exercise, and the erect attitude of attention was fast giving way to listlessness and lounging, when, in answer to his name, he walked promptly but slowly to the rostrum.

He does not at once begin to speak. There is something in his look as he calmly surveys the audience that fixes the attention of every boy, and imposes silence as by a spell. He is going to deliver the oration of Antony over the dead body of Cæsar, and he is already Antony. He begins:

“‘Friends, Romans, countrymen’ (in a tone of endearment)  
‘lend me your ears!’

I come to bury Cæsar, not to praise him.’”

There is that in his tone which makes every boy hold his breath. How inadequate are all words to convey a clear idea of the genuine actor or the genuine orator! Their force, so sensibly felt, cannot be analyzed. It is as swift and subtle as the electric current, and more inscrutable. As the young actor (for he was a born actor) goes on, even the old master looks at him with wide eyes, surprised and moved by the boy’s dramatic power. He reaches, amid the silent wonder of the school, this passage:

“‘You all did love him once, not without cause:  
What cause withholds you, then, to mourn for him?  
O Judgment, thou art fled to brutish beasts,  
And men have lost their reason!’”

And then with broken voice:

“‘Bear with me—

My heart is in the coffin there with Cæsar,  
And I must pause till it come back to me.’”

He turns away, covers his face with his handkerchief, and shakes as with a convulsion of grief. Many boys slyly wipe away tears, and Hogan, who has been busily applying his handkerchief, bows his head to his desk.

The speaker recovers himself, turns again to the audience, and continues. Further on he says:

“‘If you have tears to shed, prepare to shed them now.’”

(Hogan puts his handkerchief in order, folding it anew.)

“‘You all do know this mantle.’”

(Here he whisks out from behind him a variegated piece of stuff, full of holes, and dabbled with red paint.)



"I remember,

The first time ever Cæsar put it on:

'Twas on a summer's evening, in his tent,

That day he overcame the Nervii.

Look!' (pointing to a red spot) 'in this place ran Cassius'  
dagger through.

See' (pointing out another spot) 'what a rent the envious  
Casca made!

Through this the well-beloved Brutus stabb'd;

And as he plucked his cursed steel away,

Mark how the blood of Cæsar follow'd it!"

(Many of the boys are now beginning to look quite savage.)

"This was the most unkindest cut of all;

For when the noble Cæsar saw *him* stab,

Ingratitude, more strong than traitors' arms,

Quite vanquished him; then burst his mighty heart.

\* \* \* \* \*

O, now you weep, and I perceive you feel

The dint of pity: these are gracious drops."

(Hogan responds freely, and there is a general thaw all over the house.)

"Kind souls, what! weep you when you but behold

Our Cæsar's vesture wounded? Look ye here:

Here is *himself*, marred, as you see, by traitors!"

At this point Hogan has both fists doubled, and he keeps them doubled to the end of this fine oration, and there is throughout the school a general feeling in favor of insurrection and rebellion.

As the school broke up, the boys collected about Dudley, and gazed at him with wonder and with a certain reverence. His dramatic power was a revelation to them all. They plied with questions John D.'s crony, "Old B.," who now shone with a reflected light. The master abstained from criticism upon these first performances; but he grasped Dudley's hand as he came from the rostrum, and walked away with him as he went home, talking earnestly, while the boys stood grouped near the door and looked after them in silence.

In the debating club afterward organized in that school, the question, "Was Brutus justifiable in killing Cæsar?"

was often put up for discussion, but was never debated, no boy being found willing to maintain the affirmative.

Out of this dramatic mania, which soon rose to fever heat in the school, grew many ridiculous incidents, some of which, though they may be thought below the dignity of this chronicle, the writer cannot forbear to relate.

The young Irishman, Hogan, who, with John D., had failed on the first declamation day, set to work manfully to get another part; avoiding the pathetic and taking this time the famous scene between Marmion and the Douglas at Tantallon Castle, which he was known to be diligently studying. One day after school, when the boys had all gone home, except John D., who had been called back into the schoolroom, to bear a note which the master was then writing, Hogan, thinking the coast clear, went into the gymnasium to have a private rehearsal. John D., coming out from the master, heard him there, and, walking softly over the sawdust and placing himself right behind him, waited until he should reach the climax of his piece. When in the very torrent and whirlwind of his passion he spoke these lines:

“ ‘Lord Angus, thou’rt defied!  
And if thou sayest I am not peer  
To any lord of Scotland here,  
Lowland or highland, far or near,  
Lord Angus, thou hast—’ ”

With a tragic “Ha!” John D. seized him. Instantly Hogan was upon him, with flushed face and flashing eyes—like a wildcat! They clinched and wrestled awhile, John D. thinking it sport. But finding Hogan fighting in earnest, and with great fury, he quickly began to do his best in that way also. Fortunately, the old master, coming out of the schoolroom at that time, heard them, and going into the gymnasium, with a few sharp words stopped the fray.

“Why, what is the matter here?” he said, as the two boys stood up, flushed and panting.

“Nothing, sir,” said Hogan, looking very foolish and forcing a laugh, and then slipping away. But John D.’s

blood was up, and being of a temper that could not put away wrath with the facility of the young Irishman, he stood before the old master, still flushed with anger.

"What the deuce," asked the master, "set you and Hogan by the ears?"

Then John D. told him the whole story, and was astonished to see him convulsed with laughter; rubbing his head, and laughing in that peculiar whimpering way of his, with more heartiness than the lad had ever seen him show before. He seemed to understand the whole thing, and to see a good joke in it, which John D., feeling his nose swelling from a blow he had got, was not able to see. In good time, however, he came to understand it, and made a resolution never again to surprise a student of elocution in a private trial.

"Old Bradstreet" was pretty nearly proof against the dramatic mania, having been accustomed to declamation at home, where Dudley often exercised himself in his favorite study. Still he took, in a mild form, the prevailing disorder, and astonished John D. not a little, while returning from a day's sport with the old fusil, by his absurd conduct. Having the weapon at full cock, he suddenly rushed some steps in advance, and aiming at the sky, shrieked with the best dramatic tone he could muster, and at the top of his voice:

"'I an itching palm!

You wronged yourself to write in such a case!'"—

"Bang!" firing off his fusil. This performance he repeated again and again, retiring each time to reload, until the gun missed fire, when he desisted.

"Where did you get that?" said John D.

"I got it from Dudley. It is a piece for two people to speak; one speaks and the other answers him, like they do on the stage. It is a dialogue. Dudley tried it with me to see if we couldn't speak it next declamation day."

"Are you going to speak it?"

"No; Dudley don't like my way of doing it."

"What don't he like about your way of doing it?"

"Oh, I don't know; he ran out of the room while I was speaking my part. He said I ought to read both parts, and

I believe I got them sort of mixed. He hasn't said anything about it since."

"Did you have the gun when you rehearsed with Dudley?"

"No; I put that in here; I thought it would be like the gongs on the stage, and make the speech more awful."

Soon after this they stopped to divide the spoils of the day, Bradstreet, as usual, endeavoring to give to John D. the lion's share. Then they parted, John D. muttering to himself as he walked away homeward, "What a dear old jackass Old B. is!"



## CHAPTER XII

### A YOUNG IMPRESARIO

"If he may have his jest, he never cares  
At whose expense."

BUTTONS was a steady patron of all shows that came to The Falls; and if one of these remained so long as a week he was sure to establish intimate relations with the "management," and to render them good service. If it was a menagerie, he could tell them of the butcher who could supply on the best terms meat for the carnivorous animals, and give like information as to food for the kangaroos and monkeys, and other vegetarians. Did they want black boys to ride, along with the big monkey, on the pony that had been taught to kick up in the ring, and to buck and to throw off the boys, Buttons could supply these. He had two black boys at hand in his father's household, not mere perfunctory actors, but experts, ambitious youths, who were never so happy as when in the arena. And then his charges were so moderate! All he asked was to have free run of the show and the privilege of passing in a few friends. He was soon on familiar terms with all the performers, calling them by their first names. The great "Fire King," who used to come into the ring dressed like the devil, with horns and a cloven foot, and with a fork eat live coals from a plate, to the horror of blacks and other superstitious people—he was simple "Jim Hart" to Buttons.

Even at Drake's theater he came at last to be in requisition. At first his offers of service were lightly regarded, and declined, his youthfulness being against him. But when they came to put on the stage a dramatization of Mr. Cooper's "Last of the Mohicans," in which a black bear was introduced, and that part was very badly enacted,

Buttons made a clamorous appeal to the manager, and got leave to bring a man who "could play the bear." Accordingly he brought Paris, one of his father's slaves, a humorous fellow and a wonderful mimic. One rehearsal not only satisfied the manager, but excited him to enthusiasm, as it did all the members of his company. After a few rehearsals Paris, dressed in the skin of the animal, presented on the stage, in voice and action, such a veritable black bear that there was a craze over the piece, and it had an immense run. The only fault was made on the first night, and never repeated, when the enthusiastic audience threw upon the stage pieces of silver money, and the bear set about picking these up.

This successful hit elevated Buttons at once to the rank of an impresario. Mr. Rice, afterward famous as "Jim Crow Rice," was then a member of Mr. Drake's company, and acknowledged himself under heavy obligations to Buttons for valuable help, and for models, while he was studying negro manners and character, and gave him a letter, which is now before this chronicler, accrediting him to all managers of theaters and shows, and concluding with this apposite quotation: "I beseech you, let his lack of years be no impediment, to let him lack a reverend estimation; for I never knew so young a body with so old a head. His trial shall better publish his commendation."

Long after this youthful period of his life, when he had come to be a grave man of business, Buttons felt a lively interest in the career of his friend Rice. This actor, it will be remembered, after his success at The Falls in his negro character-song and dance, went to the North, where he had great success, and thence to London, where he set all the fashionable world to singing "Jim Crow." There, as at The Falls, the words of the song were seemingly improvised, having new local hits every night. Of those at The Falls the following doggerel lines, referring to the paper war going on daily between the rival editors, Prentice and Shadrach Penn, is an average specimen:

"Prentice, though a Yankee, yet shows his taste ain't bad,  
For every morning regular he breakfasts on Shad."

It is not without a sense of the unornamental character of this doggerel that it is set down here. Yet it is not without value for the commentary it affords upon the taste for public amusements at home and abroad in that day, when with such a meager repertory as this ribald song and a grotesque dance the actor could attain both fame and fortune. It marks also the beginning of the taste for negro melodies which long prevailed in "society," "where," says the satirist, "is always to be seen a sheeplike quality which makes people run and crowd only because people have run and crowded before." To be in the secrets of this guild, and to know where the running and crowding is to be, is to be in the "swim," while not to be there is to lose caste and sink into obscurity. In many famous London parlors "Jim Crow" was long a favorite; and a companion piece of melody, "Sich a gittin' up stairs," found a place in the best polite letters, and now shares a chance for immortality with "The Book of Snobs."

So late as 1840 or thereabouts, after the time of the Queen's nuptials, it was known at The Falls that Buttons and Russell had dined at the new tavern (now remembered by many as the old Galt House) with a tall, "nobby," foreign-looking stranger (afterward known to be Mr. Rice), where they sat very late at table, and Buttons went home in a merry mood, singing new verses of "Jim Crow" describing the royal nuptials, of which an average specimen is afforded in the following irreverent couplet:

"I stood beside Prince Albert, and our likenesses was sich,  
The Archbishop of Canterbury couldn't tell which was which."

The zeal of Buttons as the friend and patron of showmen extended even to the humblest of the fraternity. In the early summer of this year, an old man, a native of some part of Germany contiguous to France, whose broken English was complicated both by French and German, came to The Falls with a panorama. It was a very humble show, the whole outfit consisting of a hand-organ and some views of French and Irish scenery. Most of these were probably nothing more than portions of paperhangings, on which were figured gay landscapes, and hunting scenes,

and villas, such as were not uncommon on the walls of houses sixty years ago. A survival, possibly, of "the German hunting in waterwork," which Falstaff recommended to Mrs. Quickly in place of her "fly-bitten tapestries." During the exhibition the hand-organ played French or Irish airs, according with the several scenes.

For three nights, under the active patronage of Buttons, this little show had been received with reasonable favor, when one night that irrepressible practical joker, Russell, appeared there. When he entered, Paris, for whom Buttons had secured this "position," was manipulating the organ, playing a French national air, while some views of the city of Paris were about to be shown. The scene opened with a view of one of the monuments of Napoleon's glory, and the voice of the showman announced, "Ze ceety of Paree! Dare you see ze plarse Vondome, unt ze collon erect by Napoleon for commemorate dose victoree on Preusse unt Austria, in eighteen honder unt five. Von honder unt dirty fo fut of height, of brass.—Plarse unt collon oof Vondome!"

At the conclusion of this announcement time was given the audience to view the scene, when it was withdrawn and a new one put on. Then the showman, leaving his post, went into a closet near at hand, closing the door, and leaving the key in the lock. Russell flew quickly and noiselessly to the door of the closet, and, turning the key softly, locked him in there. Then taking his place, he proceeded to interpret to the audience the new scene. This was a rural scene, representing a villa, or chateau, with a distant view of a highly improved country; with bridges of stone spanning numerous streams, and gay parties of ladies and gentlemen, in carriages and on horseback, careering there. In the foreground were a lady and gentleman, in antiquated costumes, a little boy running to meet them, and behind these, other ladies and gentlemen, a number of children, and many dogs. Near at hand on the left was a flock of sheep with lambs frisking. Paris had changed the stops of the organ for the new piece, and, either blundering or purposely abetting Russell's mischief, had turned on "Larry O'Gaff," and now rattled off a prelude with this lively air. Then



Russell, from the showman's stand, in a loud voice interpreted this scene to the audience:

"Dare you see ze chateau of Mal-Maison: ze favoreet rezedance of Napoleon, ware 'e retire to get solarse fon ze care of state—"

"Sacre nom!" was heard from the closet, and then a furious rattling at the door.

"Dare," continued Russell, "you see ze sheeps unt ze peoples, unt ze leetle boy was so glad to see his farder unt his mudder—"

"Got in Himmel!" from the closet, and then, hissed through the keyhole, "Lady unt jantleman, you doan' see no such ting!" And then, "A moi, Paree!—Ouvrez la porte—"

"Dare," proceeded Russell, "you see ze dogs of ze chase, Rowlair, Jowlair, Bowlair, unt ze bobtail bitch viz nine pups—"

"Donner unt blitzen! Gott tam!" was now shrieked from the closet, and the cries became so frantic and the kicking and rattling so loud, that Russell signaled Paris to open the door.

The old showman came forth exhausted—overcome by anger and chagrin and much vociferation and effort to get free. He could find voice only to make proclamation in a weak and tremulous way: "Lady and jantleman, ze eze-bishun is conclude; all will be pay back ze money. Jè ne puis plus—ze show is conclude." And then he sank into a chair.

But Buttons came at once to his support. He did not betray Russell, but he was full of indignation at his conduct. He could see nothing in it but a heartless interference with an humble laborer in a legitimate and respectable calling. Like his father, Buttons was a champion of the weak and lowly, and always on the under dog in a fight. And Russell, now made remorseful by the piteous aspect of the old showman, came forward with a bold face, and in a tone of indignation explained to the audience that some designing malevolent person, most likely a rival from Cincinnati, had interrupted the progress of the panorama, but that after a short interval it would be resumed. Then

he and Buttons induced the old showman to rest himself awhile, and after a short interval he recovered his composure, and the show went on to a satisfactory end.

Not only this, but Buttons stirred up all his family, and, seconded by Russell, induced his father and the whole Digby family and connections to go to the next exhibition, when there was an overflowing house. Then Russell began to find it a good joke to send his friends there, and by preposterous descriptions of the show, supplemented by a paragraph which he procured to be inserted in the *Advertiser*, stating that, "Under the unpretending title of a panorama, one of the most interesting and beautiful exhibitions that has ever come to The Falls may now be seen in Wurtz's warehouse for eighteen pence," filled the house every night for a week.

The old showman was very grateful to Buttons, and anxious to manifest this by a liberal donation; but "noblesse oblige"—and he would take nothing. At last, when bidding him farewell, the old man put into his hand a small wooden box, containing, as he said, a toy, which Buttons did accept, and which, when opened at home, he found to contain a beautiful little musical box which played very neatly three German waltzes. The old man also sent a warm expression of gratitude to Russell, which, when communicated to him, made that gay gentleman look quite grave.

## CHAPTER XIII

### THE CAPTURE OF STOKES

"They said unto him, We are come down to bind thee, and they bound him."

IT WILL not do to say that Thornton was not missed at The Falls. He had long been the leader in all the gaiety of the place, and "society" missed him sadly, missed the gay dances at the tavern; and the gentlemen that were fond of good cheer missed the dinners and suppers given there, as some uncharitably said, "to popularize his tavern." They were sorry for him, too, after a fashion, looking upon his removal to the country as banishment to Siberia. But it is the way of the world to bear with fortitude the misfortunes of its friends, and no hearts were broken over Thornton. The winter had fairly set in, the theater was open, and, spite of the money trouble—nay, all the more, as it seemed, for this—the house was crowded every night, and the gaiety of the public not a jot abated.

At the warehouse of Mr. John Digby only the usual change incident to the busy season was observable. The advent of this had broken up the rendezvous there, and its idle members were distributed among other gossiping places; the great door in the second story before which they had so often sat, where the old cashier had passed his leisure hours in meditation, was now closed, its back turned with a forbidding look to the river and the north wind. But within all was "business." In the counting-room a full complement of clerks were at work, the proprietor there busy despatching messengers; his own horse "Steamboat" standing saddled with two others in stalls on the lower story; drays, with their black drivers, crowding about the doors, and everything wearing the lively air of the busy season. There

was now a full river, covered with crafts of all kinds. The great New Orleans steamers were again in motion, and came storming up with the strong current of the falls, "burning tar," their tall chimneys sending out clouds of black smoke, their decks crowded with passengers, and piled with oranges and pineapples and other tropical fruits; their black crews chanting with strident voices their port-song; their "dandy captain," the complement of a "bully" crew, standing, a mass of blue cloth and gilt buttons, on the upper deck, swelling in turn over the small up-river steamers: just as those "big Indiamen" we used to read about, that came "rolling down from St. Helena" upon our North Atlantic coast—"the Burrampooter from Canton, one hundred and ten days out, bound for Boston," or "the Bashaw from Bombay, with a monkey and paroquettes in the rigging"—swelled over the little brigs "only from Liverpool."

The financial storm had done its worst. Many cases of bankruptcy had occurred. But financial ailings do not often kill, and though one haberdasher did for a time lose his wits and insist on going into a nunnery, people in general regarded the world as solid, and The Falls a good town to live in. As for the worthy proprietor of the warehouse, though he had paid large sums as surety, and, to secure his credit, had mortgaged his whole estate to the Bank of the United States, he yet bore himself bravely, not only not cast down, but putting new strength into enterprises by which he hoped to recover his losses. He did not worry those by whose default he had suffered loss. Satisfied that they had not been guilty of bad faith, he took care to let them know that their misfortune and his loss made no change in his friendship; encouraging them in efforts to retrieve their fortunes, helping them with wise counsel, and, in cases where the condition of their families required it, with money from his own depleted purse. No condition of affairs could make him despair. The magnitude of a task only stirred him to greater effort. And this spirit he infused into all that were connected with him. There was no change in his household, nor at the warehouse, indicative of retrenchment. Petty economies he despised. New enterprises, suggested by his fertile mind,



now spurred to its full strength, were undertaken. People wondered whence came his means and his credit, and while they wondered he went on with his work. Toward the end of the winter occurred an event of much interest to him, and which promised to throw light on Thornton's lost receipt. This will now be related.

Before the advent of steamboats, while only the old slow methods of travel and transportation were known, there were few professional criminals about The Falls. Petty larceny was not uncommon, but housebreaking was unknown. People were careless about fastening their doors, and in the country they everywhere stood unlocked and often wide open through the night. But with the new facilities for travel came a more enterprising and daring class of rogues, and the robbery of stores became not unusual. Yet the family hearth was still held sacred, and the felonious entry of a dwelling remained for a long time unheard of. The steamboats, it was commonly said, had brought in two classes of evildoers, housebreakers and the Hanoverian or Norway rats.

On a dark night, more than a year before the time of which we write, when the river had risen to a great height, flooding all the water front of the town, and reaching almost into the second story of Digby's warehouse, some rogues had moored a boat alongside there, and breaking a hole through the brick wall in the second story, entered and carried off a large quantity of valuable merchandise. They rifled also the drawer of the counting-room, carrying away some money, and, as heretofore related, the tin box belonging to Robert Thornton, containing only valuable papers. All the detective agencies at Digby's command, with Tom Long at their head, had been then put instantly to work, and in a short time strong circumstantial evidence pointed to one Stokes as the criminal—a fellow of gigantic size and who had been for some time living about The Falls, and was regarded there as a "suspicious character." He had been last employed as a fisherman at Shippingport, one of the little towns at the foot of the falls, from which place he was reported to have fled under a charge of theft. Now, though diligently hunted for a month or more,

he was not discovered, and was supposed to have quitted the country.

In the latter part of the month of March, in the middle of the night, while a great storm of wind and rain, with thunder and lightning, was at its height, John D. lay awake in his chamber. Early in the night he had been lulled to sleep by the steady rhythm of the falls, and had now been awakened by the loud tumult of the storm. And with what different sensations! A sensation now of awe and vague dread. Not for the thunder and lightning; for his was a temper that rather took delight in these. But the wild caprices of the wind, now growling in hoarse bass, now piping high and loud, like "a giant whistling for his house-dog," roused his imagination and filled his mind with ghostly fancies.

In the midst of the storm was heard, upon the brazen plate of the street door, loud knocking. Such a summons in the middle of the night, amidst storm and darkness, is apt to stir the firmest mind with apprehension; and, when the knocking was repeated, John D., not without tremor, got up, and, half dressing himself, made his way to his mother's chamber. There his father was already up and talking from an open window to some one in the street below. After a moment he closed the window and, hastily dressing himself, went down to the street door. Soon he came back, and taking from a closet a pair of pistols, and belting these about his waist, and putting on his greatcoat, he told his wife that he was going out after the man who had robbed his warehouse; that Mrs. Rogan, the wife of a grocery keeper near the river, was at the door, and had reported that Stokes was then in her house, bargaining with her husband for the sale of some goods he had brought there; and that he would take with him "little Dick," one of the stoutest of Thornton's slaves, then in his service, and capture him.

Hearing this, John D. hastened back to his own room, where, while hastily dressing himself, he heard his father's heavy tread going down the stairway. Putting on his greatcoat with ample capes, and seizing Bradstreet's old fusil, now luckily in his custody, well loaded for duck or plover,

he followed after. Reaching the street, he saw, by the light of the scattered oil lamps, far down the sidewalk, the receding figures of his father and Mrs. Rogan and "little Dick," like formless blots, moving over the glimmering wet pavement. For a moment, in a flash of lightning that blotted out all other lights, he saw them distinctly revealed, and then in the dim light of the lamps, and the confusion of cross and refracted lights and shadows, they became formless blots as before. Hurrying after them, he was but a short distance behind when they turned toward the river. There all was darkness, save the glimmer of their lantern, and all was silence save the sound of the falling rain and the low wash of the river, and above these the deep but now muffled monotone of the falls. He had got close behind them when they suddenly hid their lantern, and trod lightly, stepping on their toes, and then halted in front of Rogan's house. The next moment a bright shaft of light gleamed out upon the night, and quickly vanished as a door was opened and closed with violence, and the key turned in the lock, shutting out John D. in the darkness and the rain. Drawing near the door he heard his father's voice within; and putting his ear to the keyhole he heard, in his familiar imperative tone, these words, "No, I won't trust you an inch. Fasten his legs well—hobble him so that he can't run." And then Rogan's voice, "What about these goods, Mr. Digby?"

"Keep them just where they are; they are not mine. They look like frippery from a milliner's store. He has been robbing some poor woman, I warrant. Bring him along. Rogan, come with us."

The door was now opened, and Digby, turning about, said, "Mrs. Rogan, you are not afraid to stay here with Rogan away?"

"Troth, I'm not. It is not in the blood of an O'Nale, man nor woman, to be afeared of mortal man. I'd keep this house again all the rogues in Christendom. Afeared! No, no, Mr. Digby, I've a touch of yure own timper, good luck to ye for a brave gintleman as ye are—won't you take a sup of something, just to keep out the wet this bad night? Rogan, give me the key." Here she held out her hand with

an imperious gesture, and Rogan, with a look of reluctant submission, gave her the key, while Digby answered, "No, no, I'll come back after we have seen this fellow locked up." Then the prisoner was marched off, and the door closed.

The captive was Stokes, a gigantic fellow, but without ferocity, or even courage, as it seemed, for he was completely unmanned when confronted by Digby; and when Rogan was summoned from behind his counter to tie him, he submitted without a struggle. With Rogan and "little Dick" on either side, and Digby behind, and John D. with the fusil bringing up the rear, he was marched to the jail, and, after some delay there, and a private talk between Digby and the jailer, was locked up. Then for the first time Digby got a view of his son, with the firelock on his shoulder, and chuckled at this odd reinforcement.

As they returned from the jail, Digby sent John D. and "little Dick" home, while he accompanied Rogan back to his store. Coming in front of the house they heard within a strong female voice singing an Irish patriotic song, accompanied in the chorus by another voice, thin and quavering. Pausing to listen they heard these verses:

"Away now wid all your palaver and lies,  
Can't ye spake the good truth plain and civil?  
Can't ye say, "Cousin Pat, take this or take that,  
Free trade or the road to the divil"?"

CHORUS.

Can't ye say, "Cousin Pat, take this or take that,  
Free trade or the road to the divil"?"

"Eighty thousand brave boys have contrived such a noise  
As will charrum the ears of gay France, sir;  
And some e'en go further—Och! sure it's no murther—  
And say it will make a king dance, sir.

CHORUS.

And some e'en go further—Och! sure it's no murther—  
And say it will make a king dance, sir.

"O, were you not dull, when you tuk 'way our wull,  
To lave us so much of the leather?  
It ne'er entered your pate that a sheepskin well bate  
Would rouse a whole nation together.

CHORUS.

It ne'er entered your pate that a sheepskin well bate  
Would rouse a whole nation together.'"



Here Rogan whispered to Digby, "The ould woman's been taking her tay while we've been gone, and she's brought in a neeghbor by a tap on the wall. She'll be purty hard on me now if I go in. I'll just go by the alleyway. She'll be civil enough to you, I'm thinking, and tell you all she knows; and if not you can come down in the morning, if you plase, Mr. Digby."

While Rogan went in by the alleyway, Digby entered the house. He found the hostess sitting by the stove, upon which a tea-kettle was now steaming, and a pleasant warmth was radiated through the room. Near the hostess sat a little old woman with a pink face, whom she introduced as Mrs. Ryan, her neighbor, who saluted Digby with a low curtesy. Each held in her hand a smoking tumbler, and an unmistakable odor of lemon and "poteen" pervaded the room.

"Now, Mrs. Rogan," said Digby, "I have come back to accept your hospitable offer, and take something to keep out the wet this bad night."

"Just take a sate, Mr. Digby," she replied, with a superior air. "But I'll have ye to know that if ye've a mind to take something, it must be the same I'm now taking meself; all on account of me nerves which has never been the same, nor meself the same woman, since I came to this wild country. At home I had always wine, poort, clart, or nagus, and me father's cellar was always full o' the best. And I'll have ye mind it's an O'Nale you're drinking wid, Mr. Digby."

At her request Mrs. Ryan then brewed a tumbler of punch, and with another curtesy handed it to Digby, who said:

"Here's your health, Mrs. Ryan, and a long life to the Rogans and the O'Neils and all honest people, and capture to all rogues. Bidly, here's to you."

"'Bidly!'" cried the hostess, looking indescribably indignant and superior. "I'd have ye say Mistress Bridget Rogan, if it's to me yure spaking. Miss Bridget O'Nale that was, Mistress Bridget Rogan that is—— And where's me husband?"

"Oh, Rogan will be here after a while."

“‘Rogan’!” she exclaimed, rising and putting down the empty glass, and placing her arms akimbo; “I’ll have ye to know it should be Mister Rogan in yure mouth; and if ye talk of rogues I’m havin’ me doubts if there ain’t bigger rogues left out than are put in the jail. A fine-lookin’ lad, a’most seven feet tall, and let himself be led off like a horse wid a halter! O Lord! I’m mighty ’shamed that I let ye take him away—that I should be laiged wid informers, and give up a puir lad that had to hide and flee like a stag from the hunters! O dear! O dear!”

Here her tears began to flow, and Digby, seeing how bootless would be further talk with the lady in this maudlin state, put down the tumbler of punch and went home.

Next day it was known that Stokes had employed Ould to defend him from the charge of robbery. Tom Long, at Digby’s instance, had made further investigation of the case, and both were then satisfied that sufficient evidence might be obtained to convict him. But Ould firmly asseverated that he was innocent; that though circumstances were against him, nothing amounting to proof could be produced, and that all suspicious circumstances would be easily and simply explained. Meantime, the prisoner lay in jail, Tom Long continuing to prosecute the search for proof against him, as eagerly as if his own reputation depended upon a conviction. The case was twice continued on motion of the commonwealth, and then, before the next trial, in the latter part of the spring term of the court, Stokes escaped from the jail.

He had been closely interrogated more than once by Ould as to the tin box, and had steadily asserted his ignorance of this and of the robbery, and Ould believed him. Thus vanished the hope that his capture might lead to the recovery of Thornton’s lost receipt.

Ould was confident of success in Thornton’s case, upon strictly technical ground. But Thornton, hopeful that the lost receipt would turn up, and desirous of success upon this unquestionable proof rather than upon the technical presumptions of the law, Ould, who had often obtained a continuance of the case before, now had it laid over to the next fall term of the court, agreeing then to go on trial.

## CHAPTER XIV

### THE SCHOOLMASTER

"God of His goodness hath gifted several men for several callings, that the necessity of Church and State in all conditions may be provided for. And thus God molded some for a schoolmaster's life, undertaking it with desire and delight, and discharging it with dexterity and success."

—FULLER.

MEANTIME, at Lastlands, few incidents of interest had occurred during Thornton's first winter. He was kept busy putting the place in order, straightening the fences and the swagging gates, supplying new rails, mending the roads, and the many details involved in the repair of a plantation long untenanted. Spite of the busy season, Mr. John Digby and Russell and Stackpole and McIntyre paid him short visits, and were gratified by finding him busy and happy. Intercourse with the neighbors was soon begun. After the bustle incident to the removal was over, Phœbe Vaughn, the young daughter of his neighbor, had come over to visit Barbara. For a while she hung modestly about the lawn in view of the house, when, seeing her, Barbara went out with a smiling face and brought her in, and entertained her by exhibiting all her treasures of trinkets and books and other Christmas presents; but as Phœbe said she had "done playing with dolls," she was not shown that splendid young lady, "Mary Ormsby." They were so pleased with each other that a messenger was sent to notify her mother, and Phœbe was kept to dinner, and was thereafter a constant visitor at Lastlands.

Soon acquaintance was renewed with another neighbor, the only tenant on the Lastlands domain. This was Mr. Davis, a Swiss, who many years before had taken from

Reginald Thornton, at a nominal rent and with a covenant to leave the place in good order and set in fruit, a lease for twenty years of thirty acres of land near the banks of the Anser. This land was elevated above the general level of the valley of the stream, and was of a light, sandy texture, suited to the special purpose of Mr. Davis. He was one of the many foreigners that, like waifs, drifted out to the frontier: men of culture and training in specialties that would seem better suited to populous localities, and in the midst of diversified industries, than to the sparse settlements of a new planting region. Mr. Davis was especially a vine grower. The grape was his hobby. For a time he made wine, but not such wine as was palatable in Kentucky, and his enterprise seemed likely to end in failure. Then he had stored in his capacious cellars the crude juice of the grape, for which he at last found a market in New Orleans, whither he continued afterward to ship it.

His household was a large one, consisting of three sons and three daughters, his wife and his wife's brother. They were by no means dependent upon the vine, which sometimes failed, but were possessed of various knowledge and skill in many handicrafts. With a forge and lathes and tools of all kinds, they were workers in metal and in wood, and could make or mend almost anything appertaining to a plantation or to a household—from a wheelbarrow to a wagon, or from a spinning-wheel to a weaving machine. Besides, they kept many cows, and having unlimited pasturage allowed in the wide valley, they made cheese that found always a ready sale in the neighborhood and at The Falls. They made also fruit conserves in many forms, apple and peach leather, and sugared dried peaches, which were always in demand by the town confectioners. For a time, the solid comfort in which Mr. Davis and his considerable household lived, upon thirty acres, was a puzzle to many of his neighbors. Some of them having seen him fusing metal with a blowpipe, there arose a suspicion that he must be engaged in some unlawful business, and that "The Knoll," as his place was called, was a nest of counterfeiters. But when the various industries there came to be known, and besides what have been enumerated, that



a market was also found for all the medicinal herbs, camomile, thyme and sage, in his large garden extensively grown, and for others gathered in the wildwoods, and all dried and packed in bales, the mystery of the thrift of the household was dispelled, as well as the unjust suspicion.

Mr. Davis was a highly accomplished man, a chemist, a botanist, a musician; robust in mind and body, buoyant in spirits, honest, fearless, and benevolent. He had been long a close and valued friend of Reginald Thornton, who had often during his long solitary winters at Lastlands visited The Knoll, looking on with interest and pleasure while the various industries went on, uninterrupted by his visit. In summer he was accustomed to sit in the twilight and evening on the veranda at the back of his house, to hear the playing of the musicians at The Knoll, where Mr. Davis and two of his sons, and his brother-in-law (a fine violoncello player), played quartettes, the sound borne distinctly along the valley.

Another acquaintance was renewed this winter, fraught with good to the Thornton household. One stormy night in January, the wind blowing a gale from the northeast, and the driving snow so thick and blinding that it seemed hardly possible that any man would be able to find a way through it, loud knocking was heard at the door. Thornton chanced to be up, in dressing-gown and slippers, searching for a banging shutter, and heard the knocking, otherwise the untimely visitor might long have knocked in vain. Going to the door, he found there Mrs. Scudamore, a lonely widow living with her only son a mile away on the border of the Lastlands domain. She was wrapped in a man's greatcoat, covered with snow. Showing her at once into his wife's chamber, Thornton quickly raked away the ashes that covered the coals, and seating her by the hearth, kindled a bright fire. She had come to tell him that her boy Paul was suddenly taken ill; that she would not have disturbed him at such a time, but the case was so serious and alarming, that she could not forbear. Would it be possible for Thornton to send for the doctor?

"Of course it will," responded Thornton, and in the same

breath his wife, who had seemed asleep. Then Thornton summoned one of the maids that slept in the house, saying, "Go tell Joshua to put the brown mare in the gig and bring it to the door, and to put on his greatcoat. He must take Mrs. Scudamore home, and then go at once for the doctor, and fetch him to her house. I will give him a note at the door." Then, in answer to Thornton's inquiry, the mother described her son's condition, his suffering and fortitude, and his unwillingness to have anybody disturbed at such a time on his account. And then she broke down in sobs and tears, and wrung her hands, and cried, "My poor Paul! My poor, poor boy!" which brought Mrs. Thornton at once to her side.

Thornton wasted no time in sympathy, but set about writing a note to the doctor which should insure his coming promptly. Then the mother handed him a note which she had written, and Thornton, finding it to present the case effectively, took this. In a few minutes, wrapped in warm garments, the widow was driven safe back to her son, and then Joshua went rapidly after the doctor.

When Joshua returned to Lastlands, Thornton and his wife had got up, and were dressed, and getting into the gig, drove over to the cabin of Mrs. Scudamore, bearing a load of things, with wine and other restoratives. That a widow should lose an only son seemed to Mrs. Thornton the most grievous of all calamities. She remained all night, watching with the unhappy mother and the doctor, while Thornton went back home in the gig.

Next day, after breakfast, taking with him a man to chop wood for the widow's fireplaces, Thornton went again to Mrs. Scudamore's, where two of old Vaughn's sons, axes in hand, had already presented themselves for the same purpose. In the course of the morning the doctor came again, and after feeling Paul's pulse, and scrutinizing his eyes, turned to the light, and looking at his tongue, pronounced the crisis passed; and soon Paul was "out of danger," then "convalescent," then "well."

Mrs. Scudamore was the widow of a surveyor who, in conjunction with a man of capital, had purchased in partnership large bodies of land in Kentucky, the one giving

his labor and knowledge of the land, the other the capital. While the surveyor was busy in the country the other had fraudulently contrived to have all the conveyances made to himself individually. On his way to Virginia, seeking redress for this wrong, the surveyor had died, leaving his widow in possession of the tract near Lastlands to which she had no legal title, though now many years in undisputed possession. A fund of a few thousand dollars in the stock of the Bank of the United States, and an old negro man and his wife, constituted the widow's whole estate. From the dividends on the stock and the product of the few acres that Paul and the old negroes could cultivate, she had heretofore lived, husbanding the bank stock for Paul. The neatness and simple beauty of her cottage log-cabin, with its verandas in front and rear, covered with clematis and climbing roses, and a garden with a strong paling, and a pit for flowers, bespoke culture and refinement. Thornton's father had once offered Mrs. Scudamore a home at Lastlands, which she had declined, and soon Thornton and his wife, attracted to both the widow and Paul, made her the same offer. She again declined, explaining that she could not give up her possession of the land without impairing her right to hold it. But when Thornton afterward talked to Ould about this, he was told that she might retain possession by leasing it to another. Assured of this she accepted Thornton's offer, leasing the land to Thornton himself, who soon after put in possession another tenant, a near kinsman of Kirby, the old soldier who had been his father's herdsman and was now back at Lastlands, Kirby guaranteeing that his kinsman would hold possession against the devil incarnate, if that should become necessary.

The acquaintance of Mrs. Scudamore with these neighbors, the Vaughns and the Davises, was of long standing. She spoke warmly in praise of all of them, and expressed her gratitude for numberless acts of kindness to herself and Paul, during their long lonely life in the cottage. Paul had made all the return in his power. He was good at figures, having had from his mother excellent instruction in this branch, and in simple surveying which she had

learned from her husband, whom she had long assisted in his labor. With his father's compass and chain Paul had marked anew the corners of old Vaughn's land, plotting it, and finding more land within the metes and bounds than was set down in his deed, a gratifying thing to the old farmer, though common in old surveys. Paul had also attended always on the eve of the periodical visits of the great farm wagon to The Falls, when he made a "manifest" of the cargo, all set out in an orderly manner on a sheet of foolscap.

The accession of Paul and his mother to Lastlands, with Phoebe close at hand, and the Davises still nearer, and the household thus "en rapport" with the neighbors, was an agreeable thing to all. And now the old violoncello player coming over one day with Mr. Davis, and finding that Barbara had had some instruction on the piano, and had, as he said, "goot talent," he promised to bring her some good music for the piano. Accordingly, he soon after gave her a large collection of music by Mozart. Then he gave her some instruction, bringing with him musical scales which he exhorted her to practice constantly. "Doan' play dose song, Mees Barbara, und dose dance. Play all der time scales und Mozart. Dose dance und dose song—is—notting"—contemptuously snapping his fingers. And soon finding how far inferior to Mozart were the songs and dances which, pandering to the false taste of the time, music teachers at The Falls had been accustomed to give their scholars for practice, and diligently practicing with the occasional supervision of the old violoncello player, she came to play Mozart well. Then he gave her some accompaniments to learn, and, when she came to play these well, having brought over his "'cello," they practiced privately together, and then entranced Thornton and his wife, and drew the music-loving blacks about the great door, and about all the doors set ajar, that their ears might lose none of these delightful sounds.

Barbara was now of an age when it was proper that something better than the meager and irregular instruction she got at home should be afforded her, better indeed than she had got in the schools at The Falls. This had been



a subject of anxiety to Thornton, from the first moment when he contemplated the removal to Lastlands. Deficient himself in classical learning, then considered the basis of all scholarship, but now superseded by the multiplication table, he was solicitous that she should be instructed in the ancient classics, as well as the common branches taught in female schools. To send her away for this, was never thought of. It was an ancient maxim of the Thorntons that the best training of a young girl was to be had under her mother's wing, and it was an inexorable rule with them never to send a daughter to a boarding-school. Thinking it likely that his neighbor Vaughn would be glad to send to a good school Phœbe and his youngest son Hugh, a lad of sixteen, and that Sterrett might come out to live, and send his boy; and knowing that Mrs. Scudamore was ambitious for Paul, and was anxious to afford him an opportunity to extend his knowledge of mathematics, and of surveying, of which he knew only a little by rote, and having consulted with Vaughn and Sterrett, and finding them equally disposed to contribute to the maintenance of a good select school, Thornton advertised for a schoolmaster competent to teach the ancient classics and mathematics and the ordinary English branches. This advertisement brought a prompt reply from a Mr. John Wall at Shelbyville, who represented himself as a native of Dublin, Ireland, a graduate of Trinity College, with several years' experience in teaching, chiefly the ancient classics and mathematics and French, and for three years a resident on the Continent. After a further exchange of letters, Mr. Wall was invited to visit Lastlands, where he arrived one rainy winter morning. He came on horseback, wearing an immense cloth cloak, which covered himself and the greater part of the stout pony on which he rode. Through the window Thornton saw him as he approached the house, and identifying him by the cloak, then peculiar to Irishmen above a certain class, went out to meet him. Having summoned a servant to take his horse, he brought Mr. Wall into the house, and into the great unfinished drawing-room, where Mrs. Thornton was sewing, Barbara practicing her scales, half a dozen young negro girls knitting, and

two others mingling the hum of spinning-wheels with the music. As the music ceased and Mrs. Thornton rose to receive the stranger, he presented a very modest but well-bred air and a blushing face. Mr. Wall was evidently a very diffident person. After a short interval and the exchange of the usual commonplaces, Mrs. Thornton dismissed her working corps, whose eyes were all stretched upon the stranger, and she and Barbara withdrew, leaving Thornton and Mr. Wall for a private conference.

Divested of his capacious cloak Mr. Wall presented a very slight but well-formed figure, below medium height, fair complexion with little color, light flaxen hair, clear open blue eyes, irregular but agreeable features, the most conspicuous of these being the mouth, which was large, exposing at all times, except when in absolute repose, rows of short, white, even teeth. The result of the conference, which was soon over, was an agreement that Mr. Wall should remain at Lastlands for a week or longer, see the place and its environment, and then they would determine between them whether an engagement for a year would be mutually agreeable. Then Mr. Wall was shown to a room and Thornton joined Barbara and his wife, who were both favorably impressed by his modesty and his general appearance. Soon Mrs. Scudamore joined them, and there was an assembly of all the small Lastlands household in conference. Great interest in the near prospect of having a competent teacher in the house was felt and expressed by all. But this conference, like those premature public meetings we often see convoked by sentiment, without facts upon which to ground a resolution, was soon dissolved without action; Barbara going back to her piano, and the others to their usual avocations.

The rain continuing, Mr. Wall and Thornton were kept together all day within doors. Thornton found him to be possessed of various knowledge, besides those branches specified in his advertisement. He was a botanist, with a general knowledge of the natural sciences, and of natural history. Indeed, there seemed to be no field of knowledge into which he had not entered, and what in that day was considered important, having lived several years on the

Continent, he was supposed in French to have acquired the true Parisian accent. Such seemed the extent of his attainments, that Thornton could not forbear the suspicion that he professed too much. But he had not paraded his acquirements. They had been drawn out naturally by Thornton, leading the conversation into various fields, with a view to test his general intelligence. The only accomplishment which he could be said to have made known without being prompted by Thornton, was one lying out of the usual path of scholars, cryptography, and the art of deciphering hieroglyphic writing. And this, though the least valuable of all, was the one upon which alone he did seem to plume himself; taking out from his pocket-book and exhibiting a printed slip, cut from an Irish newspaper, stating the fact that Mr. John Wall had deciphered one of the ancient Irish charters, and complimenting him upon his skill in that subtle art.

At dinner, and at the tea-table, all eyes were naturally observant of him. He could not but be conscious of this, and of being on probation, and his natural diffidence aggravated by this made him silent, blushing, and awkward. One thing more was plain to all, he was a great tea drinker. But in the course of the long evening, which he passed in the midst of the family circle, he was drawn into talk by Thornton's unconventional ways, and the tact of Mrs. Thornton, and at the end had grown in favor with all, the ladies being for him unanimously. Thornton had no longer any doubt of the reality of his attainments; but that a man with such various solid acquirements should seek a place so far away from the centers of learning, and be content to take, at a moderate salary, the place of a teacher of children in a country house, seemed to be inexplicable, and invested Mr. Wall with something of mystery. Nevertheless, next day he engaged him, and he was soon after installed as teacher at Lastlands. There was no mystery in the case; Mr. Wall was all he claimed to be, and more. He was a scholar, without ambition, save for others. Full of knowledge, it was his delight to impart this to the young. To this he continued for years to devote himself, a noble missionary at Lastlands. In this lay all the happiness of

his life. No purer or livelier sense of delight ever illumined a mortal face than shone in his, when he saw in the countenance of the scholar the responsive light that announced the ready comprehension of what he taught.

His first step in teaching was to organize the whole little band of scholars in a class in Natural History. After a few general lectures before the blackboard, in which were explained the various divisions of the animal kingdom, illustrated by outlines showing their structure, from the simple worm up to the complex form of man, they were taken into the open air, where the common living things about the plantation were studied by actual observation. The birds soon became absorbing objects of study, their various forms and coloring and plumage; and they were promised new subjects in the spring, when other birds that pass their winters in the South should return to their summer home, and when all of them, their habits, their songs, and their nesting would be delightful to observe. Only the popular names of these birds were used in these early lessons, the technicalities being all reserved for a later day, when curiosity should stir the scholars to a desire for more particular knowledge. It was not long until Barbara and the other zealous scholars knew well all the birds about Lastlands, their habits, and their characteristic traits; and they were promised a new field, when spring and summer should open to their observation the various inhabitants of the branch and the Anser. One day in every week was devoted to this outdoor study, and this day proved always a delightful holiday.

Birds had long been to Barbara objects of great interest and eager observation. It had been a custom at Lastlands, in Reginald Thornton's day, in winter, to spread food for them near a window of the breakfast-room, and this was still observed. Sitting still by the window, with food placed on the sill, Barbara got a close view of these birds, often looking, as she said, "right into their eyes"; and in her rambles she had made intimate acquaintance with many. One cold day, late in the afternoon, she asked Mr. Wall where the little sap-suckers slept in winter, and when he answered, "In holes in the dead limbs of trees," she



shook her head negatively, and said, "Come and let me show you." And then she led him out to a rail fence, and peering along it, at last mounted upon the top rail, and passing her hand along the leaning stake, drew out from a hole in the underside a little sap-sucker, and put it into his hand. And then, having returned the bird to its bed, she found another and another, satisfying Mr. Wall as to the fact, and delighting him with this proof of her nice observation. He did not claim to be a professional ornithologist, and he promised himself now the acquisition of much particular knowledge of birds, in studying them with such an accurate and zealous observer as Barbara. With Wilson's American Ornithology and Bewick's British Birds as text-books, both master and scholar became in time accomplished ornithologists.

## CHAPTER XV

### OULD AND BARBARA

"The birds sit chittering in the thorn:  
A' day they fare but sparely."

ON A Saturday in the latter part of February, when the ground was white with snow, and a leaden sky promised more, Mr. Ould had gone to Lastlands. He went in behalf of Joe Sterrett, of whom he bore intelligence that greatly pained Thornton. Sterrett's success with his great horse Ormus had infatuated him with racing. He had incurred great expense in fitting up training stables and a track at Oakleigh, and expended large sums in brood mares, contemplating breeding and racing on an extended scale. The association of the turf had proved damaging to him in many ways, but worst of all in bringing him into a habit of drink. He was now in debt, all his ready money gone, his racing stable mortgaged, and an execution in the hands of the sheriff for sixteen hundred dollars, to satisfy which a levy had just been made on four of his slaves at Oakleigh, which were to be sold. Ould desired Thornton to buy these and hold them for redemption by Sterrett, if desired.

"But I have no money," said Thornton.

"I know that, but you can easily have it, by taking from McIntyre money left with him for your use by Dick, all of which is at your discretion. You have not been willing, I know, except for purposes in the interest of the Lastlands property, to use this, because of McIntyre's constant talk about economy, and putting on the airs of a custodian. He has offended your pride. I understand it all, and I have not blamed you for this self-denial in behalf of personal independence. But you will sacrifice this for such a friend as Sterrett. Captain Shelby is ill. He does not know of

this matter. He is already distressed on account of Sterrett's bad habits, and though he would quickly discharge the debt, a knowledge of this would add greatly to his discomfort. Sterrett will not take the money as a loan. You once refused to accept his aid in that way, and nothing would now induce him to become a borrower from you. But he will be glad if you will attend the sale, and buy the slaves, and thus save them from the uncertain fate of slaves sold from the block. He dreads that the negro traders may come and buy them, and he is especially apprehensive that McCrae may contrive that they shall do so, as a matter of spite, hating Sterrett as one of your particular friends."

Thornton got up and walked the floor some moments with a clouded face. Turning suddenly to Ould he said, "Of course for this purpose I will get the money from McIntyre. You are right about my feeling in this case, but I would make any sacrifice of pride or of mere sentiment—any proper sacrifice—in such a case as this. I will give you an order on McIntyre for whatever sum may be necessary." This was accordingly done, allowing a good margin for the contingencies of a sale at auction, and the subject was dismissed.

The friends had not had a chat for many months, and now held a long private talk in the snug library. Thornton found himself asking a thousand questions about his friends and ignoring his foes, about people to whom he was indifferent, showing uncommon interest in the town, which he had not visited since his removal, and which he had bitterly forsworn. At last, laughing, he said, "My talk is like Master Shallow's, Bob, all questions. There is a strange inconsistency in my thoughts. My life here is so regular and busy that time goes by imperceptibly. There is but a narrow gap between my life here and in town, yet when I look back it seems a long way off; and still I feel as if all things must be standing there just as I left them. Your announcement of the death of the old watchman startled me as an extraordinary event, and I find myself moralizing upon it much in Master Shallow's way: 'And old Double's dead!'"

"Time is a mystery," replied Ould, "and travels, as the

great poet tells us, at different paces with different persons in diverse circumstances. From your questions, you like to hear of the town as you like to look from the window of this snug room at the snow-storm, congratulating yourself that you are out of it."

"Since you interpret me so charitably I will go on with my inquiries. With whom does Sterrett consort—who are his cronies?"

"Now that the race horses are in winter quarters, his cronies are idle drinking men. Funnel is his especial favorite. They meet with the regularity of the clock, and drink, and smoke, and dree over the same threadbare topics: cigars, and the different brands of wine and brandy, receipts for punch and salads and made dishes, and such rubbish."

"Yes, I know. I was of that company once. I can hear Funnel now saying, 'I know a brandy!' with such unction as another would say, 'I know a bank whereon the wild thyme blows.'"

"Isn't it astonishing," said Ould, "to see into how small a compass the thoughts of a cultivated, capable man like Sterrett may be contracted by idleness and drink? Moving in a microscopical arena and imagining himself to be enjoying the delights of social intercourse and—friendship! But it is not for me to talk; for I am a sinner too, a conscious sinner. But I never seek companionship in drink. I sin alone. If I take to companions then they are sure to be clean out of my ordinary associates. In the first stage I am in such a sublimated state that I want no associate, and avoid all humanity. In the next I go among the gamblers. Then if I could find a band of savages I would consort with them. At last I am stranded in a slough, with monkeys, and rats, and lizards, and toads, and terrible non-descripts, all as real to me as the chairs and books in this room. And there lies a mystery physiological or psychological, for which I can find no solution, but only make obscure and terrible conjectures. But enough of this." And here he rose and walked about the room.

"Bob Ould," said Thornton, earnestly, "did you ever make a serious resolution to quit drink forever?"



“Often,” said Ould, turning about suddenly. “Have quit it forever, as I thought. But it comes back to me,—don’t say I go back to it,—it comes back to me, not in the ordinary forms of temptation that revive the appetite in most men; for mine is not a sensual nor a social craving: it comes to me in solitude, suddenly, in a wild tempest that sweeps me away. Come, let us take a walk.”

“But it is snowing.”

“You don’t mind that?”

“No, but you?”

“I like it above all things, sometimes, and this is one of the times.”

Thornton complied, and putting on their heavy great-coats with ample capes, they walked away through the falling snow, down to the Anser, now flowing full, and black between its snowy banks, and along it to the footbridge, where they stopped to observe some wildfowl, a flock of crested megansers, fishing and disporting in the cold stream. Thence they went across the water, and up the gradual, long acclivity to the great woods, where they found no living thing abroad, and after half an hour of aimless walking, retraced their steps, and throwing off their heavy coats in the hall, and exchanging their boots for slippers, Ould, now in high glee, called Barbara to come and play Mozart, while he stretched himself with half-closed eyes upon a lounge to listen. Barbara played for some time, and then, suddenly looking at the clock, bounded from her seat, and spite of Ould’s protest, went away saying, “I must feed my hens and the birds.” These last were already fluttering about the windows.

Then Mrs. Thornton came into the room with her knitting, and they fell to talking about music. Readers will remember that this was a day of false sentiment: when, as the great rough critic says, all literature lay sprawling and puking in Wertherism and Byronism, which infected everything. In a state of tender dissolution and thaw, the beaux hung over the belles while they sang maudlin, sentimental songs at the piano: “We met, ’twas in a crowd, and I thought he would shun me”—or according to Russell’s interpolation, “thought he would shoot me.”

"Oh, no, we never mention him, his name is never heard"—etc. The ideal lover was a cadaverous man with a high forehead, looking as if the "iron had entered into his soul," or a gentle melancholy invalid, with a soft voice and a general "lute and flute fantastic tenderness." Even McIntyre, robust as he was, when a Virginia belle paid a visit to The Falls, and caught him in her meshes, fell into the prevailing mood, and used to stand by her at the piano and sing duets; she piping in her soft voice,

"If there be one spark, oh, fan it to a fla-m-e,

while he responded through his nose, as through a trumpet,

"Give her more pit-ee, or me less pai-n-n-e";

All which, looking back upon it now, seems most absurd.

Ould puzzled himself to know why music should give so much pleasure to him, who could not turn any tune, even the simplest—not even "Hail Columbia" or "The Star Spangled Banner." "I cannot tell how it is," he said, "they say I have no ear, yet I love Barbara's music. I believe that Russell and Stackpole are in a conspiracy to depreciate me, on this score, because I don't like the sentimental ballads they sing—'O leave the gay and festive scene,' and all such stuff. Barbara's music is full of charming caprices, and leads me through a variety of delightful moods into a world of enchantment. I make my own libretto,—I believe you call it that,—and I fancy myself, for the time, both musician and poet. I cannot analyze this influence; it is too subtle, and eludes the grasp, as those gauzy dreams do that come between sleeping and waking. But that rubbish of Russell's, and his favorite song!" Here, in a monotonous chant, he recited these verses of a song then in fashion:

"O, leave the gay and festive scene,  
The halls, the halls of dazzling light,  
And roam with me through forests green,  
Beneath the moon's pale light.  
I'll tell thee how the maiden wept  
When her true knight was slain,

And how her broken spirit slept,  
And never woke again.  
I'll tell thee how the steed drew nigh,  
And left his lord afar—  
But if my tale should make thee sigh,  
I'll strike the light guitar.' ”

Here he rose from the lounge with a roar of laughter, crying out, “Can anything be more absurd?”

But Mrs. Thornton did not agree with him. That good lady was fond of sentimental songs, and the vague touches of chivalry and romance in this had made it a favorite with her. “I think,” she said, “that is a beautiful song; and Mr. Russell sings it with so much feeling.”

“He, the humbug!” said Ould; “why, he’s laughing all the time in his sleeve, at its nonsense.”

“But, Mr. Ould, all love songs are nonsensical, if you scan them too closely, as all love scenes and love speeches are—for the most part. But it is enough for young people if they only suggest love and romance, and have a good air. These cover all the faults of the poetry. How comes it that you remember this so well, if it is so poor a song?”

“That’s another puzzle, but I suppose it is only one more instance of the ingrained perversity of man, that he is sure to think most of what he tries to shut out from his mind. Themistocles, you know, prayed in vain for a faculty of forgetting. The air is indeed a good one, as songs go, but what is the air of any of these songs? A few bars sung over and over to a dozen verses. But I know, Mrs. Thornton, that I am only depreciating myself by differing with you in this. Thornton, don’t sit there laughing, but come to my rescue. What do you say?”

“Mr. Ould, I have nothing to say. Mrs. Thornton knows the youthful heart, for which these songs were written, better than you or I; and she tells you that they answer their purpose. I am not going to get into this controversy. I know too well the strength and the—constancy of your adversary. Besides, I am committed long ago to all her opinions on this subject, not only by word of mouth but by overt acts, and I am bound to stand with her. What do you say to this bit of love and chivalry?” And then Thornton sang with great spirit:

“O, give me back my Arab steed,  
My shield and falchion bright,  
That I may to the battle speed,  
And save him in the fight.”

“The wise man says,” replied Ould, “‘Speak to a man according to his idols.’ But I have only to say, that I hope some day to see a better quality of songs; when, instead of the iteration of a few bars, we shall have in the ballad a musical theme wrought out within a small compass, as in short poems a poetical theme is wrought out, complete and full in expression. These will be the real gems of music, as short poems are now the real gems of poetry, and the union of these may make the ideal song of the future.”

“I shall be glad to see that day,” said Thornton, “but I am not hopeful about it. Russell will be out some day this week, and will be sure to bring the latest song, so we shall see if there has been any advance. Have you heard him sing ‘Wake, dearest, wake,’ and ‘Again united’?”

“No,” said Ould, grinning, “and if he comes out while I am here and you let him sing it, I shall consider it a breach of hospitality. But I am going to look up Barbara and bring her back to play more of Mozart, and drive off all that rubbish.” Then he went away out of doors.

And here this chronicler cannot forbear to avail himself of the opportunity to express his full sympathy with Mr. Ould. Not to criticise these sentimental love songs, which have had their day, but to lament that they have been succeeded by worse songs, by maudlin lamentations over old arm-chairs and old well buckets, and superannuated things in general; and these in turn by doleful ditties that recall the inevitable distressful incidents of life, “The Vacant Chair”; “The Empty Cradle,” etc.; where, though the title suggests all that can be said, the inexorable minstrel yet goes on anatomizing our sorrows for us, “piling up the agony,” taking a mean advantage—as if a man meeting a Swiss exile, not content with reminding him of William Tell and Chamounix, should get him into a corner, and sing to him the Ranz des Vaches.

Barbara was found by Mr. Ould, after a little search, on the south side of the house, where was laid down a platform



of boards, from which the snow was kept carefully swept, and upon which, at fixed hours every day, food for the birds, scraps and crumbs from the table, and Indian corn, and the screenings of wheat, were punctually spread. Barbara had learned from old Kirby how important it is to all domesticated animals to have their food punctually served, and she was always strictly observant of this lesson, in feeding her hens, and now also the birds. Punctuality was strictly observed in all the affairs of Lastlands, and it was the absolute reverence in which the practice was held by her that had sent Barbara away from the piano against Ould's protest, as she now explained to him.

A great throng of birds of many varieties were gathered about the board as Ould approached, when they all took flight. There were blue-jays; and cardinal grosbeaks, and many varieties of woodpeckers and their congeners the sapsuckers, and sparrows, and spry little wrens with short hoisted tails, and goldfinches, now in sober winter plumage, and snow-birds with pale indefinite coloring and apathetic northern manners. The smaller birds soon recovered from their fright, and, not without some shyness at the coming of a stranger, returned to the food, while the cardinals and the blue-jays held aloof, like social lions at a soiree, "hovering distinguished."

Mr. Ould having read Wilson's Ornithology, and knowing Audubon personally, felt that he might claim some knowledge of birds, and began to discourse upon those before him. "Those blue-jays," said he, "are birds of very bad character. Like their kinsmen, the crows, they are rogues and plunderers. They invade the nests of other birds, and destroy the eggs and the young and the nests. If I were in authority at Lastlands, I would have them all killed."

"I know their wicked ways," said Barbara; and then she told how Mrs. Thornton while at Lastlands in the time of Reginald Thornton, sitting under the "Bible tree" (a shady beech, where in summer she had taught the little blacks their Scripture lessons), saw something dropped from the branches above which proved to be the wreck of a dove's nest, and, to her horror, fragments of the limbs of young birds murdered and devoured by marauding jays. "I told

Uncle Rob about them," she added, "but he said that if the jays were driven away or killed we should get no raspberries nor cherries nor currants, for the many catbirds that would swarm about the place. He says the jays are made to keep down the catbirds and other small birds. It seems hard for the poor small birds though, doesn't it, Mr. Ould?"

Ould was mightily tempted here to launch into wide waters, and discourse of that inexorable law by which, in the economy of nature, the various creatures of the earth are constrained to live by devouring one another. But he instinctively recoiled from presenting to the mind of Barbara the grim picture of "Nature red in tooth and claw," or of suggesting that awful and inscrutable question, "What is the purpose of all the pain with which the world is filled?" And so he kept silent, assenting by a nod, and looking with new interest into the young girl's sweet face and wonderful eyes.

Then she pointed out to him the woodpeckers and sapsuckers, and called his attention to the fact that these are all bow-legged. To which Ould replied that this conformation was favorable to their habit of climbing about the limbs of trees, and made further observations upon the chisel form of their beaks, by which they puncture the bark of trees, and upon their barbed tongues with which they draw out the worms that lie hid there; keeping up as well as he could his credit as ornithologist. At last she pointed out the goldfinches. "Goldfinches!" exclaimed Ould. "Oh, no, those are not goldfinches. Goldfinches are bright yellow and black. They are all away in the South now."

But she adhered to her statement, explaining that they were now in winter feathers, but would come out in all their glory in the spring; and showed so much real knowledge that he forbore further pretensions as an ornithologist, and having got a lesson where he expected to give one, he led her back into the house. There he resumed the subject, saying, "I believe with your help we may make a pretty illustration of the calendar, representing the months by birds and an appropriate scene. When you think of the

winter, in summertime, don't you think also of the birds that belong to winter?"

"Yes, even a picture of winter, in a book, puts me in mind of the winter birds; and I don't think a Christmas picture good at all if it hasn't got the cardinal, as you call the redbird, in it."

"Well, what bird shall represent January, and what shall be the scene?"

"The snow-birds will do for that, with snow on the shrubbery weighing it down."

"What for February?"

"Oh, the bluebird sitting on a stake, or flying before you from post to post, and whistling, 'Don't you see me? I've come back'; and trying to make you notice him."

Ould grinned with delight as he set this down. "And for March?"

"The blackbird for March, with his pretty song 'cher-o-ke-e-e'; and for the scene, the burning of cornstalks and the men ploughing for corn."

"April?" After long consideration Barbara could name no bird peculiar to April and it was passed by.

"Very well, for May?"

"For May? The cock partridge on a stump or a rail, with his loud 'Bob White' smacking from his lips."

"And June?"

"June? June—oh, the swallows dipping over the water."

"July?"

"The yellowhammers, with their broods, among the stumps in the new clearing."

"August? That's the place for my goldfinches; isn't it?"

"Well, yes—you may put them there; they are in the lanes then, in the dust and the thistledown."

"Yes, in the hot lane blazing with dust and thistledown. And what for September?"

"Oh, doves and stacks of hemp."

"Yes, troops of turtledoves and stacks of hemp; and I say for October, birds of all sorts flocking." And she assented.

"November? I say wildfowl, and wedges of geese on the wing."

"For November?" she said, meditating. "If you hadn't already put him down in May, I should like to have the partridge with his brood here. You don't often see him then, but I love to hear his call at dusk, bringing together his flock for the night. It has such a sweet, sad sound then."

"Oh, yes, I dare say," said Ould, laughing. "His jolly bachelor days are over then, and he sings a melancholy song, with a wife and a flock of children about him."

"I don't think it melancholy, but only anxious; for we don't know but some of the children are missing. And then it may be the mother that calls—yes, I am sure it must be the mother. Anyhow, it seems in tune with the season of the year and the time of the day. It always puts me in mind of the men chopping at the woodpile down at the quarter, and the black children gathering chips, and the red firelight in the windows of the house and in the cabin doors."

"Yes, that's all very pretty," said Ould, with a delighted face, "but we couldn't get it all into a picture. No, I think Bob White does better as a dandy beau than as a family man, and family cares are not poetical. And now for December?"

"Oh, the redbird for December,—the cardinal as you call him,—with holly trees and berries, or Indian arrow with its scarlet buttons."

"Yes, my Lord Cardinal Grosbeak for December; and that completes our calendar. And now I believe we might mark, if not the hours, at least the watches of the night, by the crowing of the cocks and the cry of owls."

"Oh, don't let us have any owls. They are hateful birds! Before Uncle Rob had a house made for my hens, when they slept in the trees, the owls carried them off. Such a pitiful cry as the poor fowls made when the owls were about, I never heard. One night they all flew down from the trees and ran to the house, and into the lighted hall for safety. Even Mr. Kirby hates the owls, and the yellow-legged hawks, the kites. He says they are sneaks and thieves. But the red-tailed hawk that catches his hens sometimes is so handsome and so bold, and makes the



other hawks stand off so, that he half likes him, as we do the good robber in the 'Children in the Wood.'"

Unused to young girls, and therefore with a daintier sense of their sweet ways, Ould was much moved by this prattle of Barbara. He looked at her with misty eyes, and putting both hands upon her head with an air of benediction, said "Come, now, and play for me again." And she whirled about her seat at the piano and played, while he reclined, courting once more the enchantment of Mozart.

The reader has, perhaps, had something too much of talk about birds. Yet this chronicler cannot withhold, while Mr. Ould is listening to Mozart, a word in behalf of the owl. While the nightingale and the rook, and the lark, and other foreign birds have been celebrated by our poets, the owl, nowhere finer than in America, has not had justice at their hands. Dwelling under the dominion of Hecate and the night, and the influence of the stars, and associated with the vague, unreal terrors of darkness, this bird would seem a valuable accessory to poetry. Yet the poets use him but seldom and for the most part only conventionally. Perhaps because they do not know him; for poets are not all naturalists, and some of them have made sad blunders in dealing with the birds. Of the owls they seem to know but one, a little mousing European bird which, with its cry, "too-whit, too-whoo," has become the conventional owl of poetry. But there be owls and owls, as we that have dwelt in the wilds well know. Has ever the reader, while walking alone through the woods at night, heard the ghostly cry of the laughing owl? Or has he seen in the light of the waning moon the great horned owl, with wings and tail outspread in a circle, wheel over him in noiseless flight, or heard his elfish scream? And if so, has he not wondered that they make so poor a figure in poetry? Shakespeare employs this last great bird at times, and one American poet must have had him in mind while writing these lines:

"When twilight fades and evening falls  
Alike on tree and tower,  
And Silence, like a pensive maid,  
Walks round each slumbering bower;  
When fragrant flowrets fold their leaves,  
And all is still in sleep,

The horned owl on moonlit wing  
Flies from his donjon keep.  
And he cries aloud, 'Too-whit—too-whoo,'  
And the nightingale is still,  
And the pattering step of the hurrying hare  
Is hushed upon the hill;  
And he crouches low in the dewy grass  
As the lord of the night goes by,  
Not with a loud and whirring wing,  
But like a lady's sigh."

Surely there is here genuine poetry. But it is marred and almost spoiled by conventionalities. In all our land there is no nightingale, and there is no owl that cries "too-whit—too-whoo." Doubtless the poet had in mind the great horned owl, for to none other can be fairly given that fine title "lord of the night." But no greater solecism can be committed than to put into his mouth such ornithological cant as "too-whit—too-whoo." He has his own ample vocabulary; three distinct cries. First a piercing whine heard far away through the night; second an elfish shriek, "waugh-ach, waugh-ach, waugh-ach" (with which he often descends within the light of the hunter's campfire), frightful enough to alarm a garrison; and last his normal cry, or song, with which he salutes the waning night, "Boof—boof! Boof—boof! (this last a tremolo), sounding afar like the tolling of a great bell, sending a tremor through the woods. This is the owl of Shakespeare when he has the buskin on; the owl that screamed in the hour of Duncan's murder; "the fatal bellman which gives the stern'st good-night."

Why will our American poets adhere to these conventionalities? Why should the crow be less fit for poetry than the rook? Why go abroad for the nightingale, while we have at home the mocking-bird? And why, oh why, shall a little European, mousing owl speak for all the owls the world over? Can it be that our poets, like Mr. Crummles in the provincial theater, play only to the "London manager"?

It is this adherence to conventionalities, which comes of writing from books instead of nature, that has given to American poetry its second-hand complexion, and made it for the most part but a pale reflex of the poetry of other lands.

## CHAPTER XVI

### A MILITARY FUNERAL

"Is the God present, felt in my own heart, a thing which Herr von Voltaire will dispute out of me, or dispute into me? This is belief; all else is opinion—for which latter, whoso will, let him worry and be worried."

To THE busy household at Lastlands—Mrs. Thornton busy with her corps of knitters and spinners, and Barbara busy with her lessons and music—another winter had passed rapidly away. Already in February, on the sunny slopes of the pastures along the Anser, had appeared, evoked by the winter sun, the bright green of the blue-grass, beguiling the eye with a semblance of spring, while that coy nymph was still far away; and in March, on the little island in the stream, and in springy spots where only willows grew, had been seen the earliest glint of her eye. But toward the end of March frost and snows had intervened, and she seemed to have fled back to the South. And now with a sudden change to sunshine and soft southerly winds, April seemed to spring right out of the frozen breast of the dead winter. A week of continuous good weather had made the pastures all green, the ground was warm to the touch at midday, and the Anser was running clear and brimming, when Mr. Ould and John D. and Buttons made their appearance at Lastlands. Mr. Ould had come for the change of scene, and John D. and Buttons to fish for "suckers" in grounds already baited by old Adam. It was Friday evening, and on Sunday they would go back to town.

Next morning, while preparing for the sport, a ball of sea-grass brought out by John D. to be put on a new reel, was missing, and though diligently sought, could nowhere

be found. It was discovered at last in the possession of Barbara's cat, who had carried it off, and after having tossed it about to her heart's content, had entangled herself in the line, and in her efforts to get free had involved it in a thousand knots and involutions. John D. having long tried in vain to disentangle it, was about to solve the problem with his knife, when Ould came upon the scene. "Stop. What are you about?" he cried. "The line will be spoiled if you cut it."

"I can't untangle it," said John D.

"But you can, if you will have patience; give it to me." Then Mr. Ould took the line and after a time returned it to him all wound smoothly in a ball. This simple lesson in patience the young man never forgot.

When they returned from fishing, John D., seeing Barbara on the lawn, with the cat on her arm, went toward her to show his string of fish. As he drew near she wore a serious face, and when he reached out to take her cat she held it away on one arm, while with the other she warded him off. "Did you want to kill my cat," she said, "because she tangled your line? Buttons says you did."

"No, Barb, I wouldn't hurt your cat nor anything that is yours. I love your cat, and your hens, and your pigeons, and everything that is yours, even your doll Mary Ormsby. Buttons had no business to tell you of my foolish speech. He knew I had no notion of hurting your cat."

"Well," said Buttons, who stood by, "you had no business to say you were going to kill her, if you had no notion of doing it. I like to see a fellow *do* a thing, when he says he's going to do it, like Bradstreet."

"Bradstreet!" exclaimed John D. "What do you know about Bradstreet?"

"I know enough about Bradstreet. I know when we were coming with him from the woods that hot day, and were going home with him to eat popcorn, and he saw a big grasshopper fly up before him on the commons, and he said, 'I'm going to kill that hopper,' he went after it, and chased it away across the commons, and across a field, and out of sight, and we got tired of waiting for him there, and went to his house and waited in the kitchen——"



"Yes, I remember," exclaimed John D., taking the story out of the mouth of Buttons. "Oh, Barb, it was too funny! Katy, the cook, wouldn't put on the corn till he came, and we waited a long time, and were thinking of giving him up and going home, when he came bursting into the kitchen, puffing and blowing, and out of breath, and stammered out, 'Katy—popcorn—grasshopper—killed him at last!' Bradstreet was a foolish fellow to keep such an idle promise made to himself, as you are now, Mr. Buttons, to praise him for it. A person can't do a better thing than to break such a promise, except never to make one. Old B. knows better than that now."

Barbara was pleased by John D.'s disclaimer and its wise, moral tone with which he concluded, and now let him take her cat on his arm, when it began at once to reach out for the fishes, its eyes glowing with fierce eagerness at the sight of them. Then John D., taking off a fish, gave it to her, when she began to struggle violently in his hands, and being set down upon the ground, quickly bore the fish away into the shrubbery, her tail held straight aloft, every hair erect, growling like a little tigress. Barbara and John D. then walked away together, going by the kitchen to leave the fish there, and thence into the old garden, where they found the gardener and old Adam dressing the beds of peonies and bleeding hearts and the long rows of old-fashioned hardy roses.

John D. and Ould, as well as Buttons, were surprised and pleased at the increased liveliness imparted to Lastlands by the accession of Mrs. Scudamore and Paul, and Mr. Wall, and had listened with delight to the music by Barbara and the old violoncello player. They found their visit only too short, and resolved that it should soon be repeated.

Barbara was fast growing in importance in the Lastlands household. For a long time before the removal of Thornton to the country he and his wife had well-nigh given up all hope of offspring. The wife, had choice been given her, would have had a son. Barbara was sufficient as a daughter, but a son would have filled full the measure of her happiness. Having so long craved this blessing, she fell

into an innocent cheat upon herself, putting upon Barbara jackets and a cap and feather, and calling her "our young prince." And Thornton, falling in with this, had been accustomed to take her, thus attired, to drive with him in his gig, and to ride on horseback, and, providing her with suitable apparel of flannel, had taught her to swim and to dive like a duck. She brought this bathing attire to Lastlands, where she had once promised herself in the summer great pleasure in the clear pools of the Anser. But she had put it away with other male attire. When that princely merchant and "preux chevalier"—that Irish gentleman, Mr. Robert Ormsby, brought to her from Philadelphia a splendid doll, named in his honor Mary Ormsby (now held in due respect by all Lastlands, and, to the delight of young Africa, still accustomed to make royal processions through the quarter), when she had given all her time, with the aid of her aunt (who still preserved the doll of her own childhood), to dressing and adorning that young lady of porcelain and kid, she had thrown off cap and feather and other male insignia, and repudiated the name she bore in her character of "young prince," and put an end to it, as Rob Roy did to *his* assumed name, when he said, "Campbell me no more, my name's Mac-Gregor." But she did this with a speech as gentle and feminine as Rob's was robust and manly, but quite as effective. Ever after she was known only by feminine appellatives, which, like the name of Sir John Falstaff, varied with the persons by whom she was addressed. She was "dear Barbara" to Thornton and his wife, "Barb" to John D. and other intimates, "Eyes" (short for All-eyes) to Buttons, "Miss Barbara" to the servants and to old Kirby and the "hill people," and "Miss Peyton" to all the outside world.

She had long borne singular sway in the Thornton household—not only through the love they bore her, but by her intuitive sense of right and wrong. It was not often that any grave occasion called for the exercise of this fine faculty, and her judgment was employed chiefly in deciding upon the grievances of the household servants, or their quarrels, all of which she determined like an

equity judge. But graver occasions did sometimes occur, and Thornton had come insensibly to test all these that were doubtful by an appeal to her. Strangers she did not favorably impress. They looked into her great, steady hazel-gray eyes (lustrous indeed, but so big), and at her large mouth, full of glistening white teeth, but so large; her black hair streaked with sunburned locks; her tall, slender shape, in which a sculptor would have rejoiced to find a model for a naiad or a sylph, stately withal, but so slender; and at her usual unconventional garb, and set her down as an unpromising ward and probable heir of the house of Thornton. Moreover, though, from mere force of habit and imitation, she could go through the perfunctory salutations that welcome strangers, yet after these she was apt to lapse into silence, or to reply in monosyllables to such commonplaces as strangers are accustomed to address to young people. The hollowness of these she intuitively felt, and having no skill in commonplaces beyond the formal salutations learned by rote, she took refuge in reserve. But at such times she bore no trace of embarrassment, nor of the bored look which is apt then to take possession of young people, nor of that melancholy which often comes even upon mature people brought into contact with "society," and depressed by its continuous empty, affected chatter. Only quiet repose possessed Barbara then, which nothing could disturb, which, while it repelled persistence in this factitious trifling, was resentfully interpreted as dullness. Thus the angel of the Thornton household—a cygnet wanting only time to unfold its snowy plumes—was, in the eyes of the mob of acquaintances, an idol of clay or an "ugly duck."

At no time had Thornton's household been accustomed at home to any form of religious exercise; not even to the perfunctory form of giving thanks or asking a blessing at meals. Perhaps because it was perfunctory. In town he had held a pew in the church and had always made liberal contribution to enterprises connected with it. His wife and Barbara were regular attendants, and Barbara was a member of the Bible-class. But Thornton seldom went to church. Not, as Ould said, from any lack of religious

feeling, but from a natural want of demonstrativeness, and as to this, almost absolute reserve. "No man," he said, "has stronger feeling than he, and no man that I know makes so little manifestation of it. As to reverence, he shows this in a habit of ejaculatory prayer, the most genuine of all prayer, coming right from the heart. Shakespeare knew this. In all profane letters is there any prayer like that ejaculatory one of Ophelia for Hamlet in his distracted state?—'Help him, YE SWEET HEAVENS!' It is both praise and prayer. Nay,

"Prayer is the burden of a sigh,  
The falling of a tear,  
The upward glancing of an eye,  
When none but God is near."

No one intimate with Thornton can fail to know that he is full of reverence. There are men incapable of manifesting all their feelings, and he is one of them. Let him alone and he will come all right in time, and show the faith that is in him."

Mrs. Thornton and Barbara missed in the country the religious services to which they had been accustomed in town. The stillness of Sunday, unbroken by the sound of church bells, was an emphatic reminder of these. Except the stopping of the work of the plantation, there was nothing to indicate the holy day. Even in the conduct of the wild denizens of the woods and the fields, the squirrels and the birds, eagerly pursuing the business of their lives, the search for food, unconscious of the day, there was something that impressed Barbara with the Godlessness of country life. She had spoken of this to her aunt, and they, with Mrs. Scudamore, had consulted together, and concluded that the wife ought to speak to Thornton about it, and suggest some form of household worship. Accordingly, she did sound him upon the subject, by asking him if he did not miss the church bells. "Miss them?" he replied. "Yes indeed, and I am glad to miss their iron clang. I lived too long close by two churches not to miss them; two sextons in rivalry trying to ring each other out, while others, in different keys, all jangled out of tune,



figured in to help the confusion." This reply discouraged the wife, and she said no more, but as Ould had advised, let him alone.

What was it that led to the use of iron bells for summoning people to the worship of God? Shakespeare says, "the never merry clock." May we not as well say, "the ever doleful bell," the "dreadful bell," that can "fright an isle from its propriety"; the signal in all ages and in all countries of some dire calamity—the scenic premonition, on the stage, of some incident of terror; a grievous annoyance to the sick, an engine of torture to such as have disordered nerves!

"In the silence of the night,  
How we shiver with affright  
At the melancholy menace of their tone!  
For every sound that floats  
From the rust within their throats  
Is a groan."

Far different are the minster bells—sweet bells *not* jangled out of tune, but in accord, and in harmony with the feeling inspired by the holy day; "a music that can never be forgotten; which the convert knows not how he can forego." Can it be that these rude, monotonous iron bells are the survival of that heathenish age which taught only by appeals to low motives; when terror was the main engine of the proselyter; when a God of love was unknown, and men knew only a God of vengeance?

At this time, a few days after Mr. Ould and John D. and Buttons went back to The Falls, died Captain Shelby; a man of singular benevolence, beloved by all. To the last he showed the same tenderness toward all creatures, even such as are commonly reckoned as pests, permitting no cat to enter his chamber, and saving on his plate crumbs "for the little mice." He was older than was generally supposed, his even temper and natural liveliness of disposition having preserved in him the savor of youth. A great concourse of people from The Falls and the surrounding country, and "all Lastlands," attended his burial at Oakleigh. As he had been a soldier of the Revolution, the officer in command of the recruiting station at The Falls

attended with a military escort, and paid the usual military honors. From this funeral Barbara returned strangely impressed by the ceremonial. All the way homeward she sat silent, in solemn meditation. Arrived at Lastlands, she went quickly into the house, when Thornton, impressed and disturbed by her unusual demeanor, followed after, and discovered her alone in the small parlor kneeling in prayer. Quickly he drew back, unseen, now in his turn stirred by unusual emotion at sight of the girl in solitary prayer.

Next morning when the household was assembled for breakfast, and about to sit down, Barbara, standing by her chair, said, in such a tone as at once arrested Thornton's attention: "Uncle!" and as he looked at her, "why don't you give thanks before meals? Captain Shelby always did it."

Thornton, looking into her eyes, after a momentary pause, answered, with manifest emotion, "I do not know any proper form of words."

"May I do it?"

"Certainly, dear Barbara." Then she bowed her head and gave thanks with such simple, tender grace as touched all hearts and was borne by the servants in waiting to the kitchen below, touching as well the emotional spirits there. Thenceforth this ceremonial was never omitted at Lastlands.

Afterward, when Ould, visiting there, witnessed this ceremony, supplemented by the previous reading of a chapter from the Bible, and when he and Thornton were alone together and Ould congratulated him upon the wholesome change, he answered apologetically: "Well, Barbara wanted it. In fact, I think it is a very good practice, if only for discipline. It makes them all come promptly for breakfast, which I was not able to enforce before." At which Ould smiled broadly, but did not pursue the subject further.

The incidents which seem to have led to this wholesome practice in the household, the military funeral and the sight of the young girl in solitary prayer, are both apt to stir the heart with strong and peculiar emotion. Whoever has seen the last only in the marble effigy of Pompolini

must have felt what it is. The other is now more familiar. Philosophers by "victorious analysis" will explain this emotion in both cases. They will attribute it to contrast—revulsion of feeling—reaction. In the case of the burial, the military escort, its "warlike appointment," its constrained, formal show of feeling, the led horse with empty saddle, the furled banner, the reversed arms, the muffled drum, are contrasted with the informal civic procession, the concourse of sorrowing friends, the free-flowing grief of the bereft household. In the other case the careless levity associated with early youth is contrasted with an act so solemn as speech addressed directly to God. They may further explain that in both cases the emotion is heightened by a sense of the beautiful, reminding us of that saying of Lord Bacon, that all exquisite beauty arises from some strangeness of proportion, and finding in these contrasts that strangeness of proportion. Nay, if the inquiry be pushed further, they will assure us that the peculiar emotion in these cases has its origin in an element no higher than that which wings the light arrows of wit, and pricks us to laughter—the incongruous—the surprising—the unexpected.

Having thus seen laid bare to view by victorious analysis, as by dissection, the secret springs of our emotion, shall we conclude that man is only an automaton, and the human heart, with its thousand complex chords, but a passive instrument, responsive as an *Æolian* harp to each extravagant and erring wind that wanders by? No, by no means! There is an easy answer to this sophistry. We know that with a few simple elements are wrought all the wonderful phenomena of life; that extremes meet; that even good pushed to extremity becomes evil; that here in the realm of metaphysics, as everywhere, Nature uses the same austere frugality, employing over again the same elements wrought into newer and more complex and higher combinations. But we need only to remind these philosophers of that good analytical chemist, but bad husband, who answered his weeping spouse, "Madam, tears are nothing to me. I have analyzed them. They are composed of—parts

of chloride of sodium—the rest water!” Perhaps we should waste upon them the admonition of the poet:

“Hold thou thy good, define it well,  
For fear divine Philosophy  
Should push beyond her work and be  
Procuress to the Lords of Hell.”

Alas! with all our pretentious “philosophy,” how little do we know of ourselves! Of the soul, who will say that he knows anything? And of the heart of which we talk so glibly—not the technical heart of the anatomist, that muscular pump with its weird automatic movement; this we may all explore and partly comprehend—but of that other mysterious entity, invisible, intangible, immaterial, permeating humanity and constituting its very essence—what do we know? We know that its chords stretch everywhere through and beyond the wide domain of human life, up to the throne of God, and, alas! down to the gates of hell. We know that it has a language everywhere intelligible, one syllable of which shows all the world akin, and that in this lies all the power of human speech and its mighty effects: not in what men call eloquence, but in feeling hot from the heart, whose phrase bears often such an emphasis as seems *indeed* to “conjure the wandering stars, and make them stand like wonder-wounded hearers.” A word in season—in the crisis of a battle or a debate—has decided the fate of nations. Nay, in default of words, a passionate, inarticulate shriek from a simple man in earnest to save British sailors from drowning in well insured but unseaworthy ships, silenced even the opposing mockery and jeers of a British House of Parliament, and achieved this end, and should make the name of Plimsol memorable forever.

We know further of this human heart that it is weak in isolation; that it has peculiar strength when two or more are together for some good end; that in multitudes it gathers increased reverberated power; that voiced by nations, its utterance is answered by nations, as deep answering unto deep, overwhelming potentates and powers and thrones and dynasties. For the rest, though we are told



that the heart of man is desperately wicked, yet are we taught also that out of it are the issues of life. Its vision is beyond the ken of logic and all that the mind conceives in the "mad pride of intellectuality." Through it alone we hold communion with things beyond this life on earth. Through it we know that "God is love:"

"I found him not in world or sun,  
Or eagle's wing, or insect's eye,  
Nor through the questions men may try,  
The petty cobwebs men have spun:

"If e'er, when faith had fall'n asleep,  
I heard a voice, 'Believe no more,'  
And heard an ever-breaking shore  
That tumbled in the godless deep—

"A warmth within the breast would melt  
The freezing reason's colder part,  
And, like a man in wrath, the heart  
Stood up and answer'd, 'I have felt.'"

## CHAPTER XVII

MAJOR TINSLEY

"Sir, you are very welcome to our home."

MUCH of Thornton's time had been passed in looking over his father's papers. He was surprised by the extent of his scheme for making a complete country home, and by the exactness with which he found his plans recorded and explained. A general map, on parchment, showed a subdivision of the Lastlands tract into three parcels. Of that parcel containing the homestead there was a particular subdivision into permanent pasture and arable lands, indication being made on the margin for a system of rotation in the crops of these last, the contents of each exactly stated in acres, poles and links, and the courses and distances of the lines of fencing accurately measured by compass and chain. All the wide valley through which the Anser wound, with the slopes on either side, were indicated as permanent pasture land. Clumps of young trees left there to grow, hickories and walnuts, and pecans, and hackberries, and box-elders, were all indicated. These had spread into luxuriant growth, and the valley now presented a delightful prospect. A large portion of the great wood on the north was indicated by a line, underscored as land from which "not a switch should be cut."

Of the orchards and the fruit gardens were found maps showing by numbered rows and an index where each variety stood; and in the same way was indicated even the shrubbery on the lawn.

Architectural work was shown in drawings of the unfinished mansion and the cattle barn, and a site was indicated for a herdsman's cottage. Many quarries had been opened, and dressed stones were scattered, at intervals, under the

shade of trees, in many places. By the branch, near the cattle barn, was a quarry, where in low water a fine layer of stone lay exposed, from which had been taken material for the barn and the abutments of a bridge over the branch, and from the refuse of which had been made the wall about the barnyard. Two kilns of bricks stood untouched, and two large piles of sawn lumber, and many heavy hewn timbers, all protected from the weather by coverings of boards; and all were sound, except at the base of the lumber piles, where dogs scratching in pursuit of hares had thrown the earth upon the boards and caused decay. Everywhere were marks of the providence of a man whose thoughts were habitually on the future. Thornton was puzzled to know for what particular purpose many of these things had been provided; a reminder, and a wholesome check upon his own inherited infirmity. The more he studied his father's plans, the greater interest he felt in them. They revealed to him new and enlarged views of country life. Poring over these and his journal, he imbibed more and more of the father's taste, until, insensibly, the passion of his life entered his own breast. He would make Lastlands what his father designed it to be, and something more. But this would require money. He had once made money without taking thought about it. Now he would think of it.

One morning in May, while he was overlooking the ploughing of a field for hemp, a stranger rode into the field. Stopping his horse for a moment to make inquiry of one of the men, he then rode directly to where Thornton sat on his horse. "Good-morning, Mr. Thornton," he said; "I am Mr. Ralph" (Raiph, he called it) "Tinsley, and am going to be your neighbor, as you know."

"I am glad to see you, Mr. Tinsley," replied Thornton, extending his hand. "I have called several times at your place, hoping to find you there, but failed."

"Yes, so I learned. I have not been here since the building was begun. I employed a man to superintend the work, because I am obliged, on account of the delicate health of my wife, to be at home most of the time. Indeed, I am here now for only a day, and must start back to-morrow.

I have come only to thank you for your visits, and especially for the excellent suggestions you made to my superintendent about the building. He thinks you the best architect he ever met. And, from the suggestions you made, and the glimpse I have had of your own house and farm buildings, I think he must be in the right."

"Well, come with me to the house, and stay to dinner with us, and let me show you what I have done. The house is the work of my father, and some of the best features in the farm buildings have been borrowed from my neighbor, Mr. Vaughn. Some of the ornamental plantations are the designs of my wife. I can claim credit only for clearing away the weeds, and straightening the fences and the gates, and a general repairing of the walks and roadways. The place was like a wilderness when I came here. In this neighborhood much interest is now taken in the embellishment of the farms and plantations, and its general appearance has been very much improved. A little thought given to the position and form of farm buildings adds much to the general appearance of the place, as well as to the comfort and health of the animals sheltered by them. And a little care about the ornamentation of the grounds adds greatly to the pleasure and happiness of the household. This neighborhood is attracting more attention since the turnpike has come under good management and is kept in good order. Captain Shelby talked of coming out to live permanently at his place with his son-in-law, Mr. Sterrett, and I look to see the society here increased by other accessions from The Falls. I shall try to set a good example, and hope to see it followed and improved upon by all who may come."

"Well, I shall do my best. I shall be glad to avail myself of your taste and skill. I have been a combined planter and trader for the greater part of my life, but I never took much thought about ornamentation. I have lived most of the time in a tobacco region, where everything gives place to one absorbing crop—tobacco. The culture of this is pretty thorough, but everything else is there neglected. Tobacco requires so much manipulation, that there is hardly time for any other work, and the farm buildings



and the fences are apt to go to wrack and decay. In fact, tobacco is a thirteen months' crop at least, and the planter finds the labor of every year lapping over the next following, and he is thus always pushed, to the neglect of everything but the one important staple. A tobacco region is never a region of neat farming, and the horses and cows, having little care, present but a sorry appearance. Hardly any tobacco planter has even a meadow, buying hay for his horses during the plowing season, and for the rest relying upon what little grass grows spontaneously, and upon a scant supply of corn and fodder. Milk and butter are generally scarce luxuries there in winter. I expect to keep fine stock here, and will put most of my land in grass. I want to have as little care and as much leisure as possible, with just enough work to maintain an interest in the business, and to keep me from absolute idleness. I have done my share of work as a tobacco planter and a tobacco dealer, and a trader in many forms—in land and live stock, and in tobacco, and having now as much worldly gear as I care to have, I desire to pass the remnant of my days in a neighborhood where social intercourse shall be the chief pleasure of my life. I may make a venture now and then in tobacco, in town, or in stock for grazing, here; but I shall never again settle myself into any regular train of business—only make an irregular sally, when I may think I see a good opportunity. Whatever I may do, I have come here to stay."

"This talk went on as they rode toward the house, and Thornton had a fair opportunity to observe the stranger. He was a large man, of full figure, with an appearance of great solidity and strength. His seat in the saddle was easy and graceful, and the management of his horse, a powerful roan, with black points, indicated long practice as a rider. He wore a substantial suit of gray cloth, stout beaver gloves, and carried a heavy leather whip, loaded at the handle, which shone with the polish of long use. He was clean-shaven, and his linen was unexceptionable. His blond complexion and light hair sprinkled with gray, and bright blue eyes that shone with both humor and sense, gave his countenance a very animated and pleasing expres-

sion. He was a man verging on sixty, whom no one could see without thinking that he must have been very handsome in youth.

As they approached the house, the stranger's eyes were busy scanning the premises, taking note of everything—the covered well, the ice house, the cisterns, the wood-house, the sheltered hitching place for horses, and other like conveniences made by Thornton. Dismounting near the hitching shed, where old Tom came to take their horses, they entered at the rear of the house Mrs. Thornton's flower garden. The ground, descending there by a regular declivity, had been thrown into two large terraces next the house, and thence in smaller terraces fell away to the Anser, where an abrupt rock bank, with a low stone wall laid upon it, made the boundary line. The beds had all been dug and raked, and the borders trimmed and dressed, and though there was but little bloom—only tulips and other bulbous plants, and peonies and bleeding hearts—yet the honeysuckles were full of tender leaves, and the clematis was reaching upward, grasping the trellis with its delicate fingers, and the garden was already full of beauty that comes of cleanliness and order and promise. Extensive beds of early roses were now in leaf and bud, forecasting ample bloom, and the borders of close-shaven blue-grass glistened as only blue-grass can glisten in Kentucky in the month of May.

The stranger looked with surprise at this exhibition of beauty, muttering: "And in the back yard!" And when he walked upon the veranda, and saw, far away down the valley, the Anser winding through the wide pastures, and then looked beyond, up the broad ascending slope to the great woods, now in their pale green livery, he gave expression to both surprise and delight. "Why," he exclaimed, "this will be like fairyland in June."

"This garden," said Thornton, "was laid off by my father, but the plantation of flowers is my wife's work. The roses and bulbs were brought from town, where she had a fine collection, and many more have been added from the garden of my neighbor, Mr. Davis."

"But you had already a large garden which we passed on the way here."

"Yes; that is the vegetable garden—the kitchen garden—made long ago by my father. We could not do without that. It is underdrained and has been trenched and manured for many years, and is very productive, and furnishes all our vegetables. It is an old-fashioned garden with some small fruits and some espaliers, and contains a little of everything—camomile and sage, and all the medicinal plants valued by the old women of the country. My father used to supply them, and they still come for them. Like the Indians, the old women keep always among them a medicine bag."

"Yes, and I would rather trust the old woman's bag than the pharmacopæia of the doctors."

"We are apt to feel that way when in full health, but when we get sick, we are pretty sure to send for the doctor."

"Yes," said the Major, with a merry chuckle, "we do. Still, I think the doctors profess too much, and that our faith in them is a kind of superstition. I learned this by living a long time out of reach of any doctor, having to rely on the simples of the old woman's bag, which I found as effective as the medicine of the doctor, when he was close at hand, and was called in for every finger ache. Yet, as you say, we send for them. It is something like the case in the old rhyme:

"The Devil was sick, the Devil a monk would be;  
The Devil got well, the Devil a monk was he."

"But the Devil's ailing must have been a spiritual one, and I fear that the spiritual doctors are also overrated. Both have fallen away in usefulness, from a desire to dignify their callings in the eyes of the vulgar; the physicians by erecting into the 'science of medicine' what was once called, with proper modesty and truth, 'the healing art'; and the spiritual doctors by erecting into the 'science of theology' what was the simple 'teaching of the Gospel': wandering away from this into the mazes and puzzles of metaphysics." Here the Major nodded assent, and the

two gentlemen laughed with the air of illuminati. Afterward when, after many discursions, their talk came back to this theme, and Thornton said that he had been baptized into the Church and that he could then repeat all the religious lessons learned at his mother's knee, and many memorized from the prayer-book, the Major confessed to a record precisely similar, and the two gentlemen laughed again, this time with the air of two men of mature age interchanging confidences about peccadilloes of their youth.

It was the fashion in that day for gentlemen to be skeptical, and to speak lightly of the "cloth," and to put on the airs of illuminati. Many of them had imbibed with their political opinions hostility to the dogmas of religion, and the French colony at The Falls having brought with them much of the infidelity and irreverence of revolutionary France, this leaven was spread widely, though superficially, among the cultivated classes. Both these gentlemen had now expressed sentiments that were merely conventional. For among these Virginia colonists, most of whom had been reared in its fold, there was a strong feeling of loyalty to the Church of England; and when Thornton was afterward giving Major Tinsley an account of the doings in the neighborhood, and told him that they had designed to put up a church building, for which his father had provided a site, and he himself had now furnished a plan and estimates—"The Church of St. John in the Wilderness"—and that it still lacked money, the Major said at once, "I will give money toward it."

"Only money for the steeple is lacking," said Thornton. "When the house is tenantable we shall have the service read there by a lay reader. Some day we hope to have an organized parish, a full congregation, and a rector. Come in, and let me show you the drawing of our building."

Then going into the library, Thornton exhibited the drawing, showing a graceful church building with its steeple, when the Major eagerly exclaimed: "Put me down for the steeple. I will pay for it myself. But pray let us have all free pews. Let us somehow get into the fundamental law of the parish a provision against the selling of pews. I never could abide the practice of selling seats



in the temple of God. It will make Pharisees if they be not already in the Church. I have not been in many years a church-goer, though bred in its fold, but my wife is a strict churchwoman. We sent more than a hundred miles for a parson to christen our daughter, and the Book of Common Prayer has been read daily in our house. While I was in the habit of going away, in the course of my business, on long journeys to the South, and was often absent for months, I was sure always to find a copy of this book in my saddle-bags, and when the hours came at which they were accustomed to read prayers at home, I often took it out and read at the same time. It was a great satisfaction to me to feel that, though so far apart, we were yet united in prayer to God; and to know with what tender emphasis they would read from the litany that petition in behalf of 'all who travel by land or by water.' Yes, indeed," looking again at the drawing, "put me down for the steeple. Why, you must know there is nothing that gives me more pleasure than the sight of a church steeple. When I was a trader, making long journeys with horses and mules to the South, often returning alone with large sums of money, I suffered grievous apprehension of being beset by the bands of lawless men that then infested the intermediate country, and often changed my route in coming back, lest they should waylay me. But when I came into a strange settlement, and saw there one of those steeples pointing to the sky, it always put me in heart; for I knew then that the good people ruled there. Yes," looking again at the drawing, "put me down for the steeple, and call on me whenever the money is needed."

Then, under Thornton's guidance, Major Tinsley inspected the interior of the unfinished Lastlands mansion. "Well," he said, "this is a grand house; far above anything I care about for myself, and I don't intend to build for my children. They may not like country life, and fine houses in the country never bring a tithe of their cost when sold. But I shall try to copy the many conveniences you have here. I shall need one cistern, for instance, but with water at your door, I can't see what need you have for three."

"We need them for the laundry. The Anser is muddy at times, and its water is never soft and clear, like the rain water."

"To be sure! to be sure! And the ladies like to have their laces and delicate stuffs washed and rinsed in soft, clear water, and without a fleck on them. To be sure, this ought to be always considered. My daughter always likes rain water for that, but we kept only a large rain barrel. I shall certainly have one or more cisterns."

Major Tinsley not only dined at Lastlands, but passed the night there. He was greatly pleased with the household, and charmed by Barbara, to whom he gave much attention, taking marked interest in her prattle, which was brought into unusual freedom by the genial manners of the stranger. Both Thornton and his wife were struck by his marked interest in Barbara, accompanied as it was by a strange look of sadness. And they were struck as well by the sympathetic response of Barbara, whose manner was usually reserved with strangers.

The Major talked freely of his family, consisting of a wife and two children, a young woman, and a son just come to manhood. But he talked almost exclusively of the daughter, relating many anecdotes of her childhood and early youth, and she seemed plainly to be his favorite child.

Next morning he went away home, promising to double the force of workmen on his house, that he might at an early day come to dwell in a neighborhood so congenial to his taste.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### JOY AT LASTLANDS

"He maketh the barren woman to keep house and to be a joyful mother of children."—Ps. cxii: 8.

VERY unexpected circumstances soon changed the whole current of Robert Thornton's life, and put into his breast new hope, and new and enlarged views of the future. "There was no mistake—no doubt about it"—Mrs. Scudamore said, "there is going to be an heir to the house of Thornton." Mysterious messages went back and forth between Digby's house in town and Lastlands. Digby's wife went out there and stayed several days, and thereafter her visits became very frequent. The two households were in a flutter of anxious but pleasurable excitement. Thornton had a new face. He did not give his usual attention to the plantation. He seemed abstracted, and often left the ground where important work was going on. Very soon the cause of this became known to all, and the work was none the worse for his absence.

He grew anxious, as time advanced, and would hardly have his wife stir in the house, desiring her to turn over to Mrs. Scudamore all household matters. But that good lady knew better, and overruled him. "Don't change your habits," she said, "don't take any unusual exercise, but go straight on as before; only let us have a little more amusement and diversion on foot than usual."

When the eventful day was yet a month off, Mrs. Digby went out to Lastlands. It had been long ago arranged by the sisters that the "event," as it had come to be called, should occur in Digby's house in town, where a physician and experienced nurse could be had at a moment's notice. And so, after two days, the sisters were placed in Thorn-

ton's carriage, and with old Tom on the box, and "little Dick" behind, it rolled away, freighted with love and hope and tender solicitude. In town it was driven to Digby's house, where its precious burden was safely bestowed. In a large, cheerful room, provided with every conceivable comfort, and overlooking the most frequented promenade of the little town, Thornton's precious wife grew cheerful, and awaited with reasonable equanimity the great event of her life.

It was not long before Thornton was summoned to town. He had left it more than a year before, shaking its dust from his feet, with a resolution not to go again within its limits, except under some imperious necessity. On the way he could not help revolving in his mind all the unhappy details of his misfortunes there. The bitter feeling toward individuals by whom he thought he had been ill-used, had died out, for he was incapable of nursing malevolence, but he still bore, if not a "lodged hate," yet a certain loathing of the town, "the infernal town," as he had called it in his moments of heat. It would have puzzled him to make specification of his grievances. Like all men of public spirit, who have done the state some service, he overrated the benefits he had conferred on the community, and in the same degree exaggerated the ingratitude of the public. In truth, he had been very highly valued by the people of the town. Recognition of his public services had been manifested by the board of trustees, who by resolution had thanked him for the skill with which he had planned and superintended the erection of certain public buildings; and they had offered him pay for these services, which he had refused to accept. Did he blame the community, that vague entity which has no executive power, for not coming to his aid and saving his property from sale? No, no; he had nobody to blame but himself. He had incautiously, as over-sanguine men are apt to do, gone into a losing business, entailing debt, and the financial storm coming on, found him in such deep water that no friend he had was strong enough, without imminent peril to himself, to go to his rescue. Digby was deeply involved in the general commercial trouble and could not help him. Two friends,



Captain Shelby and Joe Sterrett, had offered their credit and every dollar they had, but he had declined to accept their imprudent offers. Surely he was a fortunate man to possess two such friends as these. And he was more a man of the world than to count as friends all those who had flattered or fawned upon him in the days of his prosperity, or to reckon in that category the many persons with whom he had found himself closely associated, and with whom the common social law required him to exchange "the small sweet courtesies of life." Did he blame his creditors for a want of forbearance? It would have been better for him if they had used less forbearance, and had forced him to an earlier settlement. Then a lesson in prudence might have been taught him, and a catastrophe averted. But, in another sense, it was better for him as it happened. He had been removed from associations that were fast leading to vice, and placed in a new field, and had acquired there new energy and vigor. He had learned "the sweet uses of adversity." He had been taught that wholesome lesson that happiness does not lie along "the primrose path of dalliance," and that it is not purchasable with money. His brother Dick had correctly diagnosed his case, when he said that what Bob lacked was a plan of life—one that would be worthy enough to fill his whole mind and wide enough to last all his days. Without this a man only drifts like a seaweed along the ocean of life, borne hither and thither by wind and wave, with no better fate in store than to be stranded in some sunshiny cove, and there grow like "the fat weed that roots itself in ease on Lethe's wharf."

These reflections occupied Thornton's mind as he rode to town. He passed by his former home, now occupied by strangers, not only without any feeling of regret, but with a sense of aversion, as to a memento of his past purposeless life. When he reached Digby's house he had settled into a philosophic mood, dismissed his resentment, and made up his mind to make the most of the world as he found it, and not make himself unhappy because it was not what he would like it to be. His anxiety about his wife soon expelled all other thoughts. While she, as we

have seen, was in a reasonable state of equanimity, he was restless in the extreme, running about from one recognized authority to another, and getting encouragement from them all. To Digby, who had had quite a large experience in this field, his conduct seemed in the highest degree ridiculous.

One night, about eleven o'clock, the crisis came on. Thornton was roused and despatched for the doctor. He went straight to the theater, where nearly all the physicians of that day were then most likely to be found. At the door he inquires of Overstreet, the doorkeeper, and learns that the doctor is in the house, and he hurries in. As he enters, the after-piece is concluding, and a roar of laughter from pit to gallery, in response to some sally of Mr. Alex. Drake, the great comedian, salutes him. Pre-occupied as he is, how untimely seems this burst of merriment! He finds the doctor, and takes him out, still shaking with merriment, and they hurry away; the doctor, as they stride along, speaking only to ask a few leading questions. At the door of Digby's house they meet Madame Luba, the French nurse, who had been summoned by another messenger. The doctor and she are old friends. They exchange compliments and go into the house together, and hasten up the stairway. Thornton closes the door, and is about to follow them, when he is arrested by old Rose, who, with the stiff formality of a drill sergeant, shows him into the parlor below, and invites him to take a seat there, and then hurries away.

There was something in the manner of that old servant of his father that excited a feeling of surprise and apprehension. He sits alone in the great parlor, by the fire, a single sperm candle burning on the table, meditating, and vainly endeavoring to comprehend the situation. Then he takes a book and tries to read, but finds himself incapable of fixing his attention upon the page. Then he walks softly up and down the room. By and by he hears a door open above, and somebody descends the back stairway. He hastens out, and a moment after meets the old servant Rose hurrying from the kitchen. To his question about matters he gets no answer; the old woman only scowls and

hurries up the stairway. Afterward, old Mrs. Haly, who is a neighbor of Digby, and is attending as a volunteer on this occasion, passes through the hall and is intercepted by him. She answers him only by an impatient gesture of the elbow, and a frown like that on the face of old Rose.

"What can it mean?" he soliloquizes. "They look at me as if I had committed some crime"; and a vague sense of guilt creeps over him. He goes back to the parlor and resumes his seat by the table. The wick of the candle is now clubbed, and sheds but a dim light. The fire is low, and burns with a flickering blaze, casting long shadows that leap and dance in a ghostly way upon the wall. In the polished brass globes of the andirons he sees his own visage, horribly distorted. He is much depressed. Now the front door opens, a heavy step passes the parlor door and goes to the rear of the main hall. He hears the voices of two persons talking there in subdued tones. Now there are footsteps going up the back stairway, and afterward the heavy tread heard before comes slowly along the hall and stops before the parlor door. Then the door opens and the portly form of Digby enters.

"Well, Bob," he says, "have you been all alone here this long while? I had to go on an errand that could not be entrusted to an ordinary messenger, or I should have been here to keep you company and to comfort you." Then he takes the snuffers from the tray, snuffs the candle, and lights another standing there.

"John, for Heaven's sake tell me something about my dear wife!"

"Your dear wife is just as well as can be expected"—and then seeing Thornton get up from his chair at this hackneyed answer, and observing the intense expression of his face, Digby quickly added, "She is safe, and doing just as well as possible. Sit down and compose yourself. There is no ground for apprehension."

"John, you don't know how I have suffered here, alone, with no means of hearing from the poor darling! I saw old Rose on her way from the kitchen, and asked her after my wife, and do you know she scowled at me as if I were

some guilty wretch, and went away without answering me. So did old Mrs. Haly, whom I intercepted afterward."

"Why, of course; that's the way they always do, especially in a first case like this. You might as well go on deck at night, in a storm at sea, and expect the sailors to talk to you about the situation there. They would soon tell you to go below, out of the way of those whose business it is to work the ship."

"But why do they scowl at me?"

"I don't know exactly. It puzzled me a good deal when I was served in the same way. They always do it."

"You say they served you that way?"

"Yes; they serve any man so: the Tsar of Russia, the Khan of Tartary, the Imam of Muscat—the Devil himself, if he has any domestic establishment! They make a man feel at a fearful discount, to speak commercially."

"Indeed, I feel at a fearful discount morally—as if these people had found out something wrong about me, of which I am wholly ignorant."

"Oh, yes, that's the way they do it. They make you feel like a malefactor."

"That's just it, like a malefactor!"

"But," said Digby, "they'll make ample amends, when the trouble is all over. Old Rose will come down, with smiles and curtsies, and congratulate you upon a fine son or daughter, as the case may be, and show you upstairs, where you will have an ovation, and feel yourself a better man than you ever were before."

At this moment there came from above a strange shrill wail, which brought Thornton to his feet.

"My gracious! What is that?"

"It sounds like a clarionet, doesn't it?" said Digby, turning his ear upward.

"John! Where is the doctor? For heaven's sake, go and see what that means!"

"It means," answered Digby, "that an heir is born to the house of Thornton, and that the youngster has good lungs, and that they are in full play. The doctor will be down soon and will tell us all about it. Then he and the nurses, all except one, will be *functus officio*. They will



go away bag and baggage, and you will reign chief man in the house for a month at least."

And soon the doctor comes in smiling. He gives Thornton a cordial grasp of the hand, and congratulates him on the safe arrival of a fine boy. Then he takes a glass of wine, and partakes of a luncheon that has been provided for him. And then he talks of indifferent matters, and then, after another glass of wine, he goes away. Thornton thinks that, somehow, he treats a great event in a very light way!

Then there is another step in the hall, and soon after old Rose enters. As Digby had predicted, she is all smiles and curtsies, and begs that "Mars Robert" will please go up and see his wife and his son!

Thornton hastens to the chamber, where he finds everybody smiling welcome, and offering congratulations. He goes at once to the dear wife, who has had her eyes turned toward the door ever since old Rose went away on her errand. He takes her slender hand in his strong brown fist, and imprints a kiss on her white forehead. A tear falls from his eye upon her cheek, when, with a startled look, she rains back kisses over his face.

Then he is invited to look at the baby, and after much pulling away of covering he is shown a little red being, nestling in a profusion of soft wraps, like a young bird.

Then the old French nurse, who is putting on her shawl and hood, says: "Now you feel mity proud, I s'pose, because you have one fan sonn! Well, Madame is all well, an ze leetle man is well, and now, Messieu Tornton, you muz bring me 'ome. I muz 'ave you fau ezcort." Then turning to the wife, she says: "Good-night, Mees Thornton. Everything goes right; keep quite. An' doan' you be jalluse fau let yo 'usban' go 'ome wiz me." And when a little laugh went round at this, she straightened herself with an air, and added: "Ah! but dare was a time—wen I was young—I had two block eye—ah! dat is all gone! Allons, Messieu, bring ze old woman 'ome; good-night." And Thornton went away with her on his arm.

For some days Thornton's mind was filled with a medley of new ideas and emotions. He did not at once realize

the parental feeling. But a few days after it came upon him in full force. Going into his wife's chamber, he finds the little being at the mother's breast. A tiny pink hand with nails of pearl, rests there, and a dimple on its cheek comes and goes, with the regularity of a pulse, as it drinks at the "font of life." The mother's brow is slightly arched, and her eyes are turned down upon the little face with a look we dare not venture to describe, but which must be common to young mothers and newly arrived angels in Paradise.

During the stay of Thornton's wife in town Lastlands was in a state of demoralization. Everybody there was seized by a desire to go to town. Never before had the intercourse between the two places been so frequent. Little Dick or old Tom was ever on the box driving Barbara or Mrs. Scudamore or both over the road. Meantime, all Thornton's bachelor friends, Russell, Stackpole, McIntyre, Mr. Jack Taylor, felt impelled to go out and offer consolation to him, and to beguile the imagined pressure of his new responsibility. Mr. Ould was disposed to join them, but was kept in town by the impending trial of a case of great importance.

The average reader will know how grossly Thornton's case was misunderstood by his well-meaning bachelor friends, and that while he entertained them in the country he often wished them in Jericho and himself on the road to town, which he found strangely shortened now that a wife and child lay at the end of it.

## CHAPTER XIX

### AN EXPERIMENT IN SLAVEHOLDING

"But far beyond my depth: my high-blown pride  
At length broke under me."

AT THE FALLS, McCrae had not failed to attain in the circle of trade that influence and consideration always accorded there to a man possessed of money. He was now anxious to extend this influence and consideration beyond this circle, and in order further to ingratiate himself had made, on easy conditions, loans to certain traders of limited capital but of good social connections, and on like conditions had obliged young men of good expectations, as, needing ready money, would consent to be beholden to him—by these and other like means purchasing good opinions. He had now fallen in love with a widow without fortune, but of high character, and excellent connections, and of breeding far above his own. Before this he had seemed careless and even defiant of the opinions of such people as were thought to constitute the aristocratic element in the community, relying for whatever social weight he might have there upon the invincible avoirdupois of his balance in bank. But now, softened and subjugated by that passion which elevates and refines all whom it possesses, he longed for a higher plane in social life. For this he had tried to conciliate Thornton, and would have hesitated at hardly any sacrifice necessary to attain it. But stung by Thornton's reply to his friend's effort on his behalf, to which much publicity had been given, and being naturally vindictive as an Indian, he had brooded over projects of revenge. With a vague purpose of annoyance, and of being on the ground, and in a manner within easy reach of his enemy, he had bought a piece of land in the

Lastlands neighborhood, adjoining that of old Hugh Vaughn, where he had built a substantial weather-boarded log-house, and ample negro quarters, and had put in charge there a nephew brought from Missouri, whom he had procured to be made deputy sheriff and assigned to that district. Living there with a large band of slaves, this deputy, Williams by name, was busily engaged supervising the clearing and planting of the land, as well as with his official duties. McCrae was a frequent visitor to this place, and was by his proximity often thrown into the company of Hugh Vaughn. Men are more readily drawn together by some vicious trait than by any virtue they may have in common, and these men were now attracted and drawn into intimate relation by the ruling passion of both, avarice. McCrae knew that Vaughn had a considerable balance in the bank where his own account was kept, and this, with the thrifty condition of his farm, made Vaughn, in his eyes, in a high degree respectable; while McCrae's well-known wealth, his official position, and his notorious influence with the magistracy, made him, in the eyes of Vaughn, a veritable magnate. Far more agreeable and congenial than Thornton was this new intimate, to the old farmer. Together they enjoyed a delightful communion of spirit, never lacking an agreeable subject upon which McCrae could talk and Vaughn could listen forever—money.

A few days before the time appointed for the sale of Sterrett's slaves, Thornton was surprised by a visit from Hugh Vaughn. Partly from association with McCrae, and partly on Phoebe's account, he too was now inspired by social ambition, and had thoughts of assuming a more stylish manner of life. He had at one time dreamed even of a mounted servant to attend him, as he had seen Thornton's father always, and now Thornton often attended. But he dismissed this scheme, conscious of his unfitness for such an aristocratic rôle, and would now be content with a slave woman for a cook, and a man to work on the farm, and thus relieve his wife of the drudgery of the kitchen and himself of hard work, to which he was fast becoming unequal. Possessed of this idea, he had come to advise with



Thornton about the purchase, at the sale, of two of Sterrett's slaves, a man and a woman. Thornton told him of his own design to buy these slaves, explaining that his only object was to oblige Sterrett and his wife, by securing a good home to faithful slaves brought to the auction block, and that if it would be agreeable to Sterrett, he himself would be content that Vaughn should buy them. Then at Vaughn's request he gave him a letter to Sterrett stating Vaughn's desire, and certifying to his humane character. With this Vaughn visited Sterrett, who agreed that as to two of these slaves, a man and his wife not "born in his house," but "purchased with his money," it would be agreeable to him that Vaughn should buy them. After the death of Captain Shelby it was thought that all Sterrett's debts would be paid from his estate and the execution against his slaves satisfied. Under this impression the execution against Sterrett's slaves had been returned by order of the creditors without a sale. But the Captain made by will a strict settlement of everything in trust for his daughter and her children, and the execution was renewed, and the sale was now soon to take place. On the morning appointed for this, Vaughn was early at Lastlands, whence he and Thornton, attended by Tom Strother, rode away toward the place of sale. All the way, old Tom riding behind out of ear-shot, Vaughn said nothing about his contemplated purchase. Only the evening before he had notified his wife of his design, and they had talked the matter over until late in the night. She was taken by surprise, but opposed the scheme with great earnestness, using all her power of dissuasion in vain. Yet, though he had maintained his point against her, and thought he had settled the question with his own conscience, citing from Scripture many passages justifying slavery, and the example of Washington and other great and good men, and under his eye McCrae and others, estimable neighbors, all this had failed to set his mind at ease, and now, as the hour drew nigh for the consummation of his design, he found his desire to become a slaveholder, somehow, greatly abated. That long talk with the good wife recurred to him again and again, and she proved now, behind at home, more

potent than when she had confronted him with mild but firm dissuasion. As they neared the place of sale he was undergoing throes of conscience that woefully distressed him. To Thornton, "to the manner born," the transaction was a matter of course. He was in high spirits over the opportunity to oblige Sterrett and to succor the helpless slaves, and had no suspicion of Vaughn's troubles.

Soon after their arrival on the ground the slaves were put up. First the two men, who after a lively contest, which carried them up to the full price, were bought by Thornton. Then the man and wife intended for Vaughn were put up. Meantime, the old Pennsylvanian farmer had been growing more and more disturbed as this moment approached, industriously mopping with a red silk handkerchief his sweating face, and in such a state of agitation that, though the deputy sheriff, cognizant of Vaughn's design, again and again invited bids, looking at him with a glance of intelligence, he made no response. Then Thornton, seeing his bewildered condition and correctly interpreting it, bid for them, and became the owner of all four of Sterrett's slaves. When the official sale was over, Ould, who was present and had quietly looked on at the proceedings, paid the sheriff and took his receipt and then went away.

One of the farmers of the neighborhood, many of whom were present, then brought out a lame negro boy eleven years old, with a crutch, and explaining that he was about to remove to Illinois, and had sold among his neighbors all his slaves except this boy, for whom he desired to get a good home, announced that he would sell him to any gentleman at his own price; adding in a low voice, with a laugh, "provided the gentleman suited him, and should be approved by the boy." "He has only one leg," he said, "but he is very active, and I will match him to go over fences against any boy of his age anywhere. Get up, 'Lijah, and show these gentlemen how you can get about on one leg." Upon this the lad sprang up, and exhibited uncommon activity and dexterity, lifting himself over a fence and back again, and capering on his crutch with the nimbleness of a monkey on his pole. Then fixing his eyes on Thorn-

ton and renewing his feats, he elicited much applause from all, but kept his eyes so constantly on Thornton that he seemed to be playing exclusively to him. Thornton had mounted his horse, and was about to ride away with old Tom, but had paused to witness Elijah's feats, and now called to his owner, "What do you ask for him?"

"Take him at your own price, Colonel Thornton," was the reply.

"Is he a good boy?"

"The best little nigger in the world"—seconded by many voices, and from the crowd a benevolent cry, "Take him, Colonel; he will suit you to a T." And then a guilty, half-subdued voice saying, "He'll match old Kirby," was answered, "If old Kirby hears of that he'll crack your head with his wooden leg." At which there was a laugh. Then Thornton, who had been attentively regarding the boy, said to him, "Do you want to belong to me?" At which he sprang up, assenting with such alacrity as caused a general laugh and a repetition of the benevolent cry to Thornton to "take him." Then Thornton said, "Come along, 'Lijah. Tom, take him behind you." And then seeing the boy approach Tom's horse, adjusting his crutch for a leap, he cried out to him, "Jump!" and Elijah, carrying in his hand a bundle containing his little "possibles," dexterously lifted himself into the air and alighted behind old Tom. There was almost a round of applause at this, while old Tom wore a glum face at the undignified companionship.

Calling up his newly acquired slaves, Thornton had given to each of them a gratuity and a holiday of three days, Sterrett promising at the end of that time to send them with all their worldly goods to Lastlands. A conference followed with Elijah's owner, when, after an amiable contest, the farmer insisting that he should take him as a free gift, Thornton paid him fifty dollars for Elijah.

Very noticeable was the sympathy of the assembled farmers with the desire of the owner of Elijah that he should go to Thornton, as was the amiable glee with which they hailed this consummation. As for Elijah, he attained, in belonging to the "big Lastlands plantation," something beyond the wildest dream of his ambition.

On the way home, Thornton and Vaughn riding together and old Tom and Elijah behind, out of earshot, the desire of the old farmer to possess slave property was in a degree revived. He had left home with a fixed resolution, as he had announced to his household, to buy two slaves, and now he was returning with none. This was not agreeable to him, and he proposed that Thornton should let him have Elijah, but Thornton was by no means inclined to do this, considering himself under an implied obligation to keep him, by reason of the circumstances attending his purchase. Finding his old friend very persistent, and, that he might make an experiment in slaveholding, Thornton at last agreed to hire the boy to him, with this proviso: that if at the expiration of three months all parties, Thornton, Vaughn, and Elijah, should agree, he might become the owner of Elijah for fifty dollars. Thus for a very small consideration the old farmer became the conditional owner of a slave, and felt himself already a party to the "institution"; identified with its interests, and entitled to discuss it, and to defend or denounce it, as he might choose, on all proper occasions. Nay, entitled, if he should think proper, even to aspire to membership of the "Yeoman's Club!" As for the question of conscience, he silenced this by considering the uncertain nature of his ownership, with its contingencies, and, in any event, how slightly he would be involved in slaveholding, owning only a poor crippled boy, whom it would be an act of charity to care for; and considering further, that he was said to be an excellent shoe-black, and would relieve him of an ugly job, and could go to the spring for water, and that for these things alone he was "dirt cheap at fifty dollars."

The social ambition that had entered the breast of Hugh Vaughn was not altogether a selfish passion, but was due mainly to a desire to open a fairer career to Phœbe, his only daughter, the child of his old age, the very apple of his eye. He had not failed to observe her improvement in all respects since she had been associated with the Lastlands household, and he was now full of fatherly pride in her beauty and early maturity. He hoped before he should be called away from earth to see her well married, and



he would look high for a mate for her. Mean as he was about money, he denied her nothing. Now that she was fast approaching womanhood he astonished everybody by stimulating, instead of repressing, the natural love of the girl for finery. He never came now from one of his periodical expeditions to the town without bringing for her boxes and bundles of fine things. These were not always in the best taste, as Phoebe herself was prompt to see, and at her request Mrs. Thornton had undertaken to make her purchases, through "Sister Digby," whose taste was infallible. Thus Miss Phoebe Vaughn had in a short time become one of the best dressed, as she had already been considered one of the prettiest, of the budding beauties of the Lastlands neighborhood.

Paul Scudamore beheld this change with a sinking heart. That sensitive organ ached after having seen her one Saturday, neatly and beautifully arrayed, come on a visit to Lastlands. That day Paul went away from the house and kept away out of sight until she had gone home, and afterward lay awake all night feeling (as he said long afterward) as if a sharp stake lay crosswise in his left breast. Poor Paul! He now thought her too good for him, or for anybody. She seemed to have soared away above his reach. Everybody would be coming to court her now. Some prince would come, as they do in fairy tales, and take her away to be his bride.

It was known to Paul that Williams, the new deputy sheriff, was a regular visitor of Vaughn's household, and often on Sundays passed the whole day there. He was what old Kirby called "a paradeiful man." Instead of the usual fatigue suit of plain material worn by other deputies, he was arrayed in broadcloth, and rode always with a beaver hat, and buckskin leggings, with saddle-bags and a portmanteau capacious enough to hold not only his official papers but an ample wardrobe besides. Such a shining, polished and varnished deputy had never before been seen in the Lastlands district. Already it was whispered among the knowing gossips that though some twelve years or more older than Phoebe, a disparity then considered almost incompatibility, he was paying his addresses to her; that he

was a favorite of his rich uncle, McCrae, and would be his heir; and a match between them was confidently expected.

As the intimacy between McCrae and Vaughn's household increased it was observable that the cordiality between that of Lastlands and Vaughn's sensibly diminished. Though Phoebe was every day in attendance at Mr. Wall's school, and a regular visitor to Lastlands on Saturdays, Barbara had seldom returned these visits, and for some time, as by a tacit understanding, the visits had all been on one side. Barbara's nice sense had detected in Vaughn's household an air of reserve before alien to them, and meeting there more than once the deputy sheriff, and repelled by his vulgar air, and seeing in his manner to Phoebe something from which she instinctively revolted, she ceased to go there. In time it became manifest that some agency had been at work to disturb the friendly relations of the two households. This was manifested by slow degrees, because both were now very busy with their various industries, and the intercourse had long been maintained by Phoebe alone. As for old Vaughn, even in the leisure season, he had not been inclined to visit Lastlands, finding himself, from a lack of exchangeable ideas, unable to appear to advantage in the company that the summer season now brought there. Some semblance of good neighborhood had subsisted for a time in the interchange of presents, common between neighbors in the country, but even these had now ceased, and Phoebe was talking of being withdrawn from the school.

Thornton had been so absorbed in the work of the plantation that he did not observe these various circumstances, and was unconscious of the changed relations of the households. At last, having them fully explained, he at once took the blame to himself, attributing it to his neglect of the old farmer, by not going as often as he should have done to visit him, recalling, with a sharp touch of remorse, the kind reception given him when he had first come out to inspect Lastlands, before removing from the town. With this feeling he went at once to visit Vaughn, resolved, if practicable, to restore the old friendly relations of the households. Having apologized for his own neglect, taking

great blame to himself, and having gone far to invite some show of reconciliation on the part of Vaughn, and this being not manifested, but his advances received in silence, and with a look of sullen reserve on the part of the old farmer, Thornton could only accept the situation by formally taking his leave. For only a moment, as he went away, he saw the good wife, who saluted him gravely, but more in sorrow than in anger.

A short time after this visit, to the surprise and gratification of all Lastlands, Elijah was sent home. He had often while in Vaughn's service visited Lastlands, and everybody there had been already prepared to like him, by the representations of Paul and Mrs. Scudamore, to whom he had been long known, and by the doctor, who had taken off his leg. He brought no explanation, which would have been proper, seeing that the period of probation agreed upon had not yet quite ended, but said that he had only been told by Vaughn to "go home to his master." Thornton had long determined, when the time should expire, to bring him home, and now that the conduct of his old friend savored of resentment, he was glad to have this anticipated. As for the slaves at Lastlands, they were jubilant. All along, the public opinion of "the quarter" had been against Elijah's remaining with Vaughn. Kentucky slaves were always full of aristocratic notions, and they looked upon the aspiration of the Pennsylvanian farmer to "own niggers" as downright presumption; and they had not failed to imbue Elijah with this notion. He bore witness to very kind treatment from Vaughn's household, but confidentially told Charles Fetter of some very ill usage he had received from Williams, who, meeting him on his way with a letter in his hand from Phoebe to Barbara, had demanded to see the superscription, and on a slight demur by Elijah had kicked away his crutch and slapped him to the ground. Charles enjoined him to say nothing of this, and it was not known to Thornton till some time after. Meantime, Phoebe continued to come to Lastlands, and when John D. and Buttons came out on Saturdays the young people had many pleasant hours, loitering together in the delightful precincts.

## CHAPTER XX

### TITLES OF HONOR IN KENTUCKY

"Colonels without regiments, and captains without companies."

THAT readers unacquainted with Kentucky manners and customs may understand how Thornton, whom they have known at The Falls as plain Robert Thornton, after a short residence in the country, in a time of profound peace, came to have a military title and to be on all hands called *Colonel* Thornton, it becomes necessary to say, parenthetically, something of the sources of titles of honor in Kentucky. Their chief technical source is the prerogative of the governor, who may appoint an indefinite number of gentlemen to be commissioned as colonels, and to constitute his military staff. By the exercise of this prerogative every fourth year since the inauguration of Governor Shelby in 1792, a very considerable addition had been made, and will continue to be made, to this array of Kentucky colonels, already in number an army in themselves. For a time these officers were accustomed to consider their corps as only the skeleton of an army, of which the muscles and sinews and other requisite parts were to be supplied when the proper occasion should occur. It has now attained gigantic proportions, for which, if it were desired to hide it, the Mammoth Cave itself would not afford a sufficient skeleton closet; and there is some talk in military circles of a provision for subaltern officers and a few privates.

But the prerogative of the governor is not the only source of these titles. A more prolific source—the very “*officina*” of titles of honor—lies in the “unbought grace” and the “omnipotent fiat” of the people. They delight in titles, and bestow them with a liberal hand; not indiscriminately nor capriciously, but with well-defined fitness and order.



The necessary qualifications are three in number: popularity, aquiline features, and a martial bearing. Every popular man, willing or not, is liable to have a title of honor imposed upon him. This is not always the title of colonel, to which the governor's appointment seems to be restricted, but is graduated according to the measure in which the requisite qualifications are possessed by each individual, reaching as high as general, and as low as major, within which limits lie all the military titles thus conferred. In cases where all the required qualifications are possessed, the individual is sure to be made a general, except he be handicapped by some unwarlike feature, as great breadth of back and sesquipedality of belly, suggestive of the commissariat, when he is remitted to that department with the title of "Major." Where the individual is only popular, possessing neither aquiline features nor a martial bearing, and is, moreover, handicapped by the unwarlike features indicated, he is regarded as clean out of the category of military men, and is relegated to civil life with the title of "Judge." Some confusion is made in two of these titles, that of judge and that of general, by the fact that a judge of horses often has this first title conferred though he may know nothing of law, and every attorney-general has all his rank merged in the sonorous military title, and is called general. Sometimes of a judge it is necessary to ask whether he be of stock or of the law.

The army of officials thus created by the governor's prerogative and the fiat of the people, vast as it is, is yet by no means expensive. None of them receives any pay, and all furnish their own rations. Moreover, though some zealous members of the governor's staff have been known, on receipt of their commissions, to buy copies of Vauban and Jomini, with a view to important active service, they are not required to possess any technical knowledge, nor "to know more of the divisions of a battle, or how to set a squadron in the field, than a mere spinster."

Many of these dignitaries affect to think lightly of their titles, speaking of them with "a mocking lip and noble scorn," as if they despised greatness. Yet it is observed that they are not pleased to have their rank ignored, and

are mortally offended on being called by an inferior title; as when a general is saluted as colonel, a colonel as major, a major as captain, or a judge as squire.

Thornton's title came by the popular fiat.

## CHAPTER XXI

### LOITERING AT THE RIDGE-LICK

"What knowest thou of birds, lark, mavis merle,  
Linnet? What dream ye when they utter forth  
May music, growing with the light,  
Their sweet sun worship? These be for the snare  
(So runs thy fancy), these be for the spit,  
Larding and basting."

AT LASTLANDS were many pleasant loitering places for the young people. A favorite spot was on the banks of the Anser, half a mile above the house, in the shade of spreading elms and beeches, where a rustic seat was placed beneath a beech that had grown up with a wild grape-vine about it, and now, enfolded in the thousand arms and tendrils of the vine, made immaculate shade. Opposite, on the further shore of the stream, was the beginning of the "Ridge," high ground, at the foot of which burst out a spring, filling with its waters a natural bowl in the rock and flowing thence with a sparkling current into the Anser. This was the best spring within the Lastlands domain, and was known far and wide as the "Ridge-lick," a name given to it by the old hunters, who had often lain in ambush there for deer and other game that came to slake their thirst. It was confidently said that Boone had often drunk there. The Ridge, beginning here, extended in a northeasterly course, expanding gradually into a high rolling upland containing many thousand acres of primitive woods. Deer were still to be found in these woods, and sometimes visited this spring. One morning, a typical spring morning,—when "all the world was May,"—Barbara and John D. had sat there, his rifle on the seat between them, when a doe with two fawns came to the spring to drink. Instinctively John D.'s hand stole to his rifle,

but Barbara's hand was quickly laid on his, and she whispered, "No, John D.," and he whispered back, "No, Barb"; and the doe stood with her wild black eyes staring toward them, but seeming not to see them, her ears pricked forward, and after a moment, as at a signal, the fawns bounded away, their white tails spread abroad, and were followed by the doe into the shadows of the wood.

Later in the season, at the time of the oat harvest, while John D. and Buttons were at Lastlands for the summer, they found themselves, with Barbara, and Phoebe Vaughn, and Paul, loitering at the same spot, when two of the harvest hands came by, one of whom showed to them, lying on his "cradle," a large dead rattlesnake. While the young people were looking at this, and expressing in various ways the horror which that reptile always inspires, old Kirby came along the path and joined the group.

"Where did you kill that?" he said to the man.

"Down in the oatfield," he replied. "We was cuttin' some lands left yistiddy, and we found him in thar."

"He tried to get away from you, didn't he?"

"Yes, sir; he kep' hidin' in de oats, till it was all down, and den he run."

"And you followed him up?"

"Yes, sir; till he come to a stump and quirked hisself up."

"And rattled, didn't he?"

"Yes, sir—"

"And then you killed him?"

"Yes, sir."

"The fairest enemy in the world! Nothing sneaking or mean about him. He always tries to get away, if he sees you; and if he only hears you, he coils near a stump or a log, or the root of a tree, and gives fair warning. I'd rather kill any snake than a rattler! I do kill 'em, but I always have a bad feeling over it." And then, looking at the tail of the reptile, he said, "He's ten years old—about—nine rattles and a button." Then, holding it by the neck, he put into its mouth a stick with which he drew into light two great fangs, crooked and thickened at the base like fishbones, and sharp as needles. As he withdrew the stick



they were quickly drawn within, as by a spring. Then taking up the body, he carried it to a large flat stone that lay near, and said, "There's a settlement of ants under this stone. I'll lay him on it, and by to-morrow or next day they'll have him all packed away for provender—all but the bones—and you can get his skeleton and keep it for a curiosity. We had skeletons of a'most every snake in the wilderness. And I've got a big eel's skeleton, the biggest eel I ever saw. It looks like a row of pipe stems. I was fishin' one day along the Anser and saw a fish hawk catch it on the ripple. And *such* a squirming *and* twisting as that eel made I never saw. And then an eagle came and made the hawk drop it, and caught it himself, in the air, and still it squirmed *and* twisted. But the eagle carried it off, and lit on a tree and ate it. It took him about an hour or more to get done, and I happened to be looking at him when he finished and flew away, and I saw something dropped from the tree, and I went there and found the skeleton on the ground, picked as clean as if it had been scoured and sandpapered, or cleaned by ants. Nothing can beat ants cleanin' bones."

After some further desultory talk, he began to discourse of the birds. "It is astonishin' to think how few small birds were in the wilderness; such birds as are all around now in the garden and the bushes and along the fences. As the settlements were made, they came around. The swallows quit the hollow trees and took to the chimneys; and another swallow that lives in the cliffs, took to the eaves of the houses, and especially to the barns and the sheds. It looks as if they were intended to live with the white man, and had been only waiting for the settlements, to take up their board with him. But there's other birds that leave the country as the clearings are made. The ivory-bill woodpeckers—you seldom see them now. And the paroquet, he's off and gone, thank goodness! A mischievous fellow! I've seen a flock of 'em light on an apple tree and, in two minutes, throw down every apple to the ground. And they eat nothing but the seeds! There used to be a good many of 'em along the bottoms where they fed on the pecans. But the pecans are pretty much all gone now. People cut down

the trees to get the nuts. There's thousands of paroquets still along the bottoms of the lower Ohio, but the people are destroying the pecan trees in the same way there, and the paroquets will have to move again. It's a question of grub. There's no question about the usefulness of the birds that take up with the settlements. Look at the swallows at the barn, all day long on the wing catching the weevil and the flies that pester the grain. Even the little wrens, with their houses full of young ones, are busy the whole day long destroying bugs. And the pewees! I've seen 'em under my porch, where they have a nest of young ones—five, feeding the whole day long. First comes the cock bird with a bug, and gives it to the first young one in the row. They all stretch up their necks, and open their mouths wide enough to let you see down their throats, but he drops it into the first mouth, and then flies away. Then comes the mother, and up fly all the necks again, and she drops a worm in the second mouth, and then comes the cock and gives his to the third mouth, and so they go on all day, and, I believe, never make a mistake. I've watched 'em on Sundays, when I've been lying on the bench there, for hours, and they always keep the right count. Take all the birds together, there's hardly any calculatin' how many mischievous bugs they make way with. I heard an old man that studied a great deal about birds and about bugs, say that if all the birds were destroyed, all the trees, and pretty much everything that grows, would be devoured by bugs. And I've noticed in the neighborhood of town, where the birds are pretty much killed off by the boys, that the rough-barked trees, the locusts and the walnuts and the hackberries, don't flourish like they used to do. And right in town the black locust will hardly grow at all, but is destroyed by the borer before it gets four years old. When there were plenty of small woodpeckers around, they picked out the borers, and the trees flourished. And there's great destruction of birds goin' on all around. The Colonel takes good care of the woodpeckers, and in fact of all the birds" (here he gave a little chuckle), "even of the rascally, thievin' jays and crows, that steal my eggs right under my nose. He says

we must give and take in this world and not want it all. But it's astonishin' to see how keen after all kinds of birds the youngsters are! They used to come out here from town, and although the Colonel's father had forbid any shooting about the great-house and the grounds there, when these young strangers were here he didn't like to forbid them, and sometimes they just powdered the grass with feathers. But now Miss Barbara there stops 'em"—here he gave a chuckle and a shake of his head—"it's just no use to talk, when she puts in. They just c-a-n't kill the birds when she's about! To see how crazy they were after even the poor little singing birds! It was kill, kill, kill, from morning to night. There's a singer!" he whispered, "a little tiny fellow, but the finest of all—just piping up. Listen" (making a gesture to impose silence), "it's the wood-thrush."

Every ear was now set to hear this marvelous songster, whose prelude had just been sounded. No words can give even an adequate notion of this strange wild melody. The negroes, who have a wonderful faculty of imitation, and can "mawk" almost all sounds made by bird or beast, cannot imitate this. Even the mocking-bird fails here. He cannot give the reed-like tone; and though he may catch one or more of the parts, he cannot connect them, and loses the pauses, which are as effective as the rests in music. Naturalists have described this song as consisting of many parts; some of them of as many as seven. But this chronicler has never heard but three. The first, Wilson likens to "double-tonguing" on a flute, or the rapid tinkling of a bell, which gives the best idea of its character, but does not express the spirit that is in it. After this first part there is a pause; then comes the second part, with no trace of double-tonguing, but far sweeter and more full; then another pause; and then the third and last, "a dying fall," which fills the ear with satisfaction and delight. We grow indifferent to the songs of many birds, as they are staled by custom; but who was ever indifferent to the song of this thrush? The ear soon hungering, we cry, as Jaques to the tuneful Amiens, "More, I prythee, more—come, warble, come!"

And then he is so shy and modest! So chary of his little person, that few people have ever seen him. It is said by Bartram, an eager lover of birds, that though living for fifteen years where, in summer, he heard them every day singing, and though constantly looking for them, he never got sight of one! Yet they seem to like an audience; for when singing, his favorite perch is upon some high leafy branch near the edge of the settler's clearing. But if you go about to spy after him, he stops singing at once, and hides. After the primitive woods are cut down they all go away. They give up to the tanagers, and catbirds, and the orioles, and other familiars of the landscape gardener, the shrubberies, and the gardens, and the orchards, and go away into the primitive woods. No artificial wilderness will then entice them to stay. With the old pioneers, whose favorite minstrels they were, they flee before the axe and the advancing light of civilization into the twilight of the frontier; as those sprites the poet feigns to dwell about the shadow of the earth flee before the advancing sun, "following darkness like a dream."

And has not everything that was most beautiful under its glamour vanished with the changeful solemn twilight that inspired Gray—the twilight of primitive days—"the wizard twilight Coleridge knew"? The fierce light that beats upon an unshadowed earth has wrought a sad disenchantment, disrobing the earth of its brightest vesture! Well might the young poet, with the warm temper of boyhood, complain:

"Science! true daughter of old Time thou art!  
 Who alterest all things with thy peering eyes,  
 Why preyest thou thus upon the poet's heart—  
 Vulture, whose wings are dull realities?

\* \* \* \* \*

"Hast thou not dragged Diane from her car?  
 And driven the Hamadryad from the wood,  
 To seek a shelter in some happier star?  
 Hast thou not torn the Naiad from the flood,  
 The elfin from the green grass, and from me  
 The summer dream beneath the tamarind tree?"

Many birds indigenous to the locality had now disappeared from Lastlands; first the eagles and then the paro-



quets and the great woodpeckers, notably the ivory-bill. These and others seem fitted only for the wilderness, and as the land is redeemed, fly away to other wilds. But as plants unknown before soon sprang unbidden about the settler's feet, so other birds, before unobserved or rarely seen, gathered about his cabins; and both plants and birds now accompany him everywhere. The two classes of birds exhibit marked difference in form and coloring, and character. The strength and the formidable beaks and talons of eagles and other great birds of prey plainly indicate their affinity with the violence and ferocity of savage life. The great woodpeckers, though they prey on nothing more formidable than the large horned beetles, yet bear in their coloring, red and black, the favorite coloring of the Indians, and in their crests, like scalp-locks, emblems of their affiliation with these savages; and the gaudy array of the parquet bears a similar indication. All birds that are incapable of adapting themselves to civilized life bear somewhere, in their markings, similar stamps; splashes of color laid on with a careless barbaric grace, as on the tails of the passenger pigeons, and on the wings of others indefinite tracery suggesting emblematic designs. And these refuse all familiarity with man, are untamable, fighting to the last against all restraint, and for absolute freedom. On the other hand, such birds as attach themselves to civilized man bear in their markings a certain definite regularity in harmony with his designs, and a domestic, household coloring that belongs to him: the bright goldfinches and tanagers and indigo-birds presenting his favorite colors for ornamentation: not forgetting the dainty waxwings, and the cardinals, with their pretty hats, nor the swipe-swallow with his suit of coal-black velvet, so completely adjusted to his sooty home in the chimney. And all these, if unharmed, become familiar with man, and nearly all may be easily tamed. May we not recognize in these things some of the infinite subtle harmonies of the universe?

At Lastlands the rule established by Thornton's father, forbidding the pursuit of birds or any game within the extensive grounds about the homestead, and now enforced, was followed by its natural effect. These creatures are

prompt to discover any place where they are safe from their enemies, and they quickly availed themselves of this; filling the large area of wood and plain and valley with all the many varieties of birds. The singers were there in force, and in spring and summer made vocal all the groves and shrubberies; the mocking-birds, even in the night, while the moon shone, singing continually. In the early fall these and the jangling jays, and the various shouting and drumming woodpeckers, and the feathered mob at large, made a bird babel in the wooded preserves.

In a high broken snag near the house a colony of screech-owls had long been domiciled. One of these always saluted the setting sun; sounding from his high campanile an evening bell; sending forth the notes, as the drumming pheasant does, in such a wavering fashion as perplexes the ear, and long baffled all efforts to locate the bellman.

The blackbirds, in time, gave up their roosting place in the willows below the town for a wood containing a small canebrake, near the house at Lastlands, and thronged there at nightfall; their coming marked by unfailing punctuality, announced by the roar of their thousand wings and their cry, "check—check," then quickly settling into silence and sleep.

Along the Anser wildfowl of many kinds fed and disported in security. By the shore, moving with slow and stealthy tread, or in the shallows standing fixed as a statue, the great blue crane watched for his prey. Wild geese, in the season of their migration, often alighted and passed the night with a large band of their brethren long domesticated there. One particular flock of the wild geese established such an intimacy, that, during certain seasons of the year, they made the Anser their roosting place, and were known and recognized throughout the neighborhood as the "Lastlands geese," and were respected accordingly. One of these, a male bird, captivated by a siren among the domesticated birds, remained behind, one spring, after his companions had gone away, and continued there during the nesting season, but in the fall went, leaving the siren and a numerous progeny behind. That all this bird life gave interest and zest to the beautiful pleasure grounds at Last-

lands, and made them a delightful loitering place for old and young, the reader needs not to be told.

Curious it is, and pitiful, to see with what persistency, and against what hindrances, certain birds cling to civilized man. Nay, against what destructive hostility! For since, with a strange indifference to such a barbarous fashion, their skins, and their feathers, and even their dismembered limbs have become modish ornaments for women, and each bird, according to its beauty, has a price set on its head, they are menaced with extermination. Yet still they cling to us; none more persistently than the little humming-birds, seemingly too delicate for the rough warfare of life. Even in the towns, if there be anywhere a bed of flowers, thither, with heavenly hues, as from the skies, come these "jewels of ornithology,"

"Least winged of all the vagrants of the sky,"

outshining far the gaudy array of bloom. Poised on viewless wings, they drop from flower to flower, briefly display their rainbow hues, then shoot like golden bolts back to the skies.

Nay, even in the heart of great cities, where all traces of nature have been effaced, among brick walls and paved streets, and amidst the din of traffic, is now found, come from afar over the sea, another bird to bear us company even there: a cosmopolite, at home everywhere, consorting with the humble ragpicker in the gutters, or nesting in the eaves of the rich man's dwelling. It is the house-sparrow, the bird of Holy-writ, that cried out from the housetops in Judea; the hardy little finch, for ages the companion of the tough race in whose annals he is first recorded, come to bear them company here; bringing the ancient virtues common to both, thrift and independence, here as everywhere alive, indomitable, indestructible, inexpugnable—"COME TO STAY"—and to find, let us hope, in fresh America instead of effete Asia, their new Jerusalem.

Shall we always remain insensible to the value of these beautiful creatures? They were not made only to enliven and embellish our homes. They are also useful—nay, indispensable—to check the inordinate growth of insects. All

birds destroy insects, and all (except pigeons and their congeners and birds of prey) feed their young exclusively on insects. This is one of the many complementary designs of Providence, by which, through antagonistic forces, all things in the Universe are kept in just proportion and equilibrium. As the forests are cleared away and the ground exposed to the vivifying rays of the sun, insects multiply with amazing rapidity. The late advent in force of the potato beetle, and of two new kinds of flies whose larvæ are destructive to the cabbage plant, have given us a foretaste of what may occur in the future. What germs of what other insects, still more destructive, may lie in the ground, awaiting the destruction of the forests and of the birds, and now kept in abeyance by the shadows of the one and the unremitting aggression of the other, we know not. When they shall come as in the treeless districts of the Old World, and in like districts of our own land, the locusts come, in countless number, obscuring the sun,—of whom Joel says, “Before them is a garden of Eden, and behind them a desolate wilderness,”—then we shall know, but only too late, when the plague is upon us.

Spare the birds, good husbandmen! Nay, cherish them! Provide about your habitations trees and shrubs in which they may disport themselves. Plant hedges of thorn in which they may nest in security; and grant, not grudgingly but freely, their right, when,

“Tamed by the cruel season, they crowd around  
The winnowing store and claim the little boon  
That Providence assigns them.”



## CHAPTER XXII

### THE DUKE

**"And in his nose, like Indian king,  
He wore for ornament a ring."**

THE herdsman's cottage was another favorite loitering place for the young people; and, with that perversity which belongs to humanity, a chief attraction there was at the same time an object of dread. This was the "Duke," a bull sent out from England by Dick Thornton. It was not known of what breed he was, but, like the other cattle sent out by Thornton, he was of immense size. They were all called by the general name of English cattle. In color they were for the most part dark red, but all had some white marks, and the Duke had a large and very conspicuous white disk which covered the greater part of his loin. When he came to Lastlands a metal ring was in his nose, forecasting the ferocity which he soon showed, becoming so fierce and dangerous that it was necessary to keep him confined in a stall, from which he was never removed except with a staff fastened to this ring.

Kirby had at first a great prejudice against the Duke, because he was a British animal. But he got over this, after having had him for a time in charge, and even grew fond of him, taking pride in his ferocity. "He's a devil," he would say, smiling and shaking his head, when exhibiting him to visitors, "but there ain't no deceit in him. He hates strangers like pison, and he lets 'em know it on sight. Keep clear of him; he can't do anything with his head while I've got hold of this staff, but he'll twist his heels round toward you, and big as he is, and clumsy as he looks, he's quick as a fish."

It was not often necessary to repeat these cautionary remarks; for few people who went to see the Duke, except

professional cattle-men, cared to stand long in his presence, while he constantly menaced them, rolling his great fierce eyes, and lashing his tail, and restlessly twisting about his body, in efforts to get near them. They were glad when he was led away, and drew an easier breath when the door of his stall was closed upon him. As for that slender iron ring, it seemed but a hook in the nose of Leviathan.

The lame boy 'Lijah had a great admiration for the Duke. At his earnest solicitation Thornton had placed him with Kirby, "to help him with the cattle." When not otherwise employed, he was pretty sure to be found about the stall of the Duke, sitting in the loft above, where he could look down into the bull's eyes, and yet be safe from his horns. Finding the boy so often in close proximity to him, the bull became indifferent to his presence, and ceased to make hostile demonstration; and, afterward, he became restless when the usual visit was not paid, and made his uneasiness known by a peculiar lowing. By and by 'Lijah made further advances, scratching his head with his crutch, and then putting down his hand, which was rasped by the bull's tongue. Then he rubbed the base of his horn; finally he got down beside him, and at last rubbed and handled him at pleasure. Many were the dainties gathered and saved by 'Lijah for his friend the Duke—beets and carrots, and cabbage leaves, to relieve the monotony of his diet, and now, in summer, he was often regaled even with water-melons; and thus grew up a strange friendship between the lame negro boy and the mighty bull.

The young people were never permitted to see the Duke except from behind the heavy stone wall of Kirby's garden, whence they looked on with awe, as Kirby led him about for exercise. On their way to the cottage they were careful to go around the cattle-yard, keeping its stone walls and strong battened gates between them and the Duke; looking toward the window of his stall, and whispering, and walking lightly, awed by the proximity of the dreadful brute. And they took to flight when he recognized their presence by a lowing more frightful than his loudest bellow, a moan as of fierce anguish at hated humanity passing so near and being not gored and tossed!

At the cottage they delighted to inspect the curious things that Kirby had collected there; spoils of war and of the chase—buffalo robes, the skins of panthers and wildcats, and the sloughs of various serpents; and Indian curiosities, wampum, medicine-bags, pipes, bows and arrows, tomahawks and scalping knives, some of these last stained and rusted, it was said, with human blood. Over the chimney in his sleeping-room hung the long rifle with which he had hunted and scouted against the Indians, and in the corner stood an old musket which he was supposed to have borne in the war against the British. Upon these the lads looked with reverence.

When sated with the curiosities of Kirby's museum, the young people had found unfailing delight in sitting upon the bridge across the branch, in the shade of the great elm, watching the minnows, and the crawfish, and the merry-go-rounds, and the water spiders skating over the iridescent surface, and the movements of the countless tenants of the stream.

One idle Saturday afternoon, in the lazy latter days of summer, Barbara, and John D., and Paul, and Phoebe Vaughn, and Buttons were loitering in the shade there, when old Kirby came down to them, bringing for their delectation two great watermelons fresh from his cold spring. The old man loved the society of these young people, and was kept in continual quiet laughter by their simple prattle; and on their part he was considered a veritable hero. They would gladly have known the story of his life, "whereof by parcels they had something heard," but had too much delicacy to ask for it. But John D. now ventured some questions about the hunting of wild beasts in the wilderness, and the old man sat down and began to discourse of these:

"There were no very dangerous beasts in the wilderness. The deer, you know, are innocent and helpless. It was not counted sport to hunt them. We killed them pretty much as we now kill sheep, for the meat and the skin. But a wounded buck is a mighty dangerous fellow, and when his eyes turn green, and his hair is turned all the wrong way, and he bristles from end to end, look out! I was camped

one fall down on Briar Creek, and one morning a big buck ran up within twenty steps of me, and stopped, looking back over his shoulder. I pulled on him, thinking to break his neck, certain, and at the crack of the gun down he went, right in his tracks. For the first time in my life that I ever did the like, I walked up to that buck with my gun empty! There he lay dead as a stone—I thought: a splendid fellow, with eight prongs, and a neck like a bull. I was just making, in my mind, a guess at his weight, when I saw his eyes begin to snap; and I had just time to jump behind a tree, when he was up and at me! I kept the tree between us, dodging behind it, and found it all I could do to keep him from getting a lunge at me, for he was as nimble as a cat. We kept up this dodging behind the tree until I began to tire. I had been sick with ague in the summer, and my wind was not as good as common, and my legs began to shake under me, and I felt that I must give out after a while, and thought to club my gun and aim to hit him between the eyes with the barrel. But I knew that if I missed, he would be likely to kill me, and so I concluded to keep up the dance with him a little longer. As luck would have it, he stopped all at once, and I kept out of his sight behind the tree, and he seemed to forget me, and walked away. Then I loaded my gun and followed after him, and saw him wading across a wide shallow pond, and took a long shot at him, but I was so shaky that I didn't hit him, and he went off.

"The panther is a great coward. They are always on the run; and even when wounded, try to get away without a fight; and when they are clinched by the dogs they scratch and claw only to get loose and run.

"But of all cowardly beasts the wolf takes the lead! You may even take the whelps from an old she without a fight. I knew, down in the Briar Creek region, not many years ago, a fellow that found the den of an old she, and he and his wife went there one night, and she held the torch while he went in and brought out the whelps. It was a good find for them. They left one whelp behind to keep the mother in heart, and took her whelps every season for seven or eight years, and got six dollars apiece for their scalps from



the State. Everybody down there respected this man's right to that wolf. One fall I was down there in a camp with Captain Shelby and some other gentlemen from The Falls when the man that owned the wolf came with another man into our camp. They always came about any camp that happened to be in the neighborhood. I had just come in with a buck, and had hung him on the pole, and was sitting down, smoking a pipe. I asked them to take some whisky, but they wouldn't have any. This astonished me so that I took a good look at their faces, and I saw that something was wrong. Just then Captain Shelby came out from the tent where he had been lying down, and shook hands in his kind way, and asked them to take something, and they refused him in such a surly manner that it riled me a little, and I said, 'What has got into you men? You won't drink, and you look like you had something on your minds. If there's anything wrong, talk it right out, and let us know it!' Then the man that owned the wolf said, 'Some of you men has killed my wolf.' Then the Captain asked him if he had a pet wolf, and that made him look madder than before. But I, knowing all about this wolf, put in, and explained it to Captain Shelby, and assured the man that none of us had killed his wolf, and satisfied him; and then they took some whisky and went away good friends with us.

"Two days after that I was down at the mouth of Salt River at a store-boat there, and met old man Sawyer. You've heard of him, I reckon. He'd been in the woods nearly all his life, and was an old Indian fighter, and was camped with another party near there. Well, as we were swappin' camp stories, he told me that a few days before, for the first time in his life, he had been made to climb a tree. 'I had followed a doe,' says he, 'just at daybreak, down into a little bottom under a cliff on Knob Creek, where I lost her; and while I was standin' there studyin' about the doe, I saw on the edge of the cliff, a'most over my head, what I took for a dog snuffin' the air. Pretty soon I saw it was a wolf, and I pulled on it, and it jumped right squar out from the cliff and fell right at my feet. And I dropped my gun and went up a tree! Did, for a

fact! Pretty soon I saw she was bleedin' at the mouth, and bitin' the wound behind the shoulder, and I lit out of the tree and stood by her, loadin' my gun while she died; an old she with teeth pretty near wore out. But she treed me! I think I'll hang up my gun and go into the chimney corner, and stay thar.' And the old man looked right downhearted. Of course, I knew then what had become of the fellow's wolf, but I said nothing about it."

"How about the bears, Mr. Kirby?" said John D. "Aren't they pretty dangerous?"

"Well, they are powerful beasts, and dangerous at close quarters, but they will never attack a man when they can get away, except maybe an old she with cubs."

"Mr. Kirby," said Buttons, "I have read about wolves following travelers in sleighs and devouring them and their horses."

"I've heard of that, too," said Kirby, "but it must have been in some other country, where they get starved out and gather in packs. There's no telling what hunger will make a beast do, nor a man, either. They used to say that Daniel Boone's brother was killed by wolves, but I never knew any hunter that believed it. I never saw 'em in a pack but once. I went one year—it was the year of the cold winter—to hunt over on Blue River, in Indiana territory. It hadn't been very cold up to that time, but it turned, all at once, bitter cold, and I found that the mast had all been blighted over there, and there wasn't an acorn or nut of any kind in the woods, and the game had all left the country, and so I packed up and started back home. Meat was mighty scarce that winter. On my way back I stopped with old Daddy Claghorn, and stayed all night. The old man had just killed a beef, and I helped him to dress it, and nothing would do him when I started home but I must take a piece along on my horse. I set out late, with a big piece of the beef behind my saddle. It had turned fearfully cold. The sun came out, but it looked sick and pale, and had no heat in it. There wasn't a breath of wind, but the air stung like nettles, and the trees through the woods were popping like rifles. About sundown, when I

was only a few miles from the river, I found that I was followed by a pack of wolves. They kept pretty far away at first, but as the dusk came on they pressed up, and when it got dark I could see their eyes shining close behind my horse's heels, and hear 'em rustling through the dry leaves. My horse was an old campaigner, and knew what a wolf is, but I think he was a little dubious at seeing so many together. Anyway, he didn't show much sign of being afear'd, but only snorted now and then, and took a somewhat pearter gait. Once or twice they got so saucy that I thought to cut the meat loose and let 'em fight over it; but I couldn't bear the idea of surrendering to wolves, so I held on and brought it in. They followed me clean into the town of New Albany, far enough to set all the dogs in the little settlement to yelping and barking, and they kept it up all night; and next morning they were all out snuffin' around, with their bristles up, on the trail."

Here Kirby rose and seemed about to go away, and said, apparently as a parting speech: "But of all the hunting in the world there is nothing like hunting *men*. Go on a scout after a war party of Indians, or even of British, and you will think all other hunting tame after that." Here he looked toward the barn, where 'Lijah was seen separating the milking cows for the cupping, when Buttons, who did not stand in awe of heroes, having been made "blasé" by familiarity with them in the green-room, eagerly broke in, saying:

"Mr. Kirby, how many British did you kill in the war?"

Kirby began to laugh in his low, quiet fashion, and to redden and to shake his head in a deprecating way, and after a while said: "Mr. Buttons, I don't like to say; a soldier ought to be modest about his war record."

"That's just like Uncle Jeems," said Buttons. "He was in the war, and when I asked him how many he killed he said he didn't kill any. But I know that ain't so; for he went in a lieutenant, and they made him a captain, and I know they wouldn't 'a' done that if he hadn't killed a good many. A man must be a mighty poor fighter, to be in a war three years and not kill anybody."

Barbara had been making ineffectual signals to Buttons

to quit this subject, and at last she said: "No matter how many of the British Mr. Kirby may have killed, he was only doing his duty as a soldier, and now may not like to talk about it."

The old fellow reddened again, and laughed, and made his deprecatory shake of the head, and then, suddenly straightening and looking at the audience, and raising his voice, said: "Would you like to hear the whole truth about my record in the war?"

"Of course we would!" said all the boys in a chorus.

"Well," said the old soldier, speaking slowly and emphatically, while the eyes of his hearers were riveted on him, "in the whole war I never killed a man; I never fired a shot; I NEVER EVEN COCKED A MUSKET ON THE BRITISH!"

The audience made a visible inhalation and exhalation, ejaculating, "Oh—my!"

"No, I never even cocked a musket on the British! It's awful, ain't it?"

"Awful!" echoed the entire audience.

"I enlisted in the regular army, and I was in about the first line of battle formed after Hull's surrender. There had been some skirmishing afar off, but not a shot had been fired on our line, when a stray bullet, from the Lord knows where, struck my leg and broke it; and they took me into the hospital and cut it off. After I got well, with a buckskin pad to muffle my crutch, I served in the hospital, and afterward, with this stump, in the subsistence department, sometimes butchering and sometimes herding cattle. I tried to get into the cavalry, but couldn't. I did my best wherever they put me, until peace came. My conscience is clear; but it is the greatest sorrow of my life that I never even cocked a musket on the British! No, no, Miss Barbara, I'd felt no misgivings about killing 'em. If I'd killed half the British army I'd wished I'd killed some more."

And then the old soldier went away, leaving his young hearers with saddened faces. Buttons immediately gave voice to the universal sentiment, saying: "Poor Mr. Kirby! I bet if it hadn't been for that stray bullet he'd 'a' killed



many a British!" And Kirby remained still a hero with the young people.

Here the chronicler cannot forbear to observe how unsatisfactory must be much of this chronicle, stopping short, and disappointing the reader just where some pleasing or exciting narrative seems to be promised. Yet such is ever the story of real life: never complete and rounded off, as are the tales of romance, but ever fragmentary—ever a story of "purposes broken off." Perhaps in that higher life,

"That one far-off divine event  
To which the whole creation moves,"

when we shall have put off this "muddy vesture of decay," and, eye to eye, shall look on knowledge; when the very primer of the new life shall unfold to us the mysteries of cosmogony, and the earth's history and the story of man's life upon it shall lie open to us, to be read as a tale that is told, all its riddles shall be solved, all that seems now purposeless or the work of chance shall be found combined in a complete and perfect whole, far transcending any conception of human imagination. Meantime, let us curb our mad desire to penetrate what is beyond the scope of our vision, and rest content in implicit trust in the Divine power that created and sustains the universe.

The attention of these young students of natural history had now been for some time turned to the inhabitants of the Anser and the branch, and the bridge had become a point for observation and study, as well as a favorite loitering place. In a deep, clear pool, made by quarrying out the rock below the bridge, they saw the minnows disporting, or gathered in a dark mass at the bottom. And they saw them, when a fly chanced to fall on the surface, all dart at once to seize it. At intervals a bass dashed into the pool, sending them leaping out of the water in terror, or a water snake glided among them like a lance, bearing off a minnow in its jaws. When Mr. Kirby had gone they resumed their observations, and were watching a large crawfish sitting at the mouth of his burrow in the bank, near the bottom of the stream, his great claws idly folded

before him, when a big bullfrog was seen suddenly to leap upon him, and instantly these two creatures were clinched in deadly conflict. The liveliest interest was at once excited in this battle between two of the largest tenants of the stream, a "reptilian" and a "crustacean." A fight in an African river, between a shark and a crocodile, could hardly excite there more concern than was now felt in this struggle in the branch. Barbara and Phoebe grew pale, while John D. and Paul and Buttons, fired with the "*gaudium certaminis*," enjoyed vicariously "the rapture of the fight." But the water soon became so discolored by mud stirred up by the combatants below that they could no longer be seen, and continuing in this state until twilight, the young people reluctantly went away without knowing the issue of the battle. They flew at once to Mr. Wall to announce the event. Though laughing heartily at their animated account, he was much interested, and promised to go down with them early next morning and find out the issue.

Meantime, Buttons and John D. and Paul eagerly speculated upon the probable result. Buttons thought the crawfish in the right, being on his own premises when attacked, and announced himself decisively *on* the crawfish, and believed that he would win. John D. having, as an angler, had some experience with the claws of crawfish, was of the same persuasion. Mr. Wall and Paul took the same view, Mr. Wall averring that the frog had no aggressive power except to swallow his adversary, and that a big crawfish, with claws like a tailor's shears, as this one was said to have, was a very awkward thing to swallow. Mr. Kirby, whom they met on the way, was of the same mind, and said that the frog had "bit off more'n he could chaw." And they were in the right; for next morning the frog was found still in the clutches of his enemy, and partly drawn into the burrow, and though still "alive and kicking," was manifestly at the mercy of the crawfish. In the course of the day he was wholly drawn within the burrow, doubtless to be there devoured piecemeal by the victor. Had the frog been victorious the craw would have been taken into his capacious maw, there to lie, as has been said of the

prey of the anaconda, "like a great estate in chancery, to be slowly consumed in the interior."

Mr. Wall was accustomed to discourse, at intervals, of something that should illustrate the observations made in these outdoor studies, and open to these eager young minds a wider view of animal life upon the globe; and now, as germane to their late experience, he gave them a description of the great sharks that inhabit the sea, and of their battles; particularly the battles of the swordfish and the thrasher-shark combined, as they often are, against the whale; the swordfish with his long, sharp horn, stabbing the whale while under the water, while the thrasher, when above the waves, struck him with his great tail covered with a coating of enamel as hard as steel, "knocking off," as a sailor had said, "whole slabs of blubber at a blow"—"making the deep to boil as a pot."

He spoke also of the habit of some of these great, fierce fish to devour man, and of the instinct by which they know localities where their prey may be found; haunting the treacherous rocks, lightly submerged, where ships are wrecked; following across the sea slave ships from Africa; learning even the meaning of a sea fight and the feast it promised, and during the great maritime wars of England rallying always promptly to the sound of guns.

These little lectures soon came to be attended by Mrs. Thornton and Mrs. Scudamore, and friends from town, and diffused in the households a strong interest in this subject, and led to that fine museum of natural history which afterward became such an interesting feature at Lastlands.

## CHAPTER XXIII

### PAUL'S CONFESSION

"It were all one  
That I should love a bright particular star  
And think to wed it."

AT LASTLANDS occurred in rapid succession a series of incidents which brought to a determinate state the vague relation in which the houses of Vaughn and Thornton had for some time stood. These will now be told in succession: Thornton, while riding on his accustomed tour of inspection about the plantation, was surprised to hear, in the depths of the great wood, the voice of Paul singing a verse of a ditty then popular with the swains about Lastlands:

"She went up the new-cut road, and I went down the lane,  
And that's the last I ever saw of my sweet Nancy Jane."

Soon he saw Paul in the wagon slowly approaching, sitting on the board seat, in solemn meditation. Checking his horse, Thornton awaited his approach. Suddenly Paul started to his feet, and making a flourish with his whip, causing it to crackle over the heads of the horses, and ending with a loud smack like the crack of a rifle, cried out—storming at the horses—"Confound your lazy pictures! You're creeping along like snails when I feel like going fifty miles an hour or flying away in a balloon—Oh, Lord! Lord!"—and then seeing Thornton, he fell silent.

"Why, what is the matter," Thornton said, "that you feel like traveling at such a rate or flying away in a balloon?"

Paul was as open as the day, never inclined to concealment, and now incapable of hiding from Thornton his disturbed mind. Confession, we are told, is good for the



soul. There are even times when the overcharged heart must have relief or break. No such sad alternative confronted Paul, but his case was serious. He must talk to somebody about it. To no one could he so readily talk as to Thornton, whom he dearly loved, and in whom his trust was implicit, and he spoke out plainly:

"Oh, Colonel Thornton, I am a miserable fellow! I didn't know till lately that it was possible to be so miserable. You know I love Phœbe—I didn't know how much I loved her till now. I hoped that she liked me, but now I know that I will have to give her up; and I can't bear to think of it. I have thought over all the misfortunes that might have come to me, and I believe that I could have mustered courage for anything but this."

"Why, what has happened that makes you all at once so desperate? Have you been saying anything particular to Phœbe that she has answered unfavorably?"

"No, no! I haven't had the courage to go near her lately. I saw her this morning going to visit at Lastlands, and she looked so much too good for me that my heart sunk, and I have given up all hope."

"Why, Paul! I am astonished at you! I, too, saw her, and very lovely she was in her new frock and bonnet. But do you think that a young woman gives up her old friends when she puts on fine clothes? She is the same Phœbe she was yesterday and all this long time that she and you have been such good friends, depend upon it."

"But that is not all. You know that red-headed deputy sheriff, Williams?"

"Yes, I have seen him. He is a nephew of McCrae. What of him? Is he paying attention to Phœbe?"

"Why, of course he is! He has bought a high-headed bay horse and new saddle and bridle and saddle-bags, and a portmanteau, and has been to the dentist in town and had his teeth fixed, and has set in there like a fall rain. I think it ought to be against the law for a man to ride sheriff as he does, in broadcloth clothes and a beaver hat—it's out of all character!"

"Ah, Paul!" Thornton said, smiling. "I am afraid you are prejudiced and uncharitable. I will lay a wager now

that, little as you know of the deputy, you dislike him—at least you don't love him as we are told we should love our neighbor."

"Love him! Jehosaphat!" And then he broke out in hysterical laughter, showing rows of teeth that looked as if they would never need a dentist, and then subsided into grim silence.

"But," said Thornton, "you have not given me any good reason why you are in such a state of desperation. Of course, such a pretty girl as Phœbe, now that she is fast growing up, will have plenty of suitors. You must make up your mind to that. You have had a great advantage in having her so long to yourself. Did you ever tell her that you love her?"

"Oh dear! No; but I thought that she knew it."

"You have just been going along without anything being said on either side?"

"Yes; just like John D. and Miss Barbara."

"John D. and Barb! Do you mean to say that they have a love affair on hand?"

"Oh, no—I ought not to have said that! But they always fall together when we go out walking or getting nuts, or anything like that; just as Phœbe and I used to do. It was always sort of understood among us, without anything being said; and I know now by my own case that John D. loves her, though he may not know it himself. He shows her that he loves her as a brother shows his sister that, and they both think that they are like brother and sister; just as I used to feel once by Phœbe. But just let some other fellow come along and set in there!"

"A red-headed fellow on a high-headed horse, with broad-cloth clothes and a beaver hat—"

"Oh, Colonel! Don't! Yes, any kind of a fellow—and then John D. will find that he has been mistaking his complaint, and will know what ails him."

"Well, Paul, you and Phœbe are older than Barbara and John D. Their case will keep, while yours is more pressing. I think Phœbe is an honest, true-hearted girl, and not one of those ambitious misses that have a precocious fancy for matured beaux, and give up their early

lovers with their dolls. You must take your chances with other suitors. Fair play, and let the best man win."

"But let me tell you: there has been a great change lately in Phoebe's father toward me. He shows plainly that I am not as welcome there now as I was before. He is mightily taken with this deputy sheriff, and would like to see him marry Phoebe— Oh! how in the world did I ever get that out?—it's frightful to think of such a thing!" Here he jerked off his hat and tugged at his hair like a wild man.

"What has her father said or done that makes you think you are not as welcome as before?"

"Nothing directly. But he talks around and over and at me, and is always, in Phoebe's presence, talking about 'Sheriff Williams,' as he calls him, and telling us that he is the favorite of his rich uncle, and will get all his money. The fact is, the old man is mightily changed since he became a slaveholder." Here Paul grinned, and Thornton could not forbear a smile. "You see he looked upon himself as quite another man after he got that little lame boy, Elijah. He watched him like an only child. He was almost afraid to let him do any work, and fed and pampered him like a fighting-cock. They say that when he first got him home he sat up nearly all night watching him while he slept. You see he never owned a nigger before. It beats all, the way he went on about him! The Sunday after he got him home, some young men were there with the Vaughn boys, and they got to sky-larking, throwing walnuts at each other. Pretty soon the walnuts were flying thick right about the back porch, where the old man was sitting in the sun with his nigger. Some walnuts struck the porch, and he sprang to his feet; and then a regular hailstorm of them fell that way, and he rushed out in the direction the walnuts came from, and saw the boys, and broke upon them in a high rage, cavorting and going through a regular war-dance, and stormed out: 'What are you doing, you blamed infernal fools, throwing your stones and things about here? You all-fired jackanapes! Have you lost your senses? Are you crazy? You might knock a nigger's eye out!'"

Thornton laughed at the absurd conduct of his old friend, but cautioned Paul against repeating this story. Then he mused seriously for some moments, and said: "Paul, are you in earnest about wanting to go away?"

Paul hesitated a moment, and replied that if he could get employment away he thought this would be best for him. He wished to Heaven the British would make another war! He would like to be a soldier!

"Bah!" exclaimed Thornton. "That is nonsense. There will never be any more war between enlightened nations. So you may dismiss your military aspirations. What you want is employment in civil life. This country life is too isolated and promises no future for you. I have thought of this, and have written to Bliss, who is making some extensive surveys of the State of Tennessee, along the line of the 'Purchase,' and I have now to tell you that he will give you a place in a month from this time. You will get employment for many months, with good pay, and will have an opportunity to learn something practically of what Mr. Wall has taught you theoretically. Keep this in mind; think it over, but do not speak of it to anyone except perhaps—Phoebe."

"O Lord!"

"You ought to seek an interview with her, and if she does not already know it, you ought to tell her the state of your mind, and without asking her for any pledge, tell her that you are going away, with the hope of getting such a position as will justify you in asking for her love, with the approval of her parents. I think she likes you at least as well, if not better, than anyone else. I'm in earnest, and if I do not state the case more strongly for you it is because I want to keep on the safe side. I don't want to interfere in so delicate a matter, but if you are the young woman's favorite, you shall have her! Buckle down to your mathematics, review your surveying with Mr. Wall, and go out on this expedition. Take whatever place Bliss may offer you, and work faithfully, as I am sure you will, and you will be certain of promotion. I spoke modestly to Bliss of your attainments, which are considerable. It will be better to exceed than to fall short of his expectations.



In this good sense let 'lowliness be young ambition's ladder.' Aim to make your services valuable by excelling in your calling, and escape that galling thing, a sense of dependence, as well as that other abhorred thing—at which the gorge arises—patronage! Let no man presume to patronize you. Be prepared to give a quid-pro-quo in all business transactions. Then you may reach the only true basis of happiness—independence. Then, instead of receiving, you will be able to bestow, and have within your grasp one of the few unalloyed pleasures of this life. Don't make yourself unhappy about Phoebe's suitors. If she prefers you now, she will not change because you are away. As for the deputy, whatever her father may say, she will not fancy him. Opposition will only strengthen Phoebe's liking for you, while by pushing *his* claims he will make her detest him. Does the mother prefer the sheriff?"

"No; I think not. She was always fond of me; just as if I were one of her own sons. Now she looks at me in a kind of tender, sorrowful way, as much as to say, 'Paul, I love you as I always did, but you can't have Phoebe, and I am sorry for you.'"

"I understand:

" 'Cassio, I love thee,  
But never more be officer of mine.'"

She knows her husband's preference for Williams, and, like a good, dutiful wife, foregoes her own and falls in with his wishes. Paul, I tell you if the girl fancies you, you shall have her! Get ready for this surveying expedition. Keep out of the way of Williams; but above all things, avoid a collision with him. Human resentments are bad things to indulge, and never come to any good. Keep a cool head and a good heart, and you will be sure to win. What are you doing, driving the wagon? What have you got in it?"

"Some laps left by the men from the hickory that was struck by lightning. I wanted something to do. I am taking them in for the smokehouse."

"That is very well; but, Paul, you are no longer a wagoner. Make the men unload the wagon and put away the horses."

Then Paul drove away, and Thornton continued his ride through the great woods, indulging in a world of sentiment; identifying himself with the young lover, and vicariously chewing the food of sweet and bitter fancy. "It is strange," he said aloud—"it is strange that I feel such interest in these lovers! Yet I do feel the strongest interest in them. O, 'Love's young dream!' do we ever forget it? I must talk further with Paul. I would rather talk five minutes with him, and hear him pour out from his honest heart his young love, than listen an hour to Ould philosophizing—yes, rather than walk with Plato in his garden." Then he rode away to the outer boundary of Lastlands, reveling in the glories of the primitive woods, and full of that vague but potent feeling inspired in the Anglo-Saxon breast by the possession of land, the pride of domain!

Returning from his ride, as he came near the big gate, he saw, riding leisurely along the road from the house, a horseman, whom at a second glance he recognized as Paul's rival, Deputy Sheriff Williams. Thornton was surprised to see him there, because only visitors to the household at Lastlands were accustomed to enter by this road, it being well understood throughout the neighborhood that all business was transacted by Thornton at the office, which was reached through an avenue that led to the public highway, and was in all respects more convenient. The acquaintance of Thornton with the deputy extended no further than the business transacted when he purchased Sterrett's slaves, and a feeling of irritation now rose within him at seeing him intruding upon his grounds. As fire to the burnt child would have been the appearance there of any executive officer of the courts of law, suggesting always disaster; and now, recalling those black days when his heart-strings had been torn, and his pride touched to the quick by the seizure and imprisonment of his faithful slaves, who might now be distressed by apprehension of some new disaster to him and to themselves, especially irritating was it to see there this nephew of his ignoble enemy, McCrae.

As the two men met and checked their horses, and formally bowed, Thornton wore a stern face. The deputy,

with an unceremonious business air, began at once to unbuckle his saddle-bags, and drew out a bundle of papers. While untying a tape string that bound them, he mumbled:

"You are Mr. Thornton—Robert Thornton, I believe."

"Yes, I am Robert Thornton."

"You are the owner of the Lastlands property, are you not?"

"Well, sir, when you inform me why you have any interest in ascertaining the ownership of Lastlands, I will answer that question. Meantime, I beg to know the object of your visit."

"I have a tax bill against this property, which has been listed in your name, and I came to collect the tax."

"Very well; let me see it," extending his hand.

While Thornton's hand remained extended, unmindful of this, Williams continued to scrutinize the bill, turning it over and back many times. At last he handed the paper to Thornton, who found it only an ordinary tax bill, such as had always been paid by McIntyre at his office, with nothing on the back to require scrutiny; and observing the supercilious expression on the deputy's face, he was satisfied that his long scrutiny of the paper and the question about the ownership of Lastlands, and that about Thornton's own identity, and the ignoring of his military title, were all alike impertinences. Looking over the bill a second time, and discovering that a tract of five hundred acres, the "Ridge tract," as it was called, was set down twice, and thus the tax to that extent doubled, he handed back the paper, and pointing out this manifest error, told the deputy that if he would correct that he would at once give him an order to McIntyre for its payment.

"I have no authority to correct a tax bill," the deputy replied. "It is like an execution in my hands—I am bound to collect all it calls for, right or wrong. You will have to pay it. If it is wrong, you can go before the county court and they may order it to be paid back."

"I think you must be mistaken, but I will take advice. Meantime, in case of other business, I beg that you will call at the office."

The deputy was now busy adjusting his papers, his bridle

rein lying loose on his horse's neck. He made no reply, but tying up his bundle and replacing it in his saddlebags, without a word or salutation rode away. Thornton watched him until the big gate closed behind him with a loud clack, and then rode homeward, speculating upon his unseemly manners. His natural conclusion was that he intended to resent in this way the assault made by Thornton upon his uncle. He had observed, as the deputy sat on his horse, his powerful build, and thought how poor a match, in case they came together, Paul would be for this burly Orson.

As Thornton rode away after the departure of the sheriff, he found himself possessed by an annoying train of reflection. Was he the owner of Lastlands? This question, put by the deputy, again and again recurred to him. He had answered the deputy by treating it as an impertinence; but he now answered it to himself: "No; Lastlands belongs to Dick. It was bought and paid for with Dick's money, and though he has not demanded a deed, it is his."

Dick had been always devoted to his young brother, and proud of him: proud of his manly beauty, his strength, his activity, his dexterity—proud even of his indifference to riches, his love of pleasure, his leadership in the gay life in the town, and the very qualities that had led to financial disaster. Dick had always been Bob's banker. In boyhood, when the father's money resources were drained by expenditure at Lastlands, Dick kept his brother amply supplied. While abroad in England he had sent a regular quarterly supply to eke out the fund provided by their uncle at Norfolk, and afford him some superfluities. Since he had been at Lastlands many fine cattle and sheep had been sent to him from abroad, and many beautiful objects of art for the decoration of the house. Now, not without a sense of shame, he was conscious of having regarded these and Lastlands as his own, and this without any feeling of dependence; but, inured to obligation to Dick, looking upon it all as a matter of course. But now that his relation to Lastlands was made a question by outsiders, and he might be counted in the list of men that had made pretended sales, or contrived to transfer titles, in order to



delay or defeat the just claims of creditors, thus impugning the good faith of both himself and Dick, he was sorely annoyed. Venial as he had regarded such transactions in others, in the distressful times that had come upon the people of late, it was not for him to become a party to such expedients. He had left all his property open to the demands of his creditors. Wherefore the question of the deputy, implying some covert design in the matter of the sale of his interest in Lastlands and the purchase by Dick, assumed a new significance, and stung him with the venom of an insult. But a little cool reflection put him in better temper. He owed no man. His slaves had been bonded by McIntyre, but Dick was behind him, and the slaves behind Dick. "Dear little Dick! Was there ever a better man or a kinder brother?" But he must have deliverance from his dependent position. He would not be thus dependent even upon Dick.

Thornton's suspicions as to the speculations of outsiders, and the concern they felt about his private affairs, were not unwarranted. "The world" will always thus concern itself, as it did now. It does not easily forgive a man for not going absolutely to the dogs when its voice has consigned him to that fate. Thornton's life on a fine place, busy with work suited to his taste, surrounded by congenial neighbors, popular and contented—so absolutely contented that until the lying-in of his wife he had not visited the town since his removal from it—was hotly resented by "the world," and its ears were open to any revelation to his disadvantage.

McCrae had long looked forward to Thornton's downfall, when he thought the full measure of his satisfaction would be attained by becoming himself the purchaser of Lastlands. Old Vaughn also had coveted a part of it, desiring to extend his line far enough within the Lastlands domain to include a portion of the branch, and afford an ample supply to a part of his land destitute of water. He had the same view of Thornton's future as McCrae, and though incapable of his malevolence, had long kept intact his very considerable deposit in bank that he might have ready money when the opportunity to buy should occur. In-

formed of this design, McCrae promised not to stand in his way, and this matter now became the constant theme of their talk. "McIntyre," said McCrae, "will own everything these Thorntons have got. I know that he has furnished all the money that has been spent on the place of late, and has always paid the taxes. The place was bought and paid for by Dick Thornton, but he has never applied for the sheriff's deed, and it is still listed for taxation in Robert Thornton's name. Dick is now away in some foreign land, speculating as he always is. It stands to reason that he can't hold his own with Europeans on their own ground, and pretty soon you will see him come home broke, and then the Irishman will sell them out to pay himself."

With McCrae, the possession of Lastlands became soon a fixed idea. His plans, when he should come to it, were a constant subject of meditation; often covertly riding around the land and spying it out from the borders. All his thoughts were now centered in Thornton's fortunes. He knew well the history of the family. They were of Scotch descent, as he himself was, and with a Scotchman's fondness for genealogies, he was well informed of theirs. He knew well, as Ould had described them, the ups and downs of their career; and he knew, and with a Highlander's superstition, believed—and trembled as he believed—an ancient rhyme that testified to their honor, and foreboded their misfortunes, but foreboded also destruction to them that should do them wrong. He thought them now to be on the decline, and fated to downfall, and he reveled in dreams of disaster to them, but was possessed of a superstitious dread of committing against them any overt act. Yet, full of malevolence, and inspired by the fiend that palters with us in a double sense to think he might safely wound Thornton by indirection, he had set about investigating the case of Mrs. Scudamore, of which some very material facts had come to his knowledge, hoping thus to hold a point of vantage over a part of the Lastlands household. In the same way he had designed to prompt a negro trader to bid for Sterrett's slaves, but had abandoned this on finding that Vaughn desired to buy two of them.

Soon after the interview between Thornton and the deputy, during a vacation in Mr. Wall's school, a collision, as apprehended by Thornton, did occur between Paul and Williams. It was on the way home after a barbecue held in a settlement some distance from Lastlands, where Vaughn's eldest son was accustomed to visit, and where it was said he had found a sweetheart. Desirous of showing to his friends there his pretty sister, of whom he was justly proud, he had got her consent to accompany him thither, and having been always very fond of Paul, had invited him to join them at a point on the road and go with them to the festival. This invitation Paul gladly, but not without tremor, accepted, and accompanied them thither.

The people there were nearly all strangers to Phœbe, and though received with great cordiality, she felt a sense of isolation, which made Paul seem nearer to her than ever before. Both had of late been shy and undemonstrative; for both were now conscious that they sustained a relation to each other which before they had only vaguely suspected, and they now drew together in mutual confidence. If Phœbe had not before manifested for him a preference, she did now plainly manifest it, by a gentle, tender, confiding manner that could not be mistaken, and which Paul himself perceived. Had the brother designed to afford him this opportunity, no better scheme could have been devised. Yet Paul did not speak of what was nearest his heart. With intuitive delicacy, he felt that to avail himself of such circumstances would be to wrong her parents—nay, to wrong Phœbe herself. But her sweet behavior filled him with inexpressible joy and satisfaction—"Happy season of virtuous youth," says Teufelsdröckh, "when shame is still an impassable celestial barrier!"

To Williams, who came later on the ground, Phœbe showed aversion as strongly as she showed liking to Paul, filling Williams with jealous rage. All day he sulked about the dancing-ground, observing with scowling face the happiness of Paul and Phœbe; and when they rode away homeward he followed in their path.

When Paul turned away on the road to Lastlands, young Vaughn, who had seen Williams following, observing that

he now followed Paul, hastily put Phœbe within their own farm gate and rode rapidly back on their track. Soon he saw at a distance both dismounted in the road, and the next moment engaged in conflict. Spite of the great disparity in size and strength, Paul seemed, at first, a full match for Williams. But weight soon told, and closing with him and seizing Paul's long, curling hair, he threw him to the ground, and with his boots kicked and stamped upon his head until he was insensible. He would, in all likelihood, have killed him, but that Vaughn, dashing forward and jumping from his horse, and seizing him, with great strength threw him away from Paul; and when he again advanced, interposed and offered himself to take up the quarrel, denouncing Williams's conduct as unmanly and cowardly. This sobered him, and he desisted and went away.

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"Won't you bleed him?" asked Thornton of the doctor, as Paul lay on a couch at Lastlands, now conscious, but inclined to lapse into sleep.

"No; he needs all the blood he has—he has lost too much already."

Then rousing him, and talking awhile with him, he allowed him to lapse again into a doze. Then, having long and attentively watched him, with a hand upon his pulse, he said: "Let him lie quietly—he will soon be all right again. But here is a wound that must be looked after and kept constantly covered with a rag moistened with tepid water." This was a semi-circular cut, which had bled profusely, on the cheek, just beneath the eye, made by the toe of Williams's boot. Closing the gaping edges with a few strips of plaster, and repeating the injunction to keep it moistened until he should return, the doctor went away.

Thornton was filled with indignation against Williams—walking the floor with angry face and meditating some mode of avenging this unmanly assault. But Paul soon recovering, and going away to Tennessee, with no mark but a faint red semi-circle on his cheek, Thornton "used philosophy," dismissing the matter from his mind.

This affair put an end to all intercourse between Last-



lands and Vaughn's household. Phoebe paid one farewell visit to Barbara, to whom she confided all her troubles: the persistent solicitation of Williams and her father's obstinate encouragement of his suit; avowing insuperable aversion to Williams, and her mortification and shame at being placed in such a predicament, while only a school-girl, and too young to think of marrying anybody; bitterly crying, and enlisting the warmest sympathy of Barbara. These untoward circumstances had prevented the contemplated visit of Paul to Phoebe, and he went away without a word to any of Vaughn's household.

## CHAPTER XXIV

THORNTON AND WILLIAMS

"By the pricking of my thumbs  
Something wicked this way comes."

ONE day, on the way back from his accustomed ride around the outer fences of Lastlands, Thornton stopped, near sunset, in the middle of the ford opposite to the big gate. Slackening the rein to allow his horse to drink, and turning sidewise in the saddle, he seemed quietly to survey the scene before him; glancing at the rude stone acorns on the gateposts, now covered with green mould, in harmony with the leafy entrance to the plantation, and thence along the shining course of the stream. It was a hot day, late in August. Light rains had fallen in the night and in the early morning, and light high clouds now covered the sky, obscuring the hot sun but not abating the heat, which, unrelieved by any breath of air, was still intense. The ride had been excessively disagreeable. All the way his horse had been tortured by flies—not only by gadflies, but the various biting flies, among these the flies that lie in wait in the shade, the tawny deer-flies, which had swarmed out of the paw-paw bushes, and fastening themselves upon the base of the horse's ears, probed the delicate skin there with ferocious energy. Against these last the rider had industriously defended him, reaching forward and crushing them with the handle of his whip or his leather glove. But against the other flies he could give little help, and by these the horse had been driven almost to frenzy; his tail ever in motion, brushing and switching, sometimes achieving almost a complete rotary motion which, supplemented by a sudden bounce upon his hind-quarters, was anything but agreeable to the rider. Often,

stopping suddenly, and throwing back his muzzle to dislodge some persistent bloodsucker from his flank, he had endangered the rider's seat, sending him almost over the pommel.

Standing now in the stream, the horse continued to switch his long tail, and pawing the water, sent the spray upon his irritated flanks and belly. Having appeased his thirst, he raised his head and fetched a heavy sigh of relief, but, upon a slight motion of the rider, he again put down his muzzle to the water, not to drink, but only by a swilling sound to "make believe," and thereby prolong his stay in the cool stream. This cheat he might have spared his conscience, for Thornton seemed content to remain, and to be absorbed in meditation. Along the reach of the Anser, above the ford, innumerable gnats and flies were hovering over the water, the small fry eagerly feeding upon them, rising to the surface, wreathing the face of the stream with smiles and dimples. Finding no signal made to advance, the horse again raised his head, seeming content to join his master in contemplating the scene; pleased, perchance, at seeing execution done by the fishes upon the pestiferous gnats and flies.

But Thornton was unconscious of this scene, and wore a grave face. Hardly ever now, save in dreams, did the troubles of the past recur to his mind. Yet, whether by reason of the depressing atmosphere, or the enforced idleness of the season, or from some subtle association of the annoyances of the ride with these troubles, they all came vividly back to him now, and with them a bodeful apprehension of impending evil. Such forebodings of good or evil are common enough, in the shifting moods and phases of the mind, of which every man's memory bears some record. The great poets make frequent use of them, and they doubtless belong to all humanity. Often they seem to be verified, and then, according to individual bias, are set down as prophetic intimations—

"Spiritual presentiments  
And such refraction of events  
As rises ere they rise,"

or mere coincidences. Thornton was free from superstition,

and not given to abstract speculation, but he now recalled some talk of these premonitions by Ould, who had faith in the "prophetic soul," and had cited many strange instances in which they had been verified. He thought it a noble belief to hold, as Ould did, that the Creator, in making man in His own image, had done this not by giving him, as is vulgarly supposed, the fleshly form he wears, but by endowing him, in a measure infinitesimally small, with a portion—a spark—of His own celestial nature; a faculty potent above all human reason for the perception of truth, common in various degrees to all men, and to be developed, as other faculties, in the long course of the race upon earth: manifested heretofore, in its higher phases, only at long intervals, by poets—seers—prophets, and in this material age notably by Kepler, when he enunciated the laws of the universe, which the power of mere human understanding enabled Newton to demonstrate, but which only Kepler could divine. "May it not be this faculty, in its humble rudimentary state, that gives these vague premonitions of good or evil?" Canvassing this question with himself, Thornton's meditation was suddenly disturbed by the loud neighing of his horse, followed quickly by the clack of the latch of the big gate, and, turning in his saddle, he saw with surprise, and not without indignation, Deputy Sheriff Williams ride out from Lastlands.

Williams had not appeared there since the interview in which the tax bill had been presented, and Ould having been requested to have the proper correction made, and McIntyre instructed then to pay it, and the sheriff informed of all this by letter, and Thornton being now free from debt, he could think of nothing that could properly bring this odious personage again to Lastlands. At times they had met upon the road, when Thornton had observed on the deputy's face a malignant scowl, as they passed without recognition, indicating precisely the relation he desired should subsist between them, and he had come to regard Williams with indifference. But now all his offensive conduct in the past, his unseemly manners in the interview about the tax bill, the cruel blow he had given Elijah, his brutal treatment of Paul, passed in review,



and, with this intrusion upon his place, seemed to indicate a settled purpose of offense. Thornton's face, which never wore a mask, was full of resentment when Williams rode down into the stream, and, at a gesture from Thornton, pulled up his horse in front of him. Their eyes had not met till then, when a glance from Williams into Thornton's angry eyes instantly kindled a malignant flame in his own, and the two men were glaring at each other before a word had been exchanged. Thornton was the first to speak. "I desire to know," he said, "the purpose of your visit to my place?"

"I am a public officer," replied Williams, "collecting the revenue of the State, and I hold a tax bill against this Lastlands property, which has not been paid, and for which I have distrained by levying on the furniture in the house."

The blood mounted to Thornton's brow. All the humiliation he had suffered in the town came at once into his mind and seemed to be renewed in this. He answered in three words: "You damned scoundrel!"

Instead of the anger naturally looked for, the eyes of Williams now gleamed with a malicious pleasure. With rising color, and straightening himself in the saddle with an air of exultation, he said: "I have done my duty, and if you think I have gone beyond that you have your remedy at law, or you can have any other satisfaction you want."

"What other satisfaction do you mean? Do you mean such satisfaction as is accorded by gentlemen?"

"No, sir, I am no duelist!"

"What then? Do you expect me to engage with you in fisticuffs?"

"Well, that seemed to be your way of getting satisfaction when you had a spite against an old man; when you took advantage of my uncle's age, and struck him for the discharge of his duty."

Thornton paused a moment, sobered by this thrust, which he felt keenly because he had not always been sure that he was free from blame for the assault on McCrae, justifiable as it had seemed at the time. The flush passed slowly from his face, giving place to a look of grim meditation. Steadily scrutinizing in silence the face of Williams, he said,

after a moment: "I believe it is you that are seeking satisfaction, and that your conduct heretofore, to me and to those connected with me, has been prompted by a desire to make an opportunity for that. Is this true?"

Williams answered only by a series of short nods which expressed at once malevolence, triumph, and eager assent.

"Dismount, then," said Thornton, "and you shall have it right now, in your own way."

"Come on," cried Williams, leading the way out of the stream and along its margin to a spot thinly veiled from the road by a fringe of trees, a low, level spot sometimes flooded by the Anser, but now dry, and covered by a rich growth of short grass. There he quickly dismounted and fastened his horse, Thornton doing the same thing. Williams was soon stripped to the waist, awaiting his antagonist. Thornton's only preparation was to take off his coat and waistcoat, and his hat and cravat, and to loosen the button at his throat, and turn up the cuffs of his shirt. But he was delayed endeavoring to remove a seal ring from the third finger of his left hand; and finding this impracticable, he walked forward, saying to Williams, who had stood looking at him with a contemptuous smile:

"I cannot get off this ring. It may give me an advantage, for it will cut where it strikes."

"Oh, never mind the ring," Williams answered. "I will take all the chances against that." Then Thornton promptly confronted him.

As the two men stood opposed, though of equal height, there was a marked contrast in their figures. Williams was deep-chested and broad-hipped, greatly exceeding his antagonist in weight and strength, with huge muscles. But his arms were short, and his shoulders round, and he had too much flesh for activity or for long-continued exertion. Thornton had broad, square, shapely shoulders, long arms, an ample round chest, thin flanks, well developed muscles, and a light elastic movement that argued activity and quickness; and, like all his tribe, he was uncommonly well boned; yet he seemed greatly overmatched. But Thornton's English schooling had taught him the mysteries of the art of self-defense, and this, with a disciplined temper ac-

quired in more than one stand-up fight in the English fashion, might go far to make up for the inequality in weight.

Williams stood with his left hand stretched far forward, while his right seemed drawn back as for a blow. Thornton stood with his left foot advanced, both hands held well up together, his body easily poised, his head thrown a little back; an attitude that seemed better suited for defense than attack. There was a look of anticipated triumph on the face of Williams as he maneuvered with his left hand, and then suddenly advanced and struck with his right a blow which Thornton avoided by lightly swaying his body backward; and, as his adversary's side was exposed, delivered with his left hand a blow on the body of Williams which made him fetch a loud grunt (there is no other word for the sound he made), and quickly after followed with another upon the neck, which seemed to take all the life out of him, for he fell like a log to the ground.

"Golly!"

This exclamation was heard from the road, and then another voice called out: "Jump into him with your boots, Colonel; that's the way he did little Paul!" and, looking up the acclivity to the road, Thornton saw there Kirby and Elijah, both mounted. They were driving home from a distant pasture some cattle, which had passed by and were then lazily drinking at the ford.

"Stay where you are, Kirby!" cried Thornton, imperiously, as the old fellow unbuckled his iron-shod wooden leg and started to ride down to him.

Then Williams, who had lain unconscious, started up like a man awakened from a dream. For a moment he stared wildly about, and then rushed at Thornton, endeavoring to close. But, moving quickly aside, Thornton gave him another sounding blow on the body, and as he renewed the attempt met him with such a shower of blows in the face as left him bleeding, half blinded, and helpless. This page must not be further stained with what savors of the brutality of a prize fight. Let it suffice that the bully was beaten at his own game, and was sent home with a broken jaw, "a direct fracture of the lower maxillary," and did

not ride sheriff, nor go a-wooing of poor little Phœbe, for many a long day.

Thornton received no hurt. But he suffered great shame for having allowed himself to be drawn into such an unseemly, rowdy affair, and was full of remorse for the severe punishment given his adversary. Stopping at the ford to wash the blood from his hands, for the ring had cut where it struck, he there enjoined upon Kirby and Elijah strict silence about what they had witnessed. But he might as well have enjoined the winds not to blow. They would have been as likely to obey as were these loyal henchmen to keep secret what in their eyes shed so much glory upon their chief, and, reflectively, upon all Lastlands. In the strictest confidence Kirby described the fight to every man he met. And Elijah had for some time nightly rehearsals down at the quarter, where the whole scene was enacted with dramatic effect. Soon the affair, with all the particulars, was known throughout the neighborhood. "He did it just as easy," said Kirby, "as you might cuff a little nigger."—"He dropped like a beef shot in the curl."—"I tell you some of them licks would 'a' made the Duke blink." Thornton, already popular among the men in the hills, who were accustomed to settle their quarrels in the same way, now came to be in their eyes a veritable hero.

Various were the comments upon this affair in town and country. In the country they were everywhere favorable to Thornton. The deputy's treatment of Paul and Elijah had been well known there, and had excited general indignation. The sturdy farmers, though they said nothing of the fight, smiled significantly as they gripped Thornton's hand when they met. The woodchoppers engaged in clearing the way for the branch road, stopped work, and saluted him with unusual emphasis, and looked after him with admiring eyes as he rode by. Two Irishmen, busy at the stumps with pick and spade, were particularly demonstrative. One of them said: "Be dad, but he's a foin mon! And he bate the big sheriff! Long life to him! and Oi hope he'll bate more of 'em." To which his companion, taking from his mouth a short pipe and waving it, replied: "Oi go bail he will! More power to his airum!"



At The Falls, where the affair was bruited, there was not the same unanimity; the provocation Thornton had received not being there so well known. Besides, McCrae's methods had secured some strong adherents there, who gave a false view of the case, representing it as a second instance of revolt against the law on the part of Thornton. Still, the better opinion was there also on his side. Some of the fine gentlemen were shocked by the impropriety of Thornton's engaging in fisticuffs, but many of them condoned this when they learned how neatly Thornton's victory had been won and by such clean hitting as kept his ignoble foe at arm's length, never permitting him to grapple. Ould was not surprised at Thornton's consent to such an arbitrament, attributing it to his morbid independence, which would not permit him to leave any man with an unsatisfied claim against him, and recalling his willingness to give, even to McCrae, the usual satisfaction of the code.

McCrae was completely cut down by the defeat of his champion; for there is little room for doubt that Williams was expected by him to provoke Thornton to a quarrel and a fight, in which the superior strength of Williams should insure an easy victory. Finding him in bed, with a broken jaw, a direct fracture, and therefore, as the doctor said, the more difficult to heal, and with blackened eyes, and an ugly cut on the forehead, from which he had lost much blood, and learning that Thornton had not got even a scratch, he was full of wonder: and now recalling the ancient rhyme that foreboded the alternate rise and fall of their fortunes and the disastrous fate of all that should do them wrong, and recalling also a night attack made long ago upon Dick Thornton, when his life had been saved by a rouleau of silver in his pocket, he gave implicit superstitious credence to the prophetic legend. Awed by its seeming verification, and trembling at his own predicament as their chief active aggressor in the past, he resolved not only not to attempt hereafter to do them injury, but to do all in his power to atone for what he had already done.

One other incident at Lastlands, the last of the series heretofore indicated, will be briefly related. One night, when Thornton was returning from the "office," where he

had been engaged with Charles Fetter, putting up some necessary fixtures, and having sent Charles home, had remained behind to write a letter to Paul, he was overtaken by the doctor on his way home through Lastlands. Getting into the doctor's gig, he rode as far as his own stile, and when he had alighted there, and was urging the doctor to come with him to supper, they heard from beneath the wide platform of boards that made the stile a noise as of a human voice groaning or snoring; and looking there, Thornton found a man lying upon his face, insensible. With the aid of the doctor he was drawn out, and proved to be Williams, the deputy sheriff. The doctor's diagnosis showed a contusion on the back of the head and another on one hand. A large stone that lay near seemed probably the instrument used, but whether thrown with malicious intent, or cast away without thought, there was nothing to show. He was suffering from concussion of the brain, as Paul had suffered after their affray.

He was removed into a room in the "Lodge," Reginald Thornton's temporary log cabin, where Mr. Wall and the doctor remained all night in attendance upon him. Recovering from his insensible condition about daybreak, and learning the circumstances under which he had been found under the stile, and seeing about him evidence of his having been kindly ministered to, and being informed that he was then in bed at Lastlands, he was much moved, and began at once making ready to go away; and obstinately persisting in this, the doctor took him home in his gig.

In a field nearby his horse was found fastened, and was sent after him. Soon it was known that he had thrown up his office of deputy sheriff and gone back to Missouri.

It was never certainly known how Williams received this hurt. There was a whisper among the slaves that Charles Fetter, as he went home, seeing Williams lurking on the path, and after to hide beneath the stile, "drap dat rock on his head"; not thinking of a fatal result, but only of putting him *hors de combat*, in case he was about making a deadly assault on his master, as he believed him to be. Williams told the doctor that he had no design to kill Thornton, and that he was not armed.

## CHAPTER XXV

### MAJOR TINSLEY'S ILLUSIONS DISPELLED

"Still harping on my daughter."

THE HOUSE of Major Tinsley had made slow progress toward completion—a thing not unusual in rural districts in that day. The professional contractor and builder was then unknown there, and separate engagements had to be made with each of the many handicraftsmen employed in the building of a house, carpenter and joiner, masons, painter, plasterer; and each of these at some critical period in the progress of the work was sure to have another engagement on another building where there was a like crisis, and to go away thither, and thus shifting from one to another, to cause all around vexatious delays. The Major had written often to Thornton expressing impatience, but congratulating himself upon the better opportunity for Thornton's supervision and the diminished chances of any blunder in the construction. He gave an amusing account of similar delays in his old neighborhood, where he declared that he had known a building, after it had been erected and put under roof, to stand awaiting completion until it grew old enough to require new shingles, yet all the while called "the new house"; serving meanwhile as a receptacle for all loose things about, and, in fruitful seasons, stored with grain or tobacco. He consoled himself with the consideration that a house slowly constructed is apt to be better constructed, and especially to be well seasoned, and therefore more wholesome. It was not until the fall of the year—some time early in October—that the Major came to take possession of his new home, arriving with his wife and servants in the night.

Thornton and his household had promised themselves

great satisfaction from the accession of such neighbors to the Lastlands society. But the intimacy between the two families was soon clouded by circumstances that gave an air of mystery to the Tinsley household. In all the visits exchanged between them, the daughter of Major Tinsley, though constantly spoken of as being at home, had never been seen; and the son still remained, as they said, at their old home in the tobacco region. Thornton and his wife puzzled much over these strange circumstances. By and by the son came to the new home, but remained only a few days, and then went back, as was said, to the old home. A part of the mystery was thus cleared up, but the invisible daughter still remained a puzzle. While riding out on horseback Thornton had once met Mrs. Tinsley in her carriage, the Major seated by her side, and casting back his eyes after he had saluted them as they passed rapidly by, he saw on the front seat, not the daughter, as he expected, but only a framed portrait of a young woman resting there. This further complicated the mystery. At last they had ceased to speculate upon it, the visits between the two households became less and less frequent, and at last, except between Thornton and Major Tinsley, the family stood on the formal footing maintained in the intercourse of factitious life. The Major had been accustomed to come daily to Lastlands, and this he still continued to do. He had said to Thornton: "You may look for me at your house every day, if you will allow me to come, and will not put yourself out to entertain me, but just go on with your work as if I were away or one of the household. I want to learn your methods and try to copy what you do, as well as I may; and I want your society."

Thornton promised that he should be considered as one of the family, and on this footing their intimacy was permanently fixed. Nothing was said by Thornton about the mystery of the daughter, though the Major continued often to speak of her, but seldom of the son, who still remained away at their old home.

One morning the Major came at an unusually early hour to Lastlands, and announced that his son had got married. "He wrote to me," he said, "inviting my consent, but not



asking it. I thought to try how much he was in earnest, and answered that I thought him too young to marry, and that if he would wait two years I would give him the means of going abroad for that time, and of seeing the world, and would make liberal provision for this. He replied that he did not care to go abroad, except he could take his wife with him: reminding me of what I did not suppose he knew, that I myself had got married at the same early age, and had always been an advocate of early marriages." Here the Major laughed, and added: "I couldn't leave my wife to go to the wedding, but gave my approval. I also wrote a letter to the young lady, expressing my gratification at the choice my son had made, also to the parents of the lady to the same effect. They are people of excellent character, long settled in my old neighborhood. And now I shall write to him to bring his wife here, and when he comes we shall have to give him a warm welcome, and make merry a little."

And then the sad look, so often observed, came over his face.

The Major continued to make his daily visits to Lastlands with great regularity. Except on rare occasions, when some matter of business called him to The Falls, he was pretty sure, every morning, to ride over on his sturdy roan. Sometimes the weather delayed his visit, but hardly ever made him forego it. If Thornton was engaged in the field, where he always supervised the work, he would fasten his horse under the shed, and after some chat with Barbara and Mrs. Thornton, ride out to join Thornton in the field, going home always a little after noonday. He was a very agreeable companion, much given to story telling, especially stories of his experience as a trader.

One day Thornton and his wife saw more marked than usual the look of sadness and preoccupation, so often on his face, and his manner seemed to foreshadow something in his mind to which he was struggling to give utterance. As usual, about noonday, he had put on his gloves and taken up his whip, as if about to go away, but had returned to his seat on the veranda, and at last permitted his horse to be put away, and stayed to dinner. All day he wore a

sad, anxious face, often sighing heavily, and walking restlessly about. Late in the day he asked to have his horse brought out, and when the order had been given to the servant he turned to Thornton with a face in which agitation was strongly manifested, and said: "Friend Thornton, come with me into your library. I want to speak to you confidentially."

When they had entered the room, and the Major had closed the door, he began to walk the floor to and fro, declining the chair Thornton had offered him by waving it away without speaking. At last he said: "You sit down—I cannot talk if I sit—and have a little patience with my weakness." Then after a few more turns across the floor he stopped before Thornton, who was full of wonder, and said: "I have a secret to impart to you, if you will permit me—a family secret."

Thornton bowed, saying: "Certainly, if you think proper."

"It is a strange matter, and concerns only my own household. I have never before known any man to whom I could bring myself to speak of my family affairs, or whom I thought capable of giving me any help. I feel sure at least of your sympathy in a trouble that to many would be only a subject for derision. And I feel that somehow you can help me. You have often heard me speak of my daughter?"

"Yes."

"And you have wondered why she has never been over to Lastlands, and why in your many visits to my house you have never seen her?"

"Yes."

"And your wife has wondered, and you have talked it over?"

"Yes; but not being able to make any reasonable conjecture, we dismissed it, thinking that it would all be explained in good time, and that it was a thing into which we had no right to pry."

"Well, my dear friend, I have no daughter! No, my friend, *no* daughter! We had a daughter once. How dear she was to us—how good—I will not try to tell you. How

we idolized her, how worthy in every way she was of our love—I could not do that. But we have no daughter now, but only her picture, the portrait you may have seen in the carriage that day you met us driving.

“Twelve years ago this day my daughter died! And now I want to explain to you why we kept up the delusion that we have still a daughter living. You must know that my wife was heartbroken by her loss—stricken down as by a bolt from heaven. For a long time we feared that she was bereft of reason. She lay in her chamber a month, sleeping only under opiates, eating only what our importunity forced upon her, in a condition of utter prostration—despair. The doctor feared the worst, and at last, saying that anything was better than the stolid condition into which she had sunk, told me, while she slept, to have the picture of her child brought into her chamber and fixed there; not where it might seem to be obtruded on her sight, but in some inconspicuous place, where her eyes might casually rest upon it. This was done. For some hours, though awake, she did not see it. But at last she discovered the picture, which hung in an obscure light. She did not start, nor make any outcry, nor exhibit any great emotion, but only gazed for a long time with a perplexed look, and at last her eyes began to glaze, and tears came, and like a child she cried herself to sleep. This was her only natural sleep, and these the only tears she had shed, since the child died. From that time she got better. Soon she got up, cleaned up the room, refusing the services of her maid, and continued to do this for some months, growing all the while better until she reached a normal condition, except that she treated the picture as if it were her living child! I gladly gave in to this illusion, and we have gone on in this way these long years. Without that picture I believe she would have died or gone mad. In all ways she behaves now as if the child were living. She talks to her, talks of her, as you know, buys dresses for her, has her piano tuned, her chamber cared for, moving the picture there, and bidding her good-night; taking her to ride, as you saw once—going through all this and more, just as if the child were still in the flesh. It was a pitiable sight to me,

until at last, by encouraging, I came to partake of this illusion, and found a solace in it, not directly perhaps, but reflectively from my wife, which I am afraid even you will not appreciate. Of course, I was not possessed of this tender cheat as was the poor mother, being of a rougher nature and in active life all the time; but even with me it answered a good end, and I carried it about with me everywhere.

"But now this illusion has been dispelled—so far dispelled as to fill me with dread as to what may occur with my wife—dispelled by your little Barbara. You know what great friends we are. She loves to hear me talk of my daughter. She seems to know, intuitively, that there is some sorrow in that direction, and she never fails to manifest her sympathy in some delicate way. She will go into the garden here and get a flower for my button, and bring loads of roses and other flowers for me to take home to my daughter. She has touched my heart as it might not have been touched save for the strange predicament in which we stand, cheating ourselves with a picture of our dead darling. She forces on my mind again and again the thought of what might have been, if the good God had spared our angel. All the solacing illusion has well-nigh vanished, and my loss is upon me with its primal force. You cannot know how like she is, in many ways." (Here he paused for a moment.) "I am afraid I cannot make myself understood. I am like an artist I knew, a painter, who went into Mammoth Cave, and was infatuated by the Star Chamber there and wanted to paint it, and passed days and nights there, studying how he should do this, and at last, after having passed a week in the cave, came out one crisp October night, and when he reached the open air, and looked up and saw the sky loaded with stars, he threw up his hands and cried, 'God forgive me! This is the *real* star chamber,' and never went into the cave again.

"But it is not for myself that I am concerned. No, no! I cannot say that my burden is greater than I can bear. But my wife! When she shall come to know your Barbara, as she will, and feel as I do now, as she must—have this illusion dispelled as I have had it dispelled—I am afraid



to forecast the issue. Sooner or later she must be brought to this test, and for this reason, and because you are entitled to know this painful history, I tell you of all our unhappiness, and seek your counsel, and invoke your aid, and that of your good wife. I implore you to help us in this trouble."

"My good friend," replied Thornton, "you may count upon us both. I will counsel with my wife, and be assured that any service that we may be able to give shall be gladly rendered."

"Ah! Well, I knew you would do it! It is selfish in me to feel that my burden has been already lightened by shifting a part of it to your shoulders! Good-night, and God bless you!" And then he quickly mounted his horse and rode away.

## CHAPTER XXVI

### OLD LITIGANTS

"So when a fisher swain by chance hath spy'd  
A big grown pike pursue the lesser fry,  
He sits a withy labyrinth beside,  
And with fair baits allures his nimble eye,  
Which he invading with outstretched fin,  
Is suddenly encompassed with the gin."

THERE was at this period in Kentucky a peculiar class of men known to lawyers as "old litigants." Their main business in life was to engage in lawsuits. If they bought or sold, bartered or exchanged, leased or surrendered, it was with a view to a possible lawsuit. In laying the foundation for these suits, of course, a certain quantum of legal knowledge was necessary. This they acquired by constant attendance on the law courts, where they were close observers of the proceedings, especially of the ruling of the court, and picked up, for use in their "business," many valuable "points of law." Much was learned also from the trial of their own numerous cases. Even when unsuccessful they got some benefit; for a man never forgets a point of law upon which he has been beaten. Doubtless these characters have been known among all civilized peoples. They are said to have been well known among the ancient Romans, and were called by Cicero "*Comitiales homines*," litigious men, and were supposed to have been satirized by Plautus under the name of "Nefasti," men who were always to be found about the courts, attending even on a holiday, or "*dies non*," from force of habit. But modern scholars incline to think that the name applied by Plautus referred to another class that frequented the comitia for the purpose of selling their votes, the prototypes of our modern election "bummers."

Mr. Backstep, Abraham Backstep, was a distinguished "old litigant," living in the town and doing business there, and in the adjacent country. He was a large, clumsy man, awkward but energetic in movement, of sanguine temperament, yellow-red hair, light blue eyes, and a thin papery skin inclined to peel, and was about forty years old. He was a professing Christian, having a footing in some one of the denominations represented in the little town. Russell, an over-zealous Churchman (a "swaddler," McIntyre called him), being asked to what denomination Backstep belonged, answered, "He is a Baptist, but whether a whisky Baptist, a Hardshell, a Calvinistic, a Free Will, a Free Communion, a Seventh Day, a Six Principle, or an Emancipator, I do not know. There has been a second confusion of tongues, to stop the building of a new Tower of Babel."

Backstep had somewhere imbibed that wise maxim of Machiavelli, now so commonly accepted, that a show of religion is an advantage to a man in his worldly pursuits; and had accordingly put on that ample and convenient cloak. But this cloak he could easily put off, when that suited his purpose; and though he yielded to all the formal requirements of his church, and paid punctually his quota into the treasury, and looked as sanctimonious in its meetings as any devotee there, he was, when in the world, seemingly of the world the most worldly; in fact, sometimes little better than one of the wicked. Vanity often made him incautious, when he did not hesitate to accept the doubtful compliments paid to his shrewdness in his peculiar profession. He was then not only not ashamed of the "bad eminence" he had attained as an "old litigant," but took pride in it, and used to reply jocularly to those that assailed him on account of his sharp practice: "Never mind; I'll get a hold on you some day." So strong is the pride of art, that often men will vaunt themselves upon what is by common consent opprobrious. But this did not subject Backstep to public odium. There is in the open, unblushing avowal of profligacy an element of the ridiculous which inclines men to condone it. One of the most entertaining novels of a modern humorist is that in which the hero, with an air of happy unconsciousness, tells the story

of his own infamy. And two men, in our day, in our land, have made their shame a commodity, by publishing and selling histories of their frauds upon the public; failing only because of the essential meanness of their cheats, and a lack of the "happy unconsciousness." In Backstep's case, people laughed and forgave him. After all, his practices were within the law, and could succeed only by the aid of its strong arm. This, with his reputation for being "a good judge of law," and constantly associated in the common mind with lawyers and other dignitaries of the courts, and wearing a queue, lent a certain elevation to his profession.

Another distinguished old litigant was Jacob Tyte, who lived in a neighboring county. He was little known about The Falls, having never "done business" there, but confined his practice to his own county. There he had so harried people with lawsuits that, at last, no man could be found in the county willing to have any kind of business transaction with him, for fear, as the popular phrase expressed it, of the "come-back," by which was meant a suit at law grounded on breach of covenant, fraud, actual or constructive, failure of consideration, or some one of the innumerable grounds of an action at law. The field at home being thus practically closed to Mr. Jacob Tyte, he found it necessary to look elsewhere, and, a few years before the time of which we write, in search of "fresh woods and pastures new," he had come down, in the autumn term of the court, to The Falls.

Tyte was a man of medium height, thin but wiry, straight as an arrow, and exceedingly well formed. His hair was dark brown, barely touched with gray, his face colorless and waxen, his eyes long and gray like a falcon's, his brow broad and smooth, his nose springing from beneath it with an arch like the bend of a Turkish saber. Altogether, he looked the bold, capable, imperious, vigorous man he was known at home to be. But he too had a cloak which he could put on at pleasure, hiding all this, and showing to the world an outside almost its opposite. With this cloak, when he came to The Falls, he covered himself from top to toe. There he walked with a stoop, complained of ill



health, affected to be in expectation of an early demise and consequently to have lost all interest in business of every kind; to desire now only to set his house in order, and leave to his family his "little possessions" free from complication, especially from lawsuits, which he professed to abhor. Certainly a mild-mannered, gentlemanly, dignified man. Dressed in dark gray homespun cloth, with his long hair combed back over the top of his head, and smoothed behind his ears, and wearing an ample white cravat, he had a mild, almost clerical, look, and his presence commanded a certain deference everywhere. But beneath this soft exterior of "Old Bitterwater," as he was called at home, there lay hidden the courage of the lion, the rapacity of the eagle, the cunning of the fox, limbs of iron and nerves of steel.

These distinguished old litigants had never met, but were well known by fame to each other, and each had harbored a lively professional jealousy of the other. Backstep, when Tyte was first pointed out to him in the courtroom, expressed much surprise. "What! that Jake Tyte? Impossible!" he exclaimed.

It was not long before these great men gravitated together, and engaged in talk. Backstep did not hesitate to express to his confidential friends his utter disappointment in Tyte. "He has been overrated: one of those men that are great in the wilderness, but fall away when brought into the settlement. Has been a better man in his day, perhaps, but is now utterly broken down."

Tyte's ill health was a frequent subject of talk for Backstep. His pallor and a little affected hacking cough gave him the appearance of a man in failing health, and convinced Backstep that it was true, what Tyte said he feared for himself, that he was "going into a decline." Meantime, these old litigants grew more intimate every day; holding whispered talks in the courtroom, and long conferences out in the autumn sun, in the courthouse yard. One day it was known that Tyte had gone home to dinner with Backstep; then that he had dined there every day; finally, that he had taken up his quarters there; and at

last, that Tyte had gone home to the country, and that Backstep had gone with him.

The old lawyers, who had been observant of their intimacy, knew that a lawsuit would grow out of it; and many were the jokes they cracked about the conjunction of these "stars of the first magnitude." There was much speculation also as to the character of the suit that would result, and the lawyers likely to be employed. "It will be for big stakes when it comes off," said Ould, "and they will both play trumps to the last. I have been for and against both of them, and I think I shall have a hand in the game. Backstep will find he has caught a Tartar."

"Did you ever get a good fee from Backstep?" said Wilson, one of the leading attorneys. "He has been my client in a good many cases, and I could never get him to pay a decent fee."

"That has been my experience, too," said Ould, "but, if I am in this case for him, I'll make him settle all arrears. If he wants me, he will want me very badly, and he shall be put upon conditions from the start."

Not long afterward Backstep came back to The Falls, and soon made it known that he had leased from Tyte, for a term of years, a large property in mills, a flouring-mill, a corn-mill, and a saw-mill, on the most favorable terms—"terms so favorable, that I will easily make a fortune out of them."

For more than two years Backstep had passed most of his time at these mills. Then it was known that he and Tyte had quarreled, and that Tyte had brought suit against him, claiming as his percentum upon the gross earnings of the mills and the use of timber something like twenty thousand dollars. Backstep, protesting that he had not made any money with the mills, because the machinery, and especially the boilers and pumps, for some inscrutable cause, were constantly getting out of order, thus arresting the operation of the mills, treated the suit lightly at first. But when he came to consider deliberately the terms of the lease, and how he had obligated himself to account to Tyte for the earnings of the mills, and pay a certain percentum of these earnings, and how very great their capacity

was, barring the frequent disorder of the machinery, and how Tyte would have only to show this great capacity to throw the onus of proof upon him as to the interfering agency; and saw the great array of proof Tyte was collecting to show the capacity of the mills to earn money, their good condition when they came into his hands, and their subsequent depreciation, with leaking boilers and disabled pumps; and having now discovered the true character of Tyte, and how grossly he had been deceived as to the state of his health, and having had one interview with that gentleman, after which he desired never to confront him again, he became greatly concerned.

Men like Backstep, dishonest and weak, naturally reach out, when in extremity, to the honest and strong. Hurrying along the street, muttering to himself, as was his habit, and hugging beneath his left arm the big leather portfolio in which he carried his multitudinous papers, he met Digby. That sturdy gentleman openly despised him, as he well knew, but in his demoralized condition he could not forbear to stretch out a hand toward Digby, and, with an air of supplication, ask him to stop and hear a statement of his case, and give him some counsel. Then followed an account of his troubles with the mills, the machinery, as has been stated, constantly getting out of order, especially the pumps and boilers; and how, when refitted with new pumps and new boilers, these were soon found in the same condition. After a long story, of which this is a condensed statement, and after vehement denunciation of Tyte, he begged Digby to give him advice.

"Backstep," said Digby, "I have no regard for such fellows as you and Tyte, professional litigants; but as I am always on the under dog in a fight, and as you are our dog, I will give you some advice. Go to Bob Ould with your case. Pay him a good retaining fee—a *good* fee, mind you; no such petty fee as heretofore——"

"Why, Mr. Digby," interrupted Backstep, "I have always paid Mr. Ould——"

"Well, I know all about that now, and I know that you never paid him a decent fee in your life. You must do it this time, for he is the only man that can save you from

Tyte's clutches. Ould has some peculiar knowledge—mark this, now—*some peculiar knowledge* in relation to the subject-matter of this suit, which may be of vital importance to you. You had better see him at once lest he be retained by Tyte.”

Then Digby walked away, leaving Backstep, who stood some moments in meditation and then hastened off, clawing along in his strong, awkward way to Ould's office. He quickened his pace as he thought over the words emphasized by Digby, about Ould having some peculiar knowledge of the subject-matter of the suit, and of the suggestion that he might be retained by Tyte.

A few days before this the imbroglio of Tyte and Backstep had been a subject of talk between Ould and Digby, when Ould had imparted to his friend the peculiar information to which Digby had referred. Whereupon, Digby had insisted that Ould, when Backstep should come to retain him, should make him pay a good fee. “Bob Ould,” said Digby, “you lack self-assertion. You have been the underpaid servant of clients, and of lawyers as well, ever since you have been in the profession. I have no objection to the charitable work you do for poor clients and helpless women and children. I don't complain that you have monopolized that part of the practice at the bar, but when you get a client able to pay the proper fee, it is your duty to exact it; and when a scamp like Backstep, or Jake Tyte, or any other of those pestiferous professional litigants engage your services, you are under a moral obligation to make them pay the highest rate; a rate high enough to appease in some degree their appetite for law. They are public nuisances, which every man ought to lend a hand to abate. I know from what you have told me that you can defeat Tyte's suit, and if I fall in with Backstep I will tell him enough to make him know the importance of retaining you, and of paying you a good fee to boot. Now promise me that you will hold him off awhile, and make him pay at least twenty-five hundred or three thousand dollars; and, *mind you*, hold him off a while.”

Ould laughed outright, gratified at Digby's zeal in his behalf, and promised to do as he required. And the op-



portunity soon occurred, as we have seen, for Digby to send Backstep in an anxious state of mind to Ould's office.

Late in the afternoon Backstep reached the office of Ould. He found the lawyer in the back room busily writing, with many bundles of legal documents before him. Walking rapidly in, with that awkward, noisy tread habitual to him, Backstep said, "Mr. Ould, I want to see you on business."

"You will have to excuse me just now," said Ould, barely glancing from the paper before him, "I am very busy; but take a seat."

Backstep took a chair and Ould continued writing. After some minutes Backstep rose from his seat and said, "Mr. Ould, I want to see you on professional business of great importance."

"You must excuse me just now," said Ould, "I have in hand very important business for a client who has paid me a large retaining fee, and I cannot quit it at this moment, upon any consideration. Come in the morning."

"No, sir; the morning won't answer my purpose. I want to see you right now."

"I cannot possibly attend to you at this moment," said Ould, resuming his writing.

While Ould continued to write, Backstep walked the floor of the office. He thought again of that peculiar knowledge which Ould was said to possess, and then the thought flashed upon him, that he might already have been retained by Tyte, the very idea of which put him in a cold sweat. He stepped close to Ould and thundered out, "Mr. Ould, I must have your attention! I want your professional services, and I must have them, and I am both willing and able to pay for them."

"Can't you come at ten o'clock to-night?"

"No, sir; I want your attention right now!"

"Well, Mr. Backstep," said Ould, laying aside his pen, "if I must hear you now, please state the case as briefly as possible. I cannot do more than hear it now, and you must be brief."

Then Backstep stated his case, not briefly by any means, but at great length, mingling with his statements imprecations upon Tyte, whom he denounced as the greatest

hypocrite and rogue alive, and at last asked Ould what he would ask to defend the suit against him.

"Five hundred dollars down," said Ould, "as a retaining fee, and two thousand contingent upon defeating Tyte's whole claim."

"I will give it," said Backstep, eagerly, and taking out his pocket-book he filled a check for the retainer. Meantime, Ould wrote a bond for the contingent fee, which Backstep signed, and the business was closed. Then Backstep, greatly relieved, wanted to talk about the case and the line of defense, but Ould pleaded a pressure of business, appointing an early hour next morning for a conference, and Backstep, though he felt like talking all night upon this theme, reluctantly went away.

Next day Ould and Backstep met early at the office in consultation about the defense. Ould told him to get some person in good credit, and well known to the community, to go down to the mills, and get in jugs or other vessels a sample of the water from each of the wells that supplied the boilers. "Have these sealed and taken to old man Davis at Lastlands. He is a chemist and will analyze the water, and make a memorandum of its elements. It contains a corrosive material which eats away the iron of the boilers and pumps. Tyte discovered this while he ran the mills on his own account, and, finding that he could not make them profitable, by reason of the frequent interruption of the work from this cause, closed them, put them in order, and lay in wait to lease them to some responsible person, for a certain rent and a percentage on the earnings, with a view to just such a lawsuit as this against you."

This case was set for final trial early, the fall term now close at hand, and required vigilant attention from Mr. Ould.

## CHAPTER XXVII

### JOHN D. ON THE FALLS

"They loved to walk where none had walked before,  
About the rocks that ran along the shore,  
Or far beyond the sight of men to stray:  
They loved to stop at every creek and bay  
Made by the river in its winding way."

JOHN D. and Bradstreet had parted on a Friday evening with an agreement to meet at daylight next morning at Hare's boatshop and go over to Goose Island, to pass the day there in fishing and shooting. Bright and inspiring to the boys was the October weather, and dear to them the romantic precincts of the falls. They had waded over every fordable chute there; they had fished in every eddy on the north side of these islands, along which in low water flows the great volume of the river. They had sat behind the sheet of water that pours over the shelving rocks at the head of the big chute through Goose Island, watching the fishes that lie in the deep well dug there by the water in the solid rock; wondering over the strange sight of fishes ascending through the falling sheet. Every current, and eddy, and whirl, and every jutting rock and sandy bank, and every clump of willows in this enchanting region was familiar to them as the streets and houses of their own town.

Having his satchel well filled with substantial food for the day, a piece of middling bacon, and a small frying pan, and a coffee pot with a supply of ground coffee, a huge pone of corn bread, and an onion for Bradstreet, and his hunting knife, and fishing-rod and net, all in order, John D. went early to bed, leaving an injunction on his old nurse to awaken him before daylight. He was filled with a sense of happiness, and said his prayers that night with uncommon unction, and not sleepily and in a perfunctory way, as

he had often done. John D. was one of those who see the good God only in His goodness; whose hearts overflow with gratitude for the happiness they find in the world. He knew only a God of love and mercy, and had no faith in that terrible being so fearfully pictured in sermons of that day, "a God of vengeance." His mind revolted from the lake of fire, and the molten lead and brimstone, and other "Tartarean drenches" prescribed for thirsting sinners in the "All hail hereafter!" Nay, when he and his crony talked over these matters, as they often did, he told Bradstreet that if these horrors were true, and there did exist such a being, he would revolt and manfully fight on the side of the devil; and at Bradstreet's reply, "It's best to believe it all; it *may* be true," he laughed heartily. This was doubtless very shocking conduct, but this chronicler does not feel at liberty to withhold the truth. Nor must he fail to record that, on being awakened before daybreak the next morning, and hearing the singing of the birds, and the crowing of the cocks, and the loud, clear trumpeting of the cows, which last he knew to be a sure sign of a fair day, he again kneeled down and prayed, with a heart full of happiness. Indeed, it is not likely that John D. ever neglected or forgot his prayers, or, which is quite as bad, said them in a careless perfunctory way, on a fine Saturday morning or other holiday. May it not be that the crowing of the cocks, and the singing of the birds, and the trumpeting of the cows, and the childish prayers of the boy were all alike natural effusions of gratitude to the Giver of all good; a part of that endless pæan which, rising in the path of the sun, from earth to heaven, is ever hailing and blessing the sacred light? "Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all ye lands!" says the Psalmist.

His prayers over and everything ready to his hand, away he went with rapid strides to the place of rendezvous near the basin. There he found Hare just opening his shop, and his men straggling in to their work. Bradstreet had not come to the rendezvous, and John D. was very restive under the delay. At last, finding that he was likely to lose the best part of the day for sport, he told Hare and the workmen to tell Bradstreet, when he should come, to hasten



over, and that he would find him at the eddy near the foot of the big chute through Goose Island.

On his way in the boat across the basin, and along the half mile over the rocks to the point where Corn Island with its frowning mass of trees shut off his view of the town, he looked back again and again, in hopes of seeing Bradstreet. But he did not appear, and John D. saw before him the long task of wading alone across the wide middle channel to Goose Island. As he trudged along in the early light over the rocky margin of this wide, shallow channel there flew before him flocks of aquatic birds. The gray-backed winter yellow-legs, with snowy breast and belly, flitted away, piping their loud, clear whistle. The golden plovers spun along before him, in large flocks, and rising on his approach, and circling around again and again, dropped down in close order upon the rocks. The little, spotted sandpiper tripped along the margin of the river, busily dipping for his food on the very edge of the wave, following it as it ebbed, and flitting away as it flowed. Surely it was from these dainty-footed waders, or their congeners, the smallest of their kind, that Shakespeare got a hint for his fairies in "The Tempest"; those delicate creatures

"That on the sands, with printless foot,  
Do chase the ebbing Neptune, and do fly him  
When he comes back."

A long string of wild geese were flying low over the island, honking as they went. The great blue crane was startled from his post on some jutting rock, or standing knee deep in the water, and flapped slowly away on his bowed wings, his legs stretching far behind, bearing on his back his long, sharp, deadly beak. Away out upon one of the backbones, as are named the dark spiny ledges that lift their backs above the water, he alights. There, resuming his stealthy posture, he stands like some gaunt assassin, with burning eye and dagger drawn, expectant of his victim.

Far away toward the head of the falls the fishhawks are already plying their trade, balancing themselves in the air, and scanning the water for their prey. On the topmost

branch of a tall hickory on Corn Island sits a bald-eagle, watching these with telescopic eyes.

John D. looked with longing eyes upon the yellow-legs and golden plovers, and lamented the absence of "old Bradstreet" and his *not* trusty firelock. But he now began his greatest task, to wade across the chute to Goose Island; and dismissing vain regrets, bent himself to his work. He had reached the middle of the chute, which is marked by a deep fissure in the rocks, when he saw mist rising like steam from the surface of the water. He quickened his steps, knowing that in a moment he might be shut in by a fog, through which it would be impossible to find his way. In another moment, just as he had made a stride across the fissure, the mist was a yard in height, and the next moment he found himself enveloped by a fog through which he could not see a yard. There was no danger in his situation; for the water was shallow, and in all the wide expanse between him and the island there was no pitfall of any kind into which he might stumble. He was soon at a loss about his course, and stood still. Nothing was heard but, at intervals, the whirr of wildfowl on the wing, and the whistle of plovers invisible in the mist; soon even these sounds ceased and all was silent, save the low whisper of the current and the continuous roar of the falls.

It now occurred to him that he might keep his true course by feeling the current with his hand, and going across it at a right angle. This he tried, but found it impossible long to preserve his course, and more than once, on venturing to walk a considerable distance without testing the course of the water, he found himself going down the stream. Then he stood still again. At last he heard behind him the cawing of crows, which he knew must be upon the tops of trees on Corn Island. Soon these were answered by other crows, which he knew must be upon the trees on the Indiana shore, and with this additional clew to his course, he pushed on with confidence. Then he stopped once more, thinking he must be off his course, and that he had already waded a far greater distance than was required to reach the island. "Would the fog never lift!" Then, impatient at losing so much time, and thinking how greedily the bass

would snap at his bait this fine morning, he pushed on. But soon he stopped again, hearing nearby the roaring of water. Can it be the big chute at the lower end of the island? If so he must await the lifting of the fog. No, it is the steady roar of falling water. He now pressed on with confidence and soon found himself on the island, just below the waterfall—at the very point he would have chosen if the morning had been clear of mist.

Feeling his way among the willow bushes which grew along the sandy alluvial that fills the fissures in the rocks, seeking a dry place where he might build a fire, and gladden the heart of "old Bradstreet," when he should come, he came suddenly upon a fire, before which a large man was sitting. It was no unusual thing for fishermen to pass the night on the island. But the man started to his feet, exhibiting to John D. the countenance and the huge proportions of a man he had once seen and could never forget. It was Stokes, the robber! To John D. this was a frightful occurrence. He was more startled than ever before. But the robber was more startled than he. He was pale as a ghost and trembled violently. John D. had instinctively dropped his rod and net, and had thrust his hand into his satchel, grasping his sharp hunting-knife. But the big man recovered himself, and fetching a long breath said:

"Why, my little man, how on earth did you get across here through the fog? Why, I've been a-watching of you ever since you left the foot of Corn Island, till the fog riz on you. I seen that you knew the track, but I didn't think any man, much less a boy like you, could find his way through sich a fog as this. I suppose you felt the current and aimed to go square across it, but I've tried that and found, after a while, that I couldn't tell by the feel which way the water was runnin'."

"Yes," said John D., recovering himself somewhat, "I tried that, and then I heard the crows on Corn Island and other crows on the trees over the river, by the big eddy—"

"Well, yes, that was better than the current—" And then, with an eager glance at John D.'s satchel, he said, "What have you got in that bag? Is it victuals? If it is,

for God's sake give me some! S'help me God, I haven't had a bite to eat since yesterday morning!"

"Yes, I have got meat and bread here, and you can have as much as you want. And here's a frying-pan, and some middling. You can cook it in a minute; and here's plenty of corn bread, if you like that." Here John D. handed him the bread and the pan, and with his hunting-knife cut off many long, thin slices from the piece of middling, and threw them into the pan, which was now on the fire. They were soon fizzing and filling the air with a most savory odor. It was a sight, the eager animal gaze of the giant upon the cooking meat! He was stuffing his mouth with the corn bread, sopping it often in the juices of the meat which were fast filling the pan, and looking up at John D. with an expression of unmistakable benevolence and gratitude. "You've been a savior to me, my little man," said he, stuffing into his mouth pieces of the meat red hot from the pan. "I don't know what would 'a' become o' me, if I hadn't a-met you. Oh, you can't think how I've suffered!"

Thus he went on eating and mumbling indistinctly, and making many oh's and ah's and grunts of satisfaction, until his hunger was appeased.

"Why do you stay over here starving," said John D., that cunning young man, "when you might go over to town? Anybody will give a hungry man food; and then you could get work, and pay for what you want."

"Well, you see, my little man, I am an unfortunate man. I've had misfortune till I'm most drove crazy. Would you be willin' to help a man that's unfortunate; a poor unfortunate man that's got no friend and that's so fixed that he can't help himself?"

"Yes," said John D., a little touched by the big fellow's pitiful looks and his poor effort at eloquence; "what can I do for you? I haven't got but a quarter—two cut nine-pences—you can have them!" And he took them from his pocket and handed them toward the man on the palm of his hand.

"Oh, no! I don't want that. I wouldn't take your little pocket money anyhow, but it wouldn't do me any good. If I could only git word to a man in town—would you take



a word from me to a man in town? Do you know a man there of the name of Ould—Bob Ould, the lawyer? A'most everybody knows him."

"Yes, I know him very well, and I'll take a message to him. What do you want me to tell him?"

"I want you to tell him that I'm over here, and that I want to git away, and that I can do something for him, and I want money enough to take me away from this country where I've been so unfortunate, and that I can do him a turn worth the money."

"What shall I tell him you can do for him, and who shall I tell him you are? What is your name?"

"Well, now, my little man, you can judge how unfortunate a man must be when he can't tell his name! But he'll know me when you tell him I'm the biggest man you ever saw out of a show; and when you tell him that I will give him something that he sets great store by, a tin box that's been lost and found, he'll be sure to know."

"Well, I'll go right off and see him."

"Wait a bit, wait a bit; you can't go back through this fog. And I want you to promise me not to tell anybody else about seein' me over here."

John D. promised, and further assured him that he would be guided by Mr. Ould, who was a great friend of his father. "But I think," said John D., disposed to amuse himself with the man, of whom he felt no longer any apprehension, "I think you might tell me your name." And he looked and smiled in quite a sly way, that cunning John D.

"You can read, I suppose, in course."

"Yes, I can read."

"You can read writin' pretty good, can't you?"

"Oh, yes, I can read writing pretty well."

"Well, look a-here," and, choosing a smooth spot on the sand, he wrote in large, well-formed characters JAMES STOKES, and then, passing his hand over the sand and obliterating the letters, he looked into John D.'s eyes with a grin of delight.

"You write a pretty good hand, Mr. Stokes," said John D.

"'Mister Stokes'! You are the first human bein' that ever called me Mister Stokes. Well, the fog's liftin'. It'll be clear in a minute now. It goes off as sudden as it comes on. Come with me till I show you where you'll find me when you come back." Then he led the way across the island, a short distance, to a small chute, down the dry channel of which they walked until they came to a thick clump of willows, where Stokes had made his hiding place. Here he had remained concealed during the day, coming out only at night or early in the morning, when he posted himself at the point where John D. had found him. This was a promontory from which he could view the whole southern side of the island, and the north side of Corn Island, and the Kentucky shore, and see any one that might approach from that quarter. Moreover, this spot could be reached from his place of hiding under cover of the willows, which grew all along the way. In his hiding place he had made a bed of long grass. This and a bag stuffed with this grass, and a log to sit upon, constituted all his household furniture.

"How long have you been here?" said John D.

"Le'me see—this is Saturday, ain't it? Well, I come over here Wednesday before day. I had a little provision in a sack, but it give out, and when I seen you this mornin' I had fasted a whole night and a day. I was pretty desperate when you found me."

"Why didn't you go down to the fishermen on Rock Island? They draw the seine there every day, and you might have got provisions by helping them."

"Lord bless you! that's the last place I'd think of goin'. I worked with them fellows once, for old man Phipps—old Jerry. You've heard tell of him, I know. Well, they put all the hard work on me. If there was a hang on the rock, and somebody had to go overboard to loosen it, Stokes was always the man. If we were hauling the short seines in the pockets, Stokes always had the outside brail. If there was any swimmin' to be done, Stokes had to do it. Every bit of hardship of every kind was sure to be put on me. It was well I was able to stand it. I wanted fifty dollars to carry me home to Harrisburg, in Pennsylvania, and I made

up my mind to save my money till I got that much. I wouldn't drink a drop of sperrits, except once in a while, when I was in the water, and the old man always furnished that: and I wouldn't stand treat, nor spend a cent in the grocery there in Shippingport, nor gamble with 'em, and they knew I had all the money I had drawed, exceptin' a little I had spent for cheese and crackers, and maybe a glass of porter now and then, at McKinzie's tavern, and then wanted to git it out of me by hook or crook. So one Saturday night they come down, leastways six or seven of 'em did, to McKinzie's, where I was havin' a glass of porter and a bit of cheese and crackers, and talkin' there with Enoch and the old man; and they accuses me of stealin' eighteen dollars that they said one of 'em had lost, and wanted to search me; for I knew they wanted to play a trick, and make believe they had found the money on me. And so they set on me and tried to do it by force. But I was too much for 'em, and knocked 'em about pretty lively, and got clear, and went off up to town. They'd make short work of me now, if they could git hold on me. It's more on account of them than anybody else that I'm bound to keep out of sight here. I'd give the world to be a trim-built little man like you! I love a trim-made little man. You see I'm so big there ain't one of these fellows that wouldn't know me a mile away, if I showed in daylight. And they'd be after me keener than ever since I've got into misfortune. I've got so used to hidin' that I can't stand anywhere in the open ground without feelin' as if somebody was lookin' at me, and even when I'm in the very thick of the bushes, if the sky is open above me, the light seems to shine clean through me; and sometimes I look up to see if some one ain't lookin' for me out of the sky. I suppose it's because I'm so big, and sich an unfortunate man. It's mighty hard to walk straight in this world! I think sometimes it's the nature of a man to wobble, even on level ground and in broad daylight. Did you ever see a straight path across a meadow or a pasture? I never did. They all wobble, wirin' in and wirin' out, first one way and then the other; and if it leads along a fence that keeps you straight a while, that's sure to be harder

walkin' than in the crooked path. It's a cur'ous thing, a cur'ous thing!"

John D., impatient to go, now rose, saying, "I must be off."

"But surely you'll come back?"

"Yes, I will come back as quickly as I can after seeing Mr. Ould, and will bring you word what he says. I'll leave everything here, so if you get hungry you can have another fry. And here's some coffee and an onion"; and then he gave him what had been reserved for Bradstreet. Then he set out to retrace his steps across the water.

Above the track which John D. had followed, the rocky bottom of this chute was filled with round holes made by the parting from the matrix of large, round fossils like cannon-balls. These holes were known as pots and kettles, over which the passage was difficult and painful. Filled with the strange adventure of the morning he missed the well-known track, going too high up the chute among the pots and kettles, and was obliged to change his course more than once before he got into the right track, which lies lower, along an even, smooth, flat surface. He did not give much thought to the throngs of wildfowl which the sun now revealed in every direction along the water. The pigeons, too, were pouring across the river, and alighting on Corn Island, swarming upon such trees as were covered with the vines of the wild-grape. He had no time for these now, but he could not altogether suppress a longing for Bradstreet and his old fusil.

As he passed along the wooded island, he was startled by a loud, sustained, shrill whistle overhead, and looking up he saw the bald-eagle in the air. He had left his perch on the hickory tree, and was flying with the swiftness of an arrow toward the head of the falls. There a fishhawk was rising from the water, with a large fish in his claws, its scaly sides gleaming in the sunlight. Seeing the eagle coming it rose straight into the air to avoid the pounce of its enemy. The eagle directs his flight upward also, and there is a question only as to which shall attain the highest position. So long as the hawk can keep uppermost he is safe. He makes a good race, though handicapped with the



weight of the fish, and still maintains the advantage. Now they have stopped flapping their wings and are sailing around in circles, rising higher and higher, and coming gradually over the point where John D. stands. They have now reached such a height that it is difficult to tell which is uppermost. Except by the gleaming sides of the fish, as they are turned to the sun, the two birds are not distinguishable. Suddenly they begin to descend. The eagle has got above, and is closing his wings, and stopping at short intervals, menacing the hawk, who is dropping toward the earth as fast as he can come, his wings held high and forming a parachute, shaking his legs again and again, endeavoring to loosen the fish from his great hooked claws, emitting all the while a piteous squeal. Just over John D. the fish falls from his clutches. Instantly the wings of the eagle are closed,

"And like a thunderbolt he falls."

Clutching it in his great talons and drawing it up to his breast, he flies heavily away across the river, while the fishhawk perches on the tall hickory, and preens his feathers.

And now John D. hastens away across the rocks to the basin, and over the basin to the town. As he passes Hare's shop he is told that Bradstreet has been there to say that he had sprained his ankle slightly that evening he parted with him, and, though able to hobble down there, was not in condition to undertake the jaunt to the island.

John D. soliloquized as he pushed on uptown: "What will old B. say, when I tell him about the robber? I'm going to make it out worse than anything in 'The Three Spaniards.'"

## CHAPTER XXVIII

### THE GAMBLING-ROOM

"Pleased, the fresh packs on cloth of green they see,  
And seizing handle with preluding glee;  
They draw, they sit, they shuffle, cut and deal;  
Like friends assembled, but like foes to feel."

THE FALLS was by no means without vice. There was always a gambling-room, the proprietors of which were well known to the authorities and to the community. Their business was an offense against the law, punishable by a heavy fine and by the forfeiture of their gambling implements; but the law was hardly ever enforced. They were often indicted but seldom arraigned, the prosecuting attorney usually dismissing the case, upon payment of that portion of the fine which was the perquisite of his office. Or, if the penalty was inflicted, "influence" was pretty sure to be used with the governor, and the fine remitted. It is humiliating to say that this was very easily effected whenever the election of a United States Senator was at hand. The governor was generally a candidate, and if the representatives from the offender's district endorsed the application, the fine was sure to be remitted. So the play went on almost as if there were no law forbidding it. Except during the races, few outside gamblers came into the field, and the business was left for the most part in the hands of local practitioners. The game was popularly known as "The Tiger." Ould, who was himself addicted to gambling, not habitually, but at intervals, as he was addicted to drinking—these vices going together, as if by some indissoluble connection—used to call these local games the "domesticated tigers," in contradistinction to those that came at the time of the races, when they swarmed into the little town from many a far-off jungle.

On the day of John D.'s adventure on the falls, Ould had received the contingent fee in the case of *Tyte vs. Backstep*. He had no sooner got the money in his hand than he set out for Digby's warehouse, where he deposited fifteen hundred dollars, old Mr. Anderson, the cashier, putting it to his credit on the books. Later in the day, with the other five hundred in his pocket, he walked up town, in a very indeterminate state of mind. The case in which he had earned this fee had occupied him for a long time, and had kept him sober; for he was never known to take to drink while he had any important business on his hands. He could throw off, when he pleased, the burden of his private affairs, but the responsibility for the interests of other people, confided to his charge, could never be shaken off. Thornton's case, both law and facts, was at his finger-ends, and the day of trial was yet a month off.

Freedom from professional care was a dangerous condition for him, as it proved to be on this occasion. He had taken an early breakfast, and thought it would be an agreeable thing to go to "Holiday's" and get a luncheon. On the way the idea of something to drink suggested itself. He repelled this suggestion, but it returned in a mild form, and found acceptance. He would have a glass of old Madeira, "to help digestion." By the time he had entered Holiday's door, and glanced at the shining array of glasses behind the bar, he had enlarged this idea, and, going into a private room, he ordered an ample repast and a half pint of brandy. The meal being served, he ate leisurely, not touching the brandy, but looking at it with a glance which expressed satisfaction that it was there. We all know how much more pleasure there is in hope than in possession, and how sweet are those moments in which we see within our grasp the object of desire; passing sweet, but, like all things so ethereal, short-lived, their delicate aroma vanishing in fruition. No man knew this better than Ould, and he dallied with the bottle, and prolonged, with seeming self-denial, this pleasure to its utmost limits. The repast over, he nibbled a piece of cheese, and filled a tumbler half full of brandy, and drank it off. Then he called for a cigar, and smoking this slowly, as he sipped the remainder, he

sat long in solitary rumination. Then suddenly he sent for the bill and paid it, and buttoning his coat high over his chest, grasped his cane with a vigorous movement, and went out. There was a slight flush on his dark face, and his eyes glowed with increased brightness; but there was no sign of intoxication upon him, and he walked with unusual vigor and elasticity. Yet the demon was in possession of him, and led him straight to the room of the gamblers.

He found there John Lewis and his two partners, Able and Woods, whom we may now, in as brief terms as possible, describe. Lewis was easily the leader of the fraternity. He was a man of thirty, with black hair and blue eyes, a good figure inclining to stoutness, with a gentlemanly bearing, having copied quite closely the stately air and prompt politeness of the fine gentlemen of the day. He was dressed in dark clothes fashionably cut, with no jewelry except a single diamond of large size, on his ruffled shirt-bosom. He was not only the fine gentleman of the establishment, but he was, in the opinion of his partners, also a great literary man, and a connoisseur in art.

Able was a little, fair man, with light ashen-tinted hair, a broad white forehead, open gray eyes, with a decidedly sagacious but honest expression, and had the reputation of being a strictly "square man." This and a quiet, amiable temper made him a favorite with all the patrons of the house.

The third partner, Woods, was a coarse, stout, black-eyed, black-haired man, with large hands and a general clumsiness of figure; very plain in attire, and very shy; hardly ever venturing to take any part in the talk of the room, but smiling blandly upon everybody. He was a blacksmith before he embarked in gaming, an old friend of Lewis and Able, who, when they had lost all their money on the races one fall, induced him to quit his forge and put his capital into this gambling-room. He was there to look after his interests, and seemed "a fish out of water." All three of these men had that peculiar bleached look which marks the professional gambler, the result of living almost all their days out of the sun,



When Ould entered the room they knew at once that he was at the beginning of a debauch; for he had never visited them except when under the influence of drink. He was now in high spirits, and, after ordering the servant in attendance to bring him a glass of brandy, challenged Lewis to a game of dummy whist. But Lewis declined, shaking his head, and protesting that he was no match for Mr. Ould. After some chaffing, Ould offered odds of a point in the game, which Lewis accepted, and they sat down to play. Ould beat him three games, when Lewis rose from the table, quitting the game, and protesting that he would never again be foolish enough to match himself against Mr. Ould. Ould laughed, and insisted that it was all luck, but Lewis paid Ould seventy-five dollars, and declared himself cured of "sucking eggs."

"Nonsense, nonsense," said Ould, "come on, now, one rub more."

But Lewis put his purse into his pocket, and buttoned up his coat, and shook his head, and said, "No, Mr. Ould, no more double-dummy for me."

"Mr. Ould," said little Able, "I'll tell you of a man who would like to play you—Mr. Twist. He's up here every day, and I heard him say, that if he should ever meet you here, he would be willing to play you at dummy whist, for any reasonable stake."

"Well," said Ould, "I wish he would come up now—Jerry, give me some brandy and water."

This was the second time that this order had been given by Ould since he had entered the room. Lewis now walked quickly up to him and said in a low tone that he desired to speak privately with him for a moment, inviting him to walk into his chamber.

"What the deuce," exclaimed Ould, "can you have to say to me that requires privacy? Speak it out here."

"I would speak it out here," said Lewis, "but I am afraid somebody may come in, and it is a thing I should not like everybody to hear. Please walk into my room a moment."

"If you want to talk to me about law, you can't do it now; I never mix law and brandy together. You'll have to wait, and come to my office."

"But it isn't about law; it is a matter of some interest to me—please come for a moment."

"Hang you!" said Ould, "can't a man have a game of cards, or take his ease in his inn, without the everlasting bother of business? Come aside and tell me in three words what it is about."

They walked to the farther end of the room, where, after a few words from Lewis, Ould broke away from him, crying out with violence, "Nonsense, nonsense; don't presume to talk to me in that way. If you are tender about your fine brandy, I'll send down to Holiday's and get it."

"No, no, Mr. Ould—you know me too well to think that—or that I would take any liberty with you." And then Lewis made further protestations, by which Ould was mollified, and he said, "Come along, then, and let me hear what you have to say"; and then he walked with Lewis to his room.

As they entered there, Ould was surprised to see such elegant quarters, the room being sumptuously furnished and the walls adorned with pictures. But he was more surprised to see a table covered with handsomely bound books, among which were many of the English classics, and two copies of Shakespeare. "Hello!" he cried, struck at once by this, "are you such an admirer of Shakespeare that you keep two copies on your table?"

"No, sir," said Lewis; "I can't say that I like the book much, but I keep it here to settle bets. You can't think how many bets are made on that book! Hardly a day passes that there isn't a bet made on some passage in it. And so we are obliged to keep it here. It is just as necessary as Hoyle. I have caught a good many points on it, and have won a pile of money on them. It was only the other night that I won fifty from young 'Campus Martius' of Lexington on that passage from Hamlet—'I am native and to the manner born.'"

"I understand," said Ould. "He thought it manor."

"Exactly. That's a real good point, because it is often put wrong in books and newspapers, and most men, when they see a thing in print, think it must be right."

"You have got over that, have you?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then, John Lewis, you have made a good stride toward making something of yourself. What other Shakesperean points have you?"

"Well, there's that other line from Hamlet—'The glow-worm 'gins to pale his uneffectual fire.'"

"Ah, yes. They bet on *ineffectual*. (How absolute the knave is!)"

"Yes, sir; and there's that passage from 'Measure for Measure': 'I am a looker on here in Vienna.' They bet on Venice every time."

"Well, you have plenty more, I suppose?"

"Oh, yes; many more. I have them all down in a book; and, in general, if a man quotes from Shakespeare as much as two lines, I bet him he's wrong, and win nearly every time. There's been a lull in the betting on Shakespeare, lately, because most of the regular customers of the house have got to be posted on the points. But when the country gentry come in, and go to Drake's theater a few nights, we are sure to get them. We used to get shoals of them on 'Richard the Third.'"

"'Off with his head: so much for Buckingham,' hey!"

"Yes, sir; they fall on that, and on many more things they show on the stage, that ain't in that play at all."

"Well, well! You make good use of your belle-lettre scholarship, I must say! I remember you were once on law points. Don't you remember consulting me about the penalty for stealing from the person?"

"Yes, sir; of course I do. I paid you twenty-five dollars for that opinion; but I made a big thing of it. Why, I won fifty from Mr. Twist on that; and I got more than a dozen young lawyers for smaller amounts, and some old lawyers, too. The whole town was buzzing with that for two weeks, and the commonwealth attorney's office was thronged every day with men that had made bets on it. I got that point from Jim Woods. He picked it up somewhere, but he was so ignorant that I was afraid to bet on it without your opinion."

"You were afraid it might be crowner's quest law?"

"Yes, sir. Woods tried to explain it to me, but talked

the greatest nonsense! He said that if a man stole the value of four dollars and a half, it was 'high treasing'; but if he stole only twenty-five cents in value, *from the person of another*, it was a felony, for which he might be sent to the penitentiary. This was the point to bet on. He was going about with a pocketful of money, betting on it. After I got your opinion I backed it freely. I won a great deal from men that had consulted their lawyers—"

"Yes," interrupted Ould, "consulted their lawyers, and got street opinions, for which they did not pay. Served them right."

"Yes, sir! I suppose so. Why, sir, some of them, too virtuous to set foot in my room before, thinking they had a sure thing, came here to hunt me up and bet me. I took them in as fast as they came."

Ould laughed heartily at this exposition of the resources of a betting man, and then asked if he had any other departments of knowledge upon which he had betting points.

"Why, yes, sir; there's the Bible."

"What! You reprobate! Don't tell me you bet upon the Bible! What have you there?"

"Well, there's that point about Satan having been driven out of heaven and cast into hell; and a lot of other things that people have got out of 'Paradise Lost.' 'He who tempests the wind to the shorn lamb'—that ain't in the Bible."

"No, it's in Sterne and a dozen other places, and in as many different languages. People have been stealing that ever since books were first written. Have you made much out of these?"

"No, sir; not much; the Bible is going out of fashion. A Bible man turns up only now and then. And then there is always trouble and delay about deciding bets on the Bible, because men are generally unwilling to give up on outside authority, and it takes an awful time to go through the book, looking for the passage. I know I have made several sinners go through it from Genesis to Revelation, looking for these passages; and I have ransacked it pretty freely myself, but I am afraid it has never done me any good."

"No, you scamp! You were looking through it as many



others look through it, hoping to find something for your temporal advantage."

"Well, Mr. Ould, I have respect for the Bible, but 'business is business.' And now let me tell you what I have to say to you. Mr. Twist thinks he plays a strong game of whist, and I know he is anxious to play a match with you, not only with a view of winning money from you, but because he knows that we will back you, and he thinks he may catch you off your foot, and make a good thing out of us all. That's the reason I asked you to pull up a little on the brandy. I would not presume, of course, to dictate to you, nor to advise you, but I thought it right to let you know how the land lay."

"Very well, let him come on. If he thinks I will play worse for the brandy, he makes a mistake. Double dummy is too simple a game for that. If it were whist with partners, he might count on it; because there a great deal depends upon observation—observation of those engaged in the game, their countenances, mode of assorting their cards, and many little things which indicate the character of their hands—your partner's as well; things which it is perfectly legitimate to observe, and are very important matters in that game, but which have no place in dummy. If I could not play a hundred games of dummy whist without a blunder, I would quit whist altogether. I'll play with him, and, with equal cards, I will beat him, as long as I can see my hand and hold it in my fingers. Come, let's go in; you took me away from my drink." Then they returned to the gambling-room.

There, just as Ould had finished the brandy, Mr. Twist entered. He shook hands with Ould, and as he felt the hot hand in his thin, cool fingers, a light beamed in his countenance, and rubbing his hands together with much jollity, he took a seat at the table on which Ould and Lewis had been playing, and shuffling the cards, challenged Lewis to a game of all-fours. Lewis declined, and so did the other partners, whom he challenged in turn. Then he proposed to play with Ould, who declined, professing not to be well versed in all-fours. Twist had a way of going indirectly toward his object, even when a straight road

lay before him. As Mr. Jack Taylor said of him, he liked "a circuitous route." At last he proposed to play with Mr. Ould a game of dummy whist, and they sat down to the game.

"Well, Mr. Ould," said Twist, "what shall the stakes be?"

"Twenty-five dollars is my limit," said Ould. "I'll bet that or any part of it on each game."

"I'll bet you ten dollars a game; I think that is about as much as I can bet against you."

While Ould was dealing the cards, Twist said, addressing Able: "Didn't you win twenty-five dollars from me the other day?"

"I believe I did," replied Able.

"Well, I should like to get it back, and, if you say so, I will bet you that amount on the first game." To this Able assented.

Before the cards had been exposed, Twist proposed to bet Lewis also twenty-five dollars on each game until one should cry off; which was accepted, and the game was begun.

Ould had drunk many glasses of brandy and water; but his was a strong head, and he exhibited little sign of intoxication. He was in that condition in which the stimulant shows its power in heightening and intensifying the action of the brain. He played with perfect correctness throughout the game, but lost it, having marked but six points. Then Twist proposed, and Able agreed, that their wagers should continue throughout the match.

Twist looked quite exultant, but was surprised at the invariable correctness and promptness of Ould's play. But this he hoped to see fall away, as Jerry should answer his repeated calls for brandy and water. Vain hope! The first was the only game won by Twist, until he had lost nearly five hundred dollars. Meantime, at the end of each game Ould had never failed to issue the usual order to Jerry. Yet Twist observed with amazement, and deep concern, that he had never made a wrong play. Though the drink had so far affected his muscles that he could hardly grasp the cards, his head seemed still as clear as at the beginning. Twist seemed very much disturbed by his loss.

He rose from the table while Ould was shuffling the cards, and walked back and forth across the room, apparently in deep meditation. He had begun to fear that the drink would sooner or later overthrow Ould, and put an end to the play, leaving him no opportunity to recover his loss. He therefore made to Lewis and Able a new proposition. This was to play one rub, "double or quits." Lewis shook his head doubtfully, but after a moment he and Able retired for consultation, Ould saying, "I never play double or quits, as you all know; it leads to too high gaming for me. But it is your trade, Lewis. I'll win for you, if Mr. Twist does not hold the best cards."

After a while, Lewis and Able come forward and announce that they accept the offer; and they have a new pack of cards, and prepare for the game, Ould still betting as before. Twist has shuffled the cards most industriously, mixing them in every way known to practiced players. Ould again wins the deal. When this has been made, and the cards assorted, Ould says, before a card has been played: "I will give you two points; you can't make more."

Twist studies the hands diligently for some time, and then accepts this offer, and scores two. This had often occurred during the games, the cards being thrown up, and the claim of one or the other allowed without a play. On the next hand Twist has omnipotent cards, with four honors, and Ould, after a glance at the hands, throws up the game. Twist is now jubilant, and, seeing that Ould does not issue his stated order for drink, calls out to Jerry to bring Mr. Ould some brandy and water, and to make a toddy for him, Twist. A quiet smile passes over Mr. Ould's face as he observes Twist's officious politeness. The next game Ould wins, and Twist looks decidedly glum. He takes a good drink of the toddy, swallowing about half of it, while Ould tosses off his brandy at one draught.

Now comes the deciding game. Again Twist calls on Jerry to give Mr. Ould some brandy. Ould says nothing against it, but sings out in his big voice, without any discernible tune, Iago's bacchanalian song:

"And let me the cannican clink, clink,  
And let me the cannican clink.

A soldier's a man,  
A life's but a span,  
Why, then, let a soldier drink.' "

At which Lewis and Able regard him with much concern.

On the first deal in the decisive game, Twist makes four. The backers of Ould look rather serious. On the next hand Ould makes six, and Twist is down in the mouth. On the third deal, Twist scores five, making his score nine, and he is much elated. On the fourth deal Ould scores two, and may now count out by honors, and his party is decidedly jubilant. The last deal comes, and Twist is livid with excitement. He is especially disturbed by seeing that Ould's last glass of brandy remains untouched. He reminds him of this, but Ould is busy assorting his cards, and scrutinizing the hands, and only mutters, "After the game." At which Lewis and Able grin. Twist turns over the cards on the table, and finding the king and knave in his hand, cannot forbear to say, "Mr. Ould is not out by honors, anyway."

"No," replied Ould, "but I am out by tricks."

"I beg your pardon, you are not out," said Twist.

"I shall be, when the hand is played out," persisted Ould.

Twist studied the cards long and carefully, and then said: "Will you bet on it?"

"Yes," said Ould, "I will bet ten dollars that I will go out on this hand"; and Twist accepted it.

"I'll give you a point," said Twist, "making you nine."

"No; play on," said Ould. "I am going out."

Twist played slowly and carefully, Ould replying quickly, and finally making a play at which Twist bounced from his seat, with an oath, and surrendered the game.

Meantime, John D. had gone home to change his wet clothes and then straight to Ould's office, and, not finding him there, was on his way to the tavern, when he met Johnson, one of the dissipated young dandies of the town, and asked him if he knew where he could find Mr. Ould.

"Do you want to see him about business?" said Johnson.

"Yes, sir; very particular business. He would be looking for me, if he knew what I want with him."



"Well, come with me, and I think I can find him for you." And he and John D. walked away together.

There was a sort of freemasonry among the men that frequented Lewis's room, and any transaction like the match at double dummy between Ould and Twist was sure to be, in some occult way, communicated to the fraternity. Johnson knew of it, and, when John D. met him, was on his way to the gaming-room. Leaving John D. at the door, he entered there just as the last game had been ended. He saw the gamblers, with satisfaction on their faces, pocketing their winnings, while those of Ould lay on the table before him; and these circumstances, with Twist's glum face, made plain to him the general result of the match.

Twist did not like his defeat to be made a topic of discussion. The opportunity for which he had so long waited, to find Ould in the beginning of a debauch, and to play with him for large stakes, had been thrown right in his way; the gamblers had backed Ould, as he desired they should, and he had been badly beaten. And worst of all, he had lost five hundred dollars belonging to a country client, who might come at any hour to demand it. Not willing that Johnson should know all the particulars, and annoyed by the covert exultation on the faces of the gamblers, he at once pretended a matter of business with Johnson. "Come here," he said, "I want to see you." And putting his arm over Johnson's shoulder, and talking in an undertone about nothing, he drew him to the door. There they met John D., whom, in his preoccupation, Johnson had forgotten. He apologized to the lad, and was about to return to the room, when John D. handed him the following note, written on a slip of paper, which he took in to Ould:

"MR. OULD: I want to see you at the door on very particular business—about the tin box you have been looking for so long.  
JOHN D."

Then Twist and Johnson walked off together down the street. Let us go with them a little way.

"What did you want to say to me?" said Johnson, when they had passed out of the room.

"Well, nothing. I wanted to get you out of that cursed den. Come, walk with me."

"How did you come off from your match with Ould?"

"He beat me."

"How many games, and for what stakes?"

"Well, I hardly know—I lost a good deal of money." And then he lapsed into abuse of the den, as he now called the room in which he had enjoyed himself so much in the past, and which he had promised himself should be the scene of a coup-de-main, by which he would win large sums from the gamblers, by beating Ould when he should find him there drunk. He had communicated this design to Johnson, in the course of their intimate association, and had invited him to take a share in the stake, which Johnson had declined, pretending a want of money, but really because he thought Ould just as good a player drunk as sober, and in either condition an overmatch for Twist or anybody else. He was not sorry for the misfortune of his friend, for theirs was not true friendship. Nor was it the conventional friendship of society, shining with the mild effulgence of the theater moon or the "uneffectual fire" of the stage stove with a candle in it, but a specious counterfeit, like that born of companionship in drink—a phosphoric glow—"blazes giving more light than heat"—easily convertible into contempt or hatred.

Twist was a complex character; loaded down with vicious inclinations, without imagination, unrefined, sensual, coarse in all his tastes, indolent, and bent upon making his way in life without labor. Yet, secretive and full of tact, he presented to the world generally an appearance of respectability; a strong ingredient of personal pride doing the office of conscientiousness, and keeping him from the utter degradation to which his evil propensities inclined him. Johnson was soon tired of Twist's Jeremiads, and left him a prey to remorse, and in the midst of struggles toward virtuous—or rather prudent—resolutions, and, eager to learn the particulars of the match at whist, he went back to Lewis's room, whither we must now return to relieve John D., left standing at the door.

Ould had started up when he read John D.'s note.

"Lewis," said he, "here is important business that concerns my best friend. Let Jerry show the young gentleman at the door into your room. He will have to wait there a while until I cool off. What books have you there, besides Shakespeare and the Bible and Hoyle's games?"

"I haven't got Hoyle there at all. We keep that here. There is nothing in my room that smells of the shop. I've got Robinson Crusoe there, a splendid edition, if he isn't too old for that."

"Give him that. Too old! A man is never too old for Robinson. I read it myself now."

Then Lewis went to the door, and courteously showed John D. into his room, and put the book before him. Meantime, Ould, furnished by Jerry with a lump of ice and a bowl of water, was busy applying these to his head; saturating his hair with the cold water, and passing the ice often across the back of his neck and head. After refrigerating himself in this way a long time, he strained the water from his hair, and throwing back his head, shook the great black shock as a buffalo shakes his mane. Then he blew a blast from his throat, as a horse does after a run over a new pasture. Then taking a towel in each hand, he rubbed his head until the hair stood up in one great frizzled mass. Then he sat down and made Jerry rub his head and scratch it, and press it from the sides. "Harder, harder!" he would say; "crush it if you can." Then he had it all brushed out again, and carefully tying his neckcloth before the glass, and scrutinizing his face, and especially his great black eyes, until he seemed satisfied with himself, he walked rapidly to Lewis's room.

"Well, John D., what is this about the tin box?"

"Mr. Ould," said John D., "I have got something very particular to tell you. Can nobody hear us here? Hadn't we better go to your office?"

"No; nobody will hear us here; this is a better place than my office."

"Well—what do you think? I went over on the falls this morning, and whom should I see there but Stokes!"

"Jim Stokes?"

"Yes; Stokes the robber."

"Why, what the devil is he doing there; and what about the box?"

Then John D. related his interview with Stokes, and what he had said about the missing tin box, and pretty much all that had passed between them. This was news indeed to Ould. "The rascal!" he muttered. "Why, he always denied that he had anything to do with that robbery. That alone would not have signified, but he told such a circumstantial story as I thought him incapable of inventing, and I believed him. Well, John D., this is particular business! I must see him to-night. You have not told anybody of this?"

"Of course not."

"Well, of course not. Keep it to yourself. Not a word or a hint to anybody, not even to your father—especially not to him. You say he is careful about showing himself?"

"Yes; he says that Phipps's fishermen would know him a mile off if he were to walk on the rocks."

"He is in the right. They would be after him for the reward offered by the jailer, and for a little private vengeance also. McKenzie, who was a witness to prove his good character while in Shippingport, told me that they undertook to beat him, one night, in his tavern, but that he literally turned the tables on them. That he got hold of a table, and breaking the legs off, laid about him with a leg in each hand, knocking the whole party down; that he went whirling through the room like a windmill in a gale, strewing the floor with his assailants, and when they were all down, took to his heels and ran away. You don't mind going back there?"

"No, sir; I *must* go back. I promised him to come back after seeing you."

"You are not afraid of his doing you any harm?"

"No, indeed! Why, I believe that when I stumbled on him in the fog, he was worse scared than I was. I don't think there's any harm in him, anyhow."

"It must have been to you like meeting a lion in your path."

"Yes, sir; but then he was like Æsop's lion, with a thorn in his foot."



Then Ould sent John D. for an almanac, and finding the hour at which the moon went down, wrote a note in the following words:

“STOKES: To-night, when the moon goes down, I will be on the Kentucky shore, opposite the point on the island where you built your fire this morning. I will show a lantern toward the island. Come to me, and deliver up the tin box and all that belongs to it, and I will provide you with money and a horse to take you away.

“R. OULD.”

“He knows that signature. I sent him two notes to the jail, while he was there, and he kept them, and, as I learned, set great store by them. He can’t read a word, nor write anything except his own name, and this he is so fond of writing that he used to scratch the jail room over with it. He leaves his sign-manual everywhere. I cautioned him about this, and advised him to write only on the sand, and by the waterside. Destroy my note after showing it to him.”

The reader shall not be wearied by following John D. in his second jaunt to the falls. Let it suffice that he found the robber in his lair and gave him Ould’s note, which he required to be read to him more than once, and then took it in his hands, and, scrutinizing the signature, said: “Yes, that’s his handwrite. I know it of old,” and smiled with a look of benevolence and gratification that touched John D.’s young heart, and inspired him with interest in the safe issue of the robber out of all his troubles. Stokes now endeavored to prolong the lad’s stay on the island, but the excitement of the adventure had so possessed him that the fishing now suggested by Stokes seemed tame, and he hastened his preparations to return to the town. There was a sensible break in the big fellow’s voice when he bade John D. good-by, and said: “Farewell, my little man—my young gentleman. You have been a savior to me. It’s mighty good of you to take so much trouble for a poor unfortunate man like me. It ain’t likely I can ever do any good for you, but I won’t ever forgit you.”

Early next morning Ould was at the house of Digby. Great was the joy of that worthy man to find the long-lost receipt of McCrae's deputy, for the full amount of the execution, in the possession of Ould!

"Now," said Digby, with a triumphant air, "you have those fellows in a box. I must be in the court when you spring this receipt on them. We must have Thornton in, too. I'll speak to Tom Long, and he shall have half the town there to witness their shame—"

"Oh," said Ould, "we can't have any scene made out of it. I am bound by professional courtesy to acquaint the counsel with a defense so complete as this. It would be against all propriety to surprise them with this receipt. They would have a just right to complain, and would say: 'We regret that our brother did not out of court acquaint us of the complete defense furnished by the paper which he now asks leave to file, when it would have given us pleasure to dismiss the suit, and to congratulate Mr. Ould and his client, as we do now, upon the recovery of this receipt. The sheriff must now look to his deputy's securities.'"

"The blanked hypocrites!" ejaculated Digby.

Accordingly, the receipt was exhibited to the opposite counsel, who, recognizing the familiar signature of the dead deputy, at once dismissed the action. There were many who shared in the feeling of Digby, and in his desire to emphasize the defeat of what, there is little doubt, was a nefarious scheme, and expose its author, and the roguish lawyer abetting him, to the just indignation of the public. A skilful writer of fiction might have made of this a fine dramatic scene in court. The faithful chronicler can relate only the simple truth.

Mr. John Digby's hostility to rogues was not confined to rogues of low degree. He liked even better to fly at high game. "Bob Ould," he said afterward when they were in friendly conference, "you know that that roguish lawyer was in collusion with McCrae to rob Bob Thornton. He ought to be turned out of the profession. But lawyers can hardly ever be brought to take a step against one of the fraternity. 'Dog won't eat dog.' They can hardly be

got to take a step against any official of the courts, clerk or sheriff, for want of a lawyer that would push a motion against him. Don't you know that there was a conspiracy in Bob's case?"

"No, I don't know it. I am strongly inclined to believe it, from many circumstances. Stokes told me that the little Englishman who was suspected of complicity in the robbery, and was certainly concerned in it, but discharged for want of evidence, and who employed this lawyer to defend him, wanted to get possession of the sheriff's receipt, which he had seen when they first overhauled the tin box; but Stokes refused to let him have it, though he was very persistent in his effort to get it, and said he could get 'big money' for it. But the evidence of these rogues, one a fugitive from justice, even if they could be brought to testify, and their testimony were conclusive, would not avail to disbar a lawyer in full practice. If I could prove the conspiracy by a competent witness, I would move against both to-morrow; not only to displace them, but also by a criminal prosecution. You do the bar great injustice, as the world does generally. I am not behind you, and the bar is not, in detestation of such vile practices. Why, even Stokes, who seemed to know the facts of the case, was amazed and shocked. Rogue as he is, he was simple enough to believe that crime was all confined to such as he. That men with all the comforts of life about them, who can read and write, who go to church on Sunday, and live cleanly, and wear such a high polish—*gentlemen*—should brood over such a crime as this, to be hatched at last, and consummated in the very court of justice, seemed to him monstrous and incomprehensible. It has shaken his faith in humanity and reconciled him to his own low vice, stealing, to which he has a natural and invincible proclivity.

"There are bad men at the bar here, as everywhere. But the bar is prompt to discover them and to cause them to change their field of labor. Such men are continually moving from place to place. This man, a 'wheeling stranger,' has made a reputation here, and has unquestionable ability, but he will soon be made to move on by the silent opinion

of the bar. Some day he may be fixed in a great city, where such men are apt to congregate, and keep each other in countenance, and constitute a dangerous class that, if not likely to suffer under the penal statutes, yet, under the inscrutable economy of Providence, sooner or later meet with inevitable, adequate punishment."



## CHAPTER XXIX

### THE CODE OF HONOR

The Capulet's abroad,  
And, if we meet, we shall not 'scape a brawl."

THE Virginia colony in Kentucky brought with them all the social laws and customs derived from their English ancestors. Notable among these was that strange unwritten social law, "The code of honor," under which men often put their lives in peril for what none could define, a vague sense of something that is nothing:

"Pleasure to have it none, to lose it pain."

'And this law, subsisting only by the sanction of precedents from the rude age of chivalry, was there fastened invincibly upon all that called themselves gentlemen. But the practice of dueling was, in the course of time, modified at The Falls, as this chronicler will now show, through one of the innocent foibles of the people.

The people of Kentucky are in a high degree imitative. If one of their popular orators makes an apt quotation, or uses any new and felicitous expression in a public speech, it is at once caught up and repeated by every minor public speaker, from one end of the State to the other. The manners, and dress, and even the foibles of their distinguished men they are especially prone to copy. About Lexington and Frankfort, and elsewhere, may be found, even now, among the old lawyers and people about the public offices, men who say "Good mar-ning" with the well-known drawl with which Mr. Clay always made that salutation. And everywhere there are politicians who, if they can copy the great man in nothing else, can yet imitate

him in the constant flourish of a handkerchief. Many men have become addicted to snuffing because Mr. Clay had that habit, and they practice it in a manner plainly imitated from him. In imitation of Judge Underwood, men about Bowling Green still wear broad-brimmed hats, and many other instances of this imitative disposition could be given.

When in 1809, at the mouth of Silver Creek, in Indiana Territory, Mr. Clay and Humphrey Marshall fought a duel, the few witnesses were beset by people anxious to know all the details of this affair. Dr. William Galt was Mr. Clay's surgical attendant, and though one of the most punctilious of men, there came a time when to his friends he felt at liberty to relate these particulars, and they became generally known. Mr. Clay was hit in the leg and knocked over; "the bullet," to use the doctor's words, "neatly dissecting the muscle, without injury to any important gland or blood vessel, the wound healed promptly, without any permanent hurt." The manner and bearing of these distinguished combatants were eagerly inquired about, and it was made known that Mr. Clay had come on the ground with the well-known air he wore on all occasions of ordinary social intercourse, with little more gravity than usual, but only the easy, yet stately, bearing natural to him. On the other hand, the manner of Mr. Marshall was austere and dignified in an unusual degree. Thenceforth, in all affairs of this kind, the parties imitated on the field the manner of the great men; the austere dignity of Mr. Marshall, or the stately insouciance of Mr. Clay, as their several dispositions or their politics inclined them. But, what is more important, they imitated also the aim of the successful combatant, endeavoring thereafter to make what was called in their vocabulary a "low line shot." And thus this bloody practice was tempered by what grew into a conventional law forbidding any but a low line shot; and this law regulated the practice of dueling, except in two certain causes of quarrel, as long as the practice subsisted at The Falls. The first exception was the case of a quarrel between neighbors about disputed boundaries; the old, old story, where they will

"Fight for a plot  
Whereon the numbers cannot try the cause,  
Which is not tomb enough and continent  
To hide the slain."

The second, still older, was that primeval "*causa teterrima belli*"—woman. A dispute about boundaries was often fought out in the courts of law, and sometimes compromised; the other never. When either became the ground of a duel the fight was deadly.

The Falls, like all communities, had its factions social and political; and, as in all small communities, these were marked by especial bitterness. In the past, duels had often taken place between their opposing members, and though some years had now elapsed since an "affair" had occurred, and the parties to former duels were, by reason of age or family or responsibility, considered almost out of the pale of the code, yet abundant material for combustion was at hand in younger members, liable at any time to be kindled into flame. Accordingly, a quarrel now occurred to which, to the surprise of everybody, Stackpole, who had come "home," as he expressed it, was a party; his opponent being a young man belonging to a faction against which, in the past, Mr. John Digby had always stood opposed. This quarrel grew out of the accidental meeting of Stackpole and a young gentleman, a stranger to the town, having the same impediment of speech as he—not being able to sound the letter *r*. Some indifferent words passing between them, each thought the other was offensively imitating his own infirmity. An altercation ensued, when both men growing angry, as they warmed with the dispute, the colloquy became in the highest degree ludicrous, exciting much merriment among the bystanders, and great wrath in the stranger.

Subsequently, when Stackpole learned that the strange gentleman was really afflicted with this infirmity of speech, he was greatly concerned at having stood in the attitude of offering an affront to a stranger. As he had kept his temper better than his adversary, and had therefore come out of the altercation with decided advantage, Stackpole, at once waiving all question about the onus of the quarrel,

sent a note to the gentleman explaining his own well-known infirmity, and disavowing any intention of offense. To this he received a polite response, accepting the explanation (which had in fact already reached him from other quarters), expressing regret for the unfortunate occurrence, and sorry for his own unhappy exhibition of temper, and offering an apology for any rudeness on his part. On the same day the gentleman went away home, and the affair was considered well at an end.

On the next day the young gentleman whose guest the stranger had been sent by a gentleman well known in connection with these affairs, a note to Stackpole demanding peremptorily satisfaction for an insult offered his friend, stating that insults offered to his guest were insults to himself. Stackpole asked a brief time to consider the matter, promising an early response, and then took the note to Russell, and calling in McIntyre, the three friends held a council of war. Russell and McIntyre both knew that Stackpole, though not to the manner born, and grounded in opinion against the practice, had yet long ago made up his mind to conform to the custom of the country, and to fight if a proper occasion should occur. Avowing still his adherence to this resolution, the friends saw no course with a peremptory challenge but to accept, which he did, referring the gentleman to McIntyre for further arrangements. As for McIntyre, he said that a peremptory challenge was, except in certain extreme cases, in itself an insult only to be redeemed by an excessive use of courtly terms, not found in this gentleman's challenge.

The matter was kept secret by these gentlemen, but the adverse faction were perhaps less reticent, for Tom Long soon got wind of the affair and at once made it known to his friend and patron, Mr. John Digby. Great was the surprise of that worthy man. "And he has promptly accepted! Well, hurrah for Stackpole! There's life in the old Yankee blood yet"; and then he posted off to the quarters of McIntyre, where he found him and Russell in consultation, and at once threw himself into the affair as if he meant to assume complete control. "He shall have my father's pistols," he said; "none of your clumsy sawhandles,



but the real old Dublin pattern, made by Fowler, and the locks by Forster. Is Stackpole anything of a shot?"

"Shot!" exclaimed McIntyre. "He can't hit the side of a barn. I doubt if he ever pulled a trigger or let off a gun of any kind in all his life."

"Bless my soul!" exclaimed Digby, "I might have known that; they don't fight now where he came from; and then *sotto voce*, "they have too much sense."

"He has made up his mind to fight," said Russell, "and that being the case there was nothing to do but accept. That has been done, and now" (with an amiable smile upon Digby) "all we want of you is the use of your pistols, in case we need them, and some good general advice."

"Yes, but I am my own man, as you ought to know pretty well, and I shall be in this business all the way through to the end. Don't make any terms until I see you again. I shall return here in a half hour." And then Mr. John Digby went away home.

Soon after he was seen, dressed in his best suit, slowly promenading, with the stately mien he wore at times, along the chief thoroughfare of the town; looking into various places of public resort, and talking with such acquaintances as he chanced to meet, in a careless, desultory way; and then he returned to McIntyre's quarters. "Look here," he said to Russell as he entered, "you know Stackpole intimately. How do you think he will bear standing up to be shot at?"

"As well as any man," said Russell, decisively. "He has long ago made up his mind to that, but I fear he is not so clear about shooting at the other man."

"The devil! Oh, that won't do at all; not for a moment to be thought of! Do you know that I think that thing of firing in the air to be in itself an unpardonable affront. If a man were plainly to throw away his shot when I had fired upon him, he should shoot at me before I left him, if I had to fall upon him pell-mell. A man has no right to accept with such a purpose in his mind. He ought to be brave enough rather to decline to fight at all. No man has a right to put another in such a humiliating posture as that. I could never forgive that—never! Well, go on

with your consultation, but make no terms until I see you again. Remember that Stackpole must be put on an equal footing with his adversary. You say he can't shoot a pistol, and I know that his adversary belongs to a set that are constantly practicing with that weapon."

"Yes," said McIntyre, "and if they are not butchers of silk buttons they have crippled half the fine trees in the groves here, firing bullets into them, and can hit a tape line at the drop of a hat."

"Yes," said Digby, "because the tape line cannot shoot. It's a different case when a man with a cocked pistol in his hand, and his eye on them, stands in its place. If Stackpole had ever shot with bow and arrow, or played marbles, I will teach him in a few hours all he need know. If not, he must select another weapon, perhaps a harpoon."

"I've been saying," said McIntyre, "that he ought to fight with the sword, and I wanted to teach him a few strokes and parries with the broadsword or the saber; but he's got no wrist, and then he's so near-sighted, and spectacles are not eyes, and are liable to get awry, or fall off in a *mêlée*. It's a bad case altogether. I wish it were mine! I'd soon teach them what a broadsword can do, or a pistol either. Anyway, I mean to give a lesson to the gentleman who bore the message, for having brought a groundless challenge."

"How groundless?" said Digby.

"Groundless because the matter had been already settled between the original parties—most properly settled. Read this letter," handing him that sent by the adversary's guest.

Digby stood a moment in grim meditation, and then went suddenly away. Soon after he was seen talking with Tom Long, and then industriously walking from point to point, inquiring for one of the adverse faction, a gentleman of his own time of life, well known in dueling circles, who had in the past been often connected with those affairs as principal or second, and still took delight in rehearsing their history. Having ascertained that he was then in consultation with the friends of Stackpole's adversary, Digby went at once to their headquarters, and having sent

in a note to this gentleman requesting an interview, he came forth, and they walked away together. After a long colloquy in private, during which the rapid gesticulation of the gentleman, and his excited manner, contrasted strongly with Digby's stolid demeanor, they parted, Digby going in the direction of Stackpole's headquarters, muttering: "They shall have fighting all along the line."

But the two gentlemen had not got far apart when Digby was hailed by the other, who had now turned about, and they came together again and renewed their talk—Digby listening with a stern face, while the other seemed to be making earnest protestations. After a time they suddenly shook hands and parted.

Meantime, Mr. Jack Taylor had also got prompt information of the affair, and now behaved in the most unexpected way. As soon as he heard that Stackpole had accepted a challenge to fight, and was backed by Digby and Russell and McIntyre, he at once ranged himself on their side, and in order to be in readiness for whatever might follow (one fight often making many), he cleaned up a pair of ancestral pistols in his possession, bought seventy pounds of lead in the "pig" (it coming cheaper in that form), and set about practicing. All day long, with only an intermission for meals, he exercised himself firing at a tape line six feet in length, stretched perpendicularly along the middle of a slab from the sawpit, making such progress in the art as was unprecedented, and astonishing all his friends by his deadly aim. Mr. Taylor's long practice at flies must have been good training for the pistol, disciplining whatever faculties go to make a good aim; for in an incredibly short time, Dennis loading for him and giving him the word, he came to be, strictly speaking, a dead shot; for, somehow, he could not acquire the conventional low-line shot, but sent his bullets always into the regions of the vitals. Mr. Sterrett and others who went out to see his practice were shocked by his deadly aim, and tried to bring him to the prevailing conventional form, but in vain. Moreover, it was ascertained that his fire could not be drawn by the quick shot of an adversary, as when they tried this with bullets of cork in the pistols, his opponent was

sure at every fire to be hit about the thorax or other vital region.

What a strange force lay in that social law, which could make this young gentleman, who would not risk one of his dollars upon any but the most substantial security, ready to peril his life at its behest! Having thrown himself into the quarrel of his friend, he was now prepared for any part he might be called upon to play. In truth, there followed in his case the usual consequence with all who acquire skill in any art, an inclination to put it into practice. Mr. Taylor had now something more than an inclination—almost a positive desire—to put in practice and exhibit to the world his dreadful accomplishment. In all his intercourse with the adverse faction he wore a bristling, high-headed, gamecock air, which unmistakably meant fight.

Happily, the tact and firmness of Mr. John Digby brought about a peaceful settlement. The challenge was withdrawn. The explanations that had been made between the parties to the original quarrel being exhibited, left nothing upon which to ground a fight. Some people, uncharitable, said that the challenger was only seeking a cheap notoriety, by sending a cartel to one he thought a non-combatant, and that he was greatly disturbed by its prompt acceptance, and by Stackpole's formidable backing.

The newspapers of the day, after their fashion, chronicled this "bloodless affair"; and it was eagerly seized upon by the press at large, in whose comments lurked many sneers at what they chose to call a "fizzle." The peaceful adjustment of a quarrel was not to the taste of the newspaper men of that day. They liked better to record a serious affair, when they overflowed with homilies upon the dreadful code. Annoyed by the notoriety given him by this affair, Stackpole proposed to Russell a visit to Lastlands; and next day, having provided themselves with a supply of presents for the slaves, and especially for Charles Fetter, a great favorite with all who visited there, they set out for Lastlands; whither, with his permission, out of the noise and dust of the town, the reader shall now be transported, leaving Russell and Stackpole to follow.



Notable among the slaves at Lastlands was Charles Fetter. He belonged to the long-haired race of Africans, having an abundance of bushy black hair standing well up, and appropriately framing his face. His forehead was low and almost triangular in shape, but the brows were full and uniformly developed. His eyes were large, with massive lids, and his features were generally well defined. He was tall and straight, long-armed, and muscular as an athlete. Though sixty, he showed no indications of old age, having few or no gray hairs, and his face being smooth and shining, and as free from wrinkles as the face of youth. He had also the spirit of youth, and, in times of holiday, took a part in all the sports of the younger slaves, and was noted for skill in these. At marbles he was an expert, and could knuckle down and plump the middle man from taw with the precision, and with something like the force, of a rifle ball. It was a sight to see him, when the Anser was frozen, swinging in the "Dutch roll," or flying over the ice before Barbara and Phœbe Vaughn in a sled! He had the good manners of an old servant bred in an old family, neither any assumption nor any excess of humility, but only simple native dignity and absolute politeness. His prowess had been shown on a few occasions, in such fashion as made it easy for him to keep the peace thereafter. He had long been the head man in the quarries, and the "top-sawyer" in the sawpits at Lastlands, and had provided most of the building material required there. In holiday dress he affected bright colors, and on Sundays wore gilt earrings.

On Saturday, when Russell and Stackpole drove up to the house at Lastlands, they found Thornton standing on the veranda, talking with Charles, who stood before him on the gravel road. He had quitted work at noon, as was the custom on Saturday, and was giving his master some account of a new quarry. In his left hand was a heavy iron crowbar, while in his right he held the handle of a forty-pound sledge, the hammer resting on the ground. As he stood with his eyes half turned to the sky, revolving some question of Thornton about the quality of the stone, his ebony face shining in the sun, his shirt sleeves rolled up to his shoulders, showing his arms knotted with muscles

that strongly contrasted with his almost childish face, he was a fit model for the ideal "African in America." He was a prime favorite with Russell, who delighted to talk with him and to repeat his odd sayings, and to imitate him for the amusement of the household; and the young people, with whom also "Uncle Charles" was a first favorite, were always thrown by these recitals into uncontrollable giggles. Charles himself had a keen sense of humor, and when he and Russell met, however formal and grave might be their first salutations, there was always a twinkle in their eyes, showing that each expected some fun to be afoot before they parted.

While Stackpole went into the house with Thornton, Russell seated himself on the steps of the veranda to have a bout with Charles. After a few inquiries about his family, which consisted of only a wife, and learning that his "little ole woman" was well, Russell said: "I was sorry to hear that some of the Lastlands people that went into town on the last holiday got into a fight there. Horace Digby—Mr. Buttons—told me of it, and said that little Dick had whipped Mr. Gwathmey's George; and he mentioned your name too."

"Well, sir," said Charles, looking a little abashed, "sence you done heerd 'bout it, I reckon I best tell you de true story. Dey did have a fuss, but I didn't 'low to say nothin' 'bout it, because Mars Robert natu'llly despises any rowdyin' an' fightin' 'mong his people. You see dere's been a grudge 'twixt little Dick an' George for a long time—ever sence Dick went waiter on one o' Mars John Digby's steamboats down to New Orleans, an' come back puttin' on French airs, an' talkin' 'bout de john-dom [gens d'arme], an' de callyboose, an' all dat; but p'intedly 'cause he brought a pineapple to Mr. Maupin's Malinda, dat George is sparkin'. So when dey met in town it warn't long till dey kicked up a fuss, an' got to fightin'. Right at de back of Mr. Dobbins' sto' dey begun, an' had a lively fight. Dick is as strong as a little jack-screw, but George was too spry for him, jumpin' back out de way when Dick tried to clinch him, an' spattin' Dick in de face, an' kickin' him, fust wid one foot, an' den wid t'other, till Dick was regular daze:

I tole him to ketch George's foot an' upset him, but he got so boddered he never knew which foot was comin', an' was pretty nigh whipped when Lawyer Taylor come along, walkin' up from de river, an' lookin' at 'em. I was glad to see him, 'cause I thought he might stop de fight. I saw de Lastlan's nigger was gwine to git whipped, an' I didn't like dat. When Mr. Taylor got in 'bout twenty feet from 'em, an' George was givin' it to Dick, an' had one of Dick's eyes stopped up, Lawyer Taylor chawed a little faster on his terbacker, an' den straightened hisself, an' drawed back his head an' fixed his lips togedder, an' 'ker cherk,' he sent a little spirt of terbacker juice right in one o' George's eyes!" Here Charles gave way to hearty laughter, twisting about in grotesque attitudes, encumbered by the crowbar and the sledge. Recovering himself he continued: "You better believe dat ambeer made George shet up dat eye! He tried to keep t'other one open, but it kep' winkin' an' blinkin' spite of him; an' Dick saw somepun was de matter an' pushed in to him, an' was 'bout to give it to him good; but I went in den an' took em apart. Den Lawyer Taylor come up an' tole 'em to make friends, an' gimme ninepence, an' tole me to get us all a dram, an' den he went away." Here Charles again indulged himself in hearty laughter. He was not one of those who can tell a humorous story with a grave face. His countenance always foreshadowed the coming fun, and now gave notice of something yet to come that to his simple mind seemed especially funny.

"You got the drams, I suppose?" said Russell.

"Yas, sir; but de best of it all was"—here he wrestled with a rising convulsion of laughter—"de best part of it was, dat Dick, nor George, nor none of 'em but me, knowed what was de matter wid George's eye; an' when we got de drams, an' was all friendly, George said he believed he would 'a' got de better of Dick if he hadn't got dat"—here he broke out again with uncontrollable laughter. Once more he recovered himself, and repeated, "ef he hadn't got dat"—falling away again into a fresh convulsion. Then with a strong effort, making such gesticulation as was possible while holding the crowbar, and at last letting go the sledge and throwing the crowbar to the ground, and swing-

ing his arms wildly abroad, with streaming eyes and distorted face, in an explosive shriek he ended—"ef he hadn't got dat *sour bug* in his eye!" following this with a loud, inarticulate bray like the neighing of a wild zebra. Then seeing Russell shaking with laughter at this grotesque exhibition, he recovered himself, and wiping his face with his sleeve, stood eyeing his auditor with the pleased look of an actor after the successful exercise of his art.

Thornton and Stackpole now came out of the house, and Charles was taking up the sledge and the crowbar as if about to go away, when Thornton, knowing his presence to be a check upon Charles's humor, went back into the house.

Then Russell, essaying again to draw him out, asked him what news there was in the Lastlands neighborhood.

"Well, sir," he answered, "dere ain't no news dat I've heerd. 'Tain't here like it is in town, where de steamboats, an' stages, an' mail riders is all de time bringin' in news from de whole world. Everything keeps mighty quiet out here in de country. But dere like to been something dat might er made news, over at Major Tinsley's dis mornin'."

"Ah! What was that?" said Russell.

"Dere like to been a duel over dar, sir." (Whether there was any intentional satire on Charles's part this chronicler does not know.)

"A duel!" said Russell, glancing at Stackpole, who winced perceptibly. And then in the most interested manner Russell asked: "Who was going to fight the duel over at Tinsley's?"

"Me an' dat big ole darky of his—his head man."

"What! That big old fellow that seems to be always in such a hurry?"

"Yas, sir" (with a laugh), "dat's him."

"What is his name?"

"Well, sir, his master calls him Jim, an' de little niggers calls him Uncle Jeems, an' he calls himself Jeems Jefferson Jones; but I calls him Ole-vinegar-heels."

"What was the matter between you and him?"

"Well, sir, you see dey was whitewashin' over dar, when I went to take a note to Major Tinsley from Mars Robert,



to ask him to let his wagon bring out some blarstin' powder from town; dey was whitewashin' de front fence. Dey whitewashes everything over dar now. Dey done white-washed de icehouse, an' all de outhouses, smokehouse, wood-house, de shed over de well—dey got all dem over dar now. Everything we does over here on dis Lastlan' plantation dey tries to do over dar. But one thing dey can't do, an' dat is whitewash like us. No, sir; when it comes to whitewashin' dey ain't dar! Mars Robert knows everything dats in de books, an' some things dat ain't in no books. He puts some truck from de doctor's shop in our whitewash dat makes it a soft brownish color like de cabins down dar, dat Mars Robert likes better dan dat shinin' white. An' Major Tinsley told Ole-vinegar-heels to come over here an' look at ours, an' see ef he couldn't make his like dat, an' tole him p'intedly to fine out what we put in ours. Well, he come over, an' hardly looked at ours, let alone askin' 'bout it, an' went back an' tole his master dat he knowed all 'bout dat kine o' whitewashin', an' dat he could make it better 'an ours. An' all he could do was to put in a little lampblack wid de lime, an' now he's got everything 'bout dat place lookin' like it was jest gwine out o' mournin'. Dat's what his master tole him, when I went up where de Major was lookin' at it; an' I laughed! You better believe dat made ole Vinegar mad! He looked at me like a copperhead snake; an' when his master went in to write an answer to Mars Robert, de ole fellow jest r'ared an' pitched."

"Did he want to fight you?"

"Yas, sir; talked 'bout whippin' me, an' said he was gwine to do it de fust good chance. But I laughed at dat, too, an' dat made him still madder; an' he raised sand, sir, I tell *you*!"

"Why, you don't suppose he thinks himself able to whip you, do you?"

"Dere's no tellin', sir; he's a mighty conceity nigger, dat ole Vinegar. He thinks himself much of a man, sir, he do indeed! But ef I couldn't whip him wid bofe han's tied behin' me, jes' by kickin' an' buttin' him, I'd beg Mars Robert to sell me cheap to a nigger trader, an' lemme go down de river. Time I'd stave my brogans in his ribs a

few times, he wouldn't think hisself such a man—he wouldn't indeed, sir!"

"What about the butting?"

"Well, sir," looking serious, "I wouldn't butt him ef I could do widout; but ef I *had* to butt him—de Lord save you! When I got dis" (pointing to his head) "at him, right between de eyes, he'd think lightnin' done struck him sho—he would indeed!"

Then Russell, recurring to the fight in town, said: "And you say that little Dick speaks French now, since he has been to New Orleans?"

"Yas, sir! He makes out sometimes dat he don't speak nothin' else; an' when anybody say anything to him, passin' on an' holler back, 'No pertandy.' I tole him t'other day dat ef he say dat to me ag'in I gwine to shake him outen his clo'es, an' tell everybody how Lawyer Taylor saved him from gittin' whipped. A sassy rascal!"

Then Thornton coming out again, and seeing the laughing faces of Russell and Stackpole, and inquiring what amused them, Russell, keeping back the story of the fighting in town, told him of the impending duel. To which Thornton said: "Ah, Charles, we must not have any quarrels with our neighbors. You know the quarrels of my people are apt to become my quarrels before the end."

"Yas, Mars Robert, I knows dat, sir," looking up with an air of pride at his master. "Well, sir, ef I can't keep him off, I'll jest tie him hand an' foot an' take him to his master, an' ask him to make him behave hisself. I'm gwine to the hemphouse now an' twist a piece of rope an' keep it puppose for him."

Then shaking his head, and laughing quietly to himself in a way that said plainly that this affair with old Vinegar was too absolutely ridiculous, he made an obeisance, and taking his hat from the ground, and throwing the sledge and the crowbar over his shoulder, walked away.

## CHAPTER XXX

### AN ARRIVAL FROM FRANCE

"He who freely praises what he means to purchase, and he who enumerates the faults of what he means to sell, may set up a partnership with Honesty."

THE recurring anniversary of Thornton's removal to the country was near at hand, and now looking back over the past he felt such a sense of satisfaction as inclined him to celebrate it by some form of festivity. But the wife looked serious, and said no. She was sensible of all the benefits of the removal and inspired with new interest in all the economical expedients adopted by Thornton, and she had now herself developed a fine administrative faculty. Long ago, at the suggestion of Mrs. Scudamore, she had induced him to have repaired, at The Knoll, weaving machines and spinning-wheels, long disused, and then, that no hands capable of work should be idle at Lastlands, the young negroes had been mustered and organized, the boys in a large room at the quarter, under the supervision of old Adam, picking wool, and the girls, with clean frocks and clean faces and carded hair, in the great unfinished drawing-room, under the eye of old Rachel, were taught to spin yarn, and to sew, and to knit stockings. And now a supernumerary ram, of those sent by Dick Thornton, having been exchanged for wool, the women that had learned to weave at Vaughn's were put to work at the looms. Soon Thornton was astonished and rejoiced at the quantity of woollen material produced. It was not long until he found himself clothed in well-fitting garments, from material manufactured at home, cut after an old suit ripped up for that purpose, and made by his wife and one of her best seamstresses. With a glow of pleasure and pride he now

looked forward to a time when Lastlands should send abroad for nothing that could not be had by an exchange of some home product. But when Thornton proposed to celebrate the anniversary, and she objected, he was thinking of the wholesome change in his mode of life, his improved morale, his absolute contentment, the defeat of the claim for which his slaves had been held, and the bright prospect now before him, while she thought only of the birth of her child; a sacred thing not to be reckoned among temporal blessings, but a divine benefaction, vouchsafed to her prayers when hope had been well-nigh abandoned; bringing happiness too profound to be expressed in festivity, and only contemplated with solemn thankfulness and reverential awe.

In many respects she seemed altered and improved by this event—made more sedate and earnest, and exhibiting not only a fine administrative faculty, but other capabilities new and unexpected. One day, while Stackpole and Russell were at Lastlands, sitting in quiet talk with Thornton, they heard from the family apartments a woman's voice singing a lullaby. Struck by its uncommon sweetness and power, these musical connoisseurs listened with ears erect, while the strain slowly sank into a low murmur, and then ceased, when Stackpole eagerly asked: "Who is that singing?" Thornton, who from the first note had keenly watched their faces, answered: "Who do you suppose?" And when they could offer no conjecture, only Russell saying, "Not Mrs. Scudamore?" Thornton said: "It is my wife."

"Your wife!" exclaimed Russell. "Why, I never heard her sing before—I didn't know that she *could* sing! And such a voice!"

"I did not know it either, till of late. She never sang for me; but she sings now for her baby boy, but only for him, and only lullabies. It is a new revelation. It is the voice of maternity."

The agricultural outlook at Lastlands was now bright. The hemp sown had been cut and stacked, and the price having advanced, promised to be highly remunerative. But Thornton, possessed of a desire to make money, meditated



a scheme for manufacturing this hemp at home, and to this end set up there machinery for spinning rope and twine; and, if this should prove profitable, also machinery for making hempen bagging. He had before this corresponded on this subject with Stackpole, then at Boston, and had received from him the fullest information, embracing drawings of the most improved machinery, with specifications and estimates of the cost. This was a sum greater than he could then command, and greater than he would have been willing to hazard on an uncertainty. But this did not deter him from digesting in his mind the scheme with all its details. The machinery for spinning rope and twine, more simple and less costly, he was resolved to have; and though he did not have the money even for this, still obstinately declining, except for purposes directly in the interest of the Lastlands property (as in completing the cattle barn and work upon the mansion), to use the fund left by his brother in the hands of McIntyre, he yet rehearsed again and again all the details of his scheme, even selecting and staking off the site for the structure. Long before he had repaired an old building near the new road, to be used as an office. His temperament we know was in a high degree sanguine. Whatever he desired he vehemently desired. He was persistent, too, and a scheme once conceived and approved could hardly be dislodged from his mind; dwelling on his purpose and pursuing it with that zeal and constancy which often seem to force the hand of fate itself.

While thus absorbed in these schemes for manufactures he had received a letter from his brother Dick, then at Lyons, France, in which he was informed that there had been that day shipped to him by way of New Orleans a fine jackass, which Dick thought would be a valuable addition to his stock of breeding animals. Thornton had read over more than once the paragraph in Dick's letter announcing this shipment, wondering what crude notions Dick must have of his plans and methods at Lastlands. For a considerable time he kept silent about this letter, unwilling to expose his brother's gross misconception of these methods, in imagining that a jackass would be a proper acces-

sory to them or be welcome at Lastlands. A half dozen red deer would have been acceptable, but a jackass! From anybody but Dick he would have regarded the letter as a practical joke. At last, one morning when Major Tinsley was paying his accustomed visit, and he and Thornton sat on the veranda in the sun of a fine December day, Thornton informed the Major of Dick's shipment of the jack, expressing his astonishment, and protesting that he would not for any consideration have such a brute within his gates. The Major was much diverted by Thornton's disgust, and disported himself for some time, laughing and descanting upon the commercial value of asses and mules, and commending the practical agricultural views of his brother Dick. But before going away he did not fail to let Thornton know that he was not insensible to the incongruity of Lastlands with a jackass, adding that the animal might prove to be valuable, as mules were now high in the market, and the price advancing; and that at all events, being an imported animal, there would be no difficulty in selling him for a good price.

Not many days after this the Major came again to Lastlands, this time in the afternoon, having failed to appear there in the morning. Waving his hand to Thornton, who had just come out upon the veranda, and saying with a smirk on his face, "I'll hitch my horse, and join you in a moment," he rode away to the hitching shed. A moment after, when they met outside on the gravel road, the Major said, with a broad smile: "I have been to town; I am just from there, and I bring you good news. Your jackass has come."

This was anything but good news to Thornton, if he were to be judged by the countenance with which it was received; for he now wore a look full of annoyance and perplexity. "He is safe and sound, and a perfect beauty," continued the Major, "the finest animal of his kind I ever saw."

"I am glad to hear he is the best of his kind," Thornton said, with a lugubrious grin, "but what am I to do with him? He shall never put foot on Lastlands, I cannot

imagine why Dick should have thought that I would desire such a brute."

"Why, my dear sir, you will have no difficulty in finding a purchaser at a high figure. He is a magnificent fellow, a steel gray, with a mealy nose and belly, and of extraordinary size, and has the finest ears I ever saw on a jack! There were a half dozen or more breeders from the Bluegrass looking at him in Booth's warehouse, where he is stabled. He was greatly admired by these breeders, and I am the bearer of an offer from one of them, an acquaintance of yours, he said, Mr. John White, of twelve hundred dollars, if you conclude to sell him."

"Twelve hundred dollars!" exclaimed Thornton. "Why, do you know that Dick bought that animal in the streets of Lyons, where he was working in a cart, for four hundred francs—about eighty dollars!"

"Is it possible!" exclaimed the Major, astonished in his turn. "But there is the cost of transportation, and the risk—anyhow, that is his value here. You had better let your brother know at once the state of the market here, and advise him to make another considerable shipment of a like quality. If you will allow me, I shall be glad to go in and sell and deliver the animal to White, and bring you the money."

"You are very kind, but I must go in myself, and let him know all about the animal, and then if he chooses to buy him at such a price, he can have him."

"Bless my soul!" exclaimed the Major. "Why, John White is a breeder and dealer in mules, and knows all about jacks and their value. Pray don't think of telling him how your brother came by the jack, or what he cost, or anything except that he came from France, and is for sale at twelve hundred dollars. I must say you have strange notions about trading—sublimated and utterly unpractical notions! I am myself a judge of jacks, and I told White that I thought him the finest jack I had ever seen, and worth all he offers for him—perhaps more. You are not under the slightest obligation to give him any information more than he now has, that he came from France. Of all the rest he is a competent judge. I think I see in this busi-

ness, if managed discreetly, all the money you will need for your manufactory, and I don't want you to raise up competitors who may forestall you in the trade.

"You see, I have been an extensive trader in many branches, and I know the shrewd ways of the fraternity; but no man can say that he has ever mastered all of them. When I thought I knew them all, a trader in horses taught me a new lesson. He came to my house to sell me a horse. I saw the horse, liked him, and made an offer for him, which he declined. I wanted the horse, and was inclined to give more for him than his market value; for a riding horse that suits you is often worth to you more than he will bring in the market. But, strange to say, being well known throughout my neighborhood as a good trader, and valuing myself upon this reputation, I was now willing to suffer personal inconvenience and discomfort rather than risk losing my reputation by paying an undue price for the horse. Nothing makes a trading man conservative like a reputation. He grows cautious in trade, as a general grows cautious about delivering battle, lest he lose in one engagement what he has gained in many. Or he is like a politician with his record. Some of these I have known so strapped and hampered by this, that they couldn't vote on a general resolution without going through a sweat. Well, I knew the horse, and wanted him, but my reputation as a trader stood in the way. I had a good name also for fair dealing, and, to be candid"—here he chuckled—"I am not sure that I would not rather have forfeited this than my reputation for sagacity. Among those on whose opinion my reputation depended this last was a long way held in greater estimation. Well, I had offered all I intended to give, and this being declined, and the bargaining at an end, I said: 'Come in and take a glass of whisky. We can agree in that if we can't agree upon a trade.' And then we took a glass of whisky. After a while he said: 'If you haven't changed your mind, I will take your offer for the horse.' I then bought him without forfeiting my reputation as a good trader—as I thought. But on going away, he said to me: 'I have always heard you called a good trader, but you did one thing to-day that a good trader



never does.' 'What is that?' I asked. 'Well, a good trader never asks a man to drink when he wants to buy anything from him. Drink makes a man feel rich, and not inclined to sell, but to buy. But want of a drink makes him feel poor and ready to sell. If you had been about selling to me, it would have been all right.'

"I told him that I had never considered drink as a factor in the trade, and that in this case I had considered the bargaining at an end. But there is much truth in what he said, and it shows the keen observation of these professionals."

"But," said Thornton, arresting the Major's career in telling stories of trading, upon which he was apt to run away whenever the subject was broached, "White is not a trader, in the invidious sense, and is, withal, an honorable gentleman."

"Well, now," interrupted the Major, "I am not going to say anything against him. But do you know that these gentlemen traders, like gentlemen gamblers, are often the most dangerous of their tribe? They are like the politicians. They don't think their private character involved in their professional transactions. Why, even the preachers—did you ever have a horse-trade with a preacher, a Methodist circuit rider, for instance? No, I know you never did, or you would have cut your eye-teeth, and known more than you do now. I was once—but then I did the business for myself—I was traveling once, riding a very unsatisfactory horse, and had dismounted, just at dusk, at a tavern, and was letting my horse drink at the trough, when I heard in the stillness of the evening the footsteps of a horse coming over the road, in a walk. His step was brisk, and regular as clockwork, the step of a first-class, flat-footed walking horse, which was just what I wanted. Soon he made his appearance, marching, with high head and ears pricked, up to the water trough where I stood. I saluted the rider, and then walked behind his horse while he drank, and saw, even in the imperfect light, that he was a horse of great power, and then suggested a swap. Then, while the stranger examined my horse, which was a good one in all respects except for the saddle, I put my

finger into the strange horse's mouth, and finding that he was young, felt much inclined for a trade. The stranger asked me large boot, which I gave, and became the owner of a splendid, powerful, flat-footed walker, a blood bay—stone blind! No wonder I heard his step so plainly. He lifted his feet a foot high at every step! The stranger went away before I was up next morning, but I learned from the tavern keeper that he was a circuit rider. I had nobody to blame but myself."

Here Thornton again interposed to assure the Major that he knew White well, and that he was incapable of any of the sharp practices of these professional traders. "Moreover," he said, "he stands in friendly relation to me, and most likely made this large offer thinking that Dick would not have been at the pains of sending so far any animal but one known to be of an approved breed; and relied, in a measure, upon my character, and that of Dick, for the value of the animal. Nothing would induce me to allow him to consummate this bargain without knowing all the facts."

"Well, of course, you will do as you think right. I don't know enough of White to form an opinion, but I am suspicious of all these traders. My belief is that when he knows all the facts he will decline the trade. And then you may fall into the hands of other sharp fellows with whom you are not competent to deal. By the way, if you don't forbid me—I left a little business in town—I will go in with you to-morrow myself."

"I shall be very glad to have your company."

"You must not think me too suspicious. I know there are many highly honorable men even in the horse trade. I claim to have been such a man myself, when I was engaged in it. I don't think trade incompatible with gentility, as one of our neighbors, Judge Ormsby, seems to think. When I first came here, and had bought land, seeing the great number of cattle in his pastures, I rode in there one day to know if I could not buy some of them. The Judge was very polite, but when I told him the purpose of my visit he drew himself up, and said I 'might see his overseer.' He thought, I suppose, that I had come to see his

park of deer and elks, and his buffalo. I heard afterward that he had said, without naming me, that he thought that 'for a gentleman to call on his neighbor and propose to buy what he had not offered for sale, was a very impolite thing, to say the least of it!'

"Why, when I lived in a trading community, nothing pleased me more than to have one of my neighbors come over for a trade. I welcomed him as Roderick Dhu did FitzJames, that night he stumbled on his campfire. But I must ride; I have not been home yet." And then having briefly explained his own code of ethics in trade, which left in full play the maxim of the law *Caveat emptor*, "the buyer must look out for himself," and promising to accompany Thornton to town, the Major went away.

## CHAPTER XXXI

### BARBARA'S WRATH

"Dame Fortune, some men's tutelar,  
Takes charge of them without their care—  
Does all their drudgery and work,  
Like fairies, for them in the dark."

THORNTON'S friends at The Falls looked with great interest upon his venture in planting. The business was not then profitable. The enormous productiveness of the new lands now rapidly opened by throngs of active, eager settlers, threw upon the markets a glut of agricultural products. Some readers may recall the time when barreled pork was so cheap in New Orleans that it was used on the steamboats for fuel, being more economical than the wood along the river shore; and when, in some localities, fuel was made also of Indian corn. Thornton had prepared to engage largely in the cultivation of hemp, which, after having sunk to a low price, was now rising in value, and, from the rapid increase in the culture of cotton in the South, presaging an increased demand for cordage and bagging, now promised to be profitable. But his friends did not share his sanguine expectation. Especially was this true of McIntyre, whose Scotch caution made him discount liberally all his friend's hopeful calculations. McIntyre was distrustful, too, of Thornton's management. Educated abroad, where a day's labor meant a great deal more than it did on a Kentucky plantation, he distrusted the result of the mild sway of the master, whose system seemed to him loose and unthrifty. He had often urged Thornton to employ an energetic manager to direct the labor and keep it up to the highest degree of efficiency. But Thornton's father had never had an overseer, and there was a



prejudice in the mind of Thornton against putting any authority save his own over his slaves. But he gave way to the solicitations of McIntyre, backed by other friends, and at last advertised for a manager. Soon after—on the day Major Tinsley had informed Thornton of the arrival of the jackass—a Mr. Fillson presented himself at Lastlands with general letters of recommendation from Virginia planters, some of whom were known by reputation to Thornton, and a note from McIntyre, who had discovered him.

Fillson was a man of some forty years of age, meager in form, but wiry, of a clear olive complexion, with gray eyes and brown hair streaked with gray, clear-cut features, a strong perpendicular chin, even white teeth, visible always as he spoke, and fitted together like the edges of tweezers. Composure and inflexible firmness were apparent in his lineaments, and in his deliberate manner; a man seeming not incapable of emotion, but never likely to come under its dominion. He was dressed in well-fitting garments of the best drab homespun cloth, and wore leather gloves and fair-top boots, and carried a heavy, loaded riding-whip. His manners were easy and polite, marked by just confidence, which came of a thorough knowledge of the business he proposed to undertake. He impressed Thornton at once very favorably. He engaged him, and the next day, after having notified the slaves that they were to obey the orders and directions of Mr. Fillson as if given by himself, he went into town to look after the French jackass, leaving Fillson in charge.

All the knowledge Fillson had of the affairs of Lastlands had been derived from McIntyre, who had represented the management there as loose in the extreme, and the negroes as an undisciplined band of indulged and petted slaves, whose labor did little more than provide for their food and raiment. He had urged Fillson to inaugurate at once a new system, and by vigorous action and discipline to bring the plantation into a thrifty condition. With these ideas impressed upon his mind, and with a desire to distinguish himself by a wholesome revolution in a place so conspicuous as Lastlands, Fillson entered upon his work.

An event occurred now which, on account of its immediate result, terminating suddenly Fillson's employment at Lastlands, and because of the lasting impression it made on all the dwellers there, must be related, yet about the details of which this chronicler has been able to gather only scanty facts and vague hints and intimations. It seems that Fillson, thinking it best to begin his administration with an exposition to the slaves of the kind of rule they had come under—a rule just but inexorably strict—had given notice that they should all assemble early in the morning to hear him lay down the new law, and assign to them their various fields of labor. Of course, the household servants were excepted from this, they being out of the jurisdiction of the overseer; and the reader may remember that Charles Fetter was engaged only in special work, in the quarry and the saw-pit, and in cutting timber. He had for years labored exclusively in these fields, and his work was considered, on all hands, as completely a specialty under the eye of his master as that of Thornton's body-servant and personal factotum, old Tom Strother. Wherefore, Charles did not go to the assembly ordered by the overseer, and was immediately arraigned for disobedience. Thornton should have notified Fillson of the exceptional position of Charles, but he had not thought to do this, and the overseer, misled by the representation of McIntyre, saw nothing in the case but an act of deliberate disobedience, to be summarily punished. It was a new and trying position for Charles, loyal and faithful and dutiful, to be thus arraigned. Surprise and embarrassment prevented him from making as clear as might have been his defense, by explaining his peculiar relation to the work of the plantation. On Fillson's part, he misinterpreted the bearing of Charles, when arraigned, mistaking his simple, dignified politeness for "airs." The consequence of all which was that Fillson, not sorry to have an opportunity to begin his administration with an example of strict discipline in the person of one he knew to be in some way prominent among the slaves, at once announced his determination to punish this act of disobedience by flogging. This was an unutterable mortification to Charles, and a

shock to all the slaves. To make the example more effective, some dozen of these were summoned to witness the punishment.

Meanwhile, nothing of this was known at the "great house" until the preparation had been all made, when the housekeeper came in a state of great agitation, to give notice of it there. It happened that Barbara, about to go out to ride, her mare at the door, intercepted the housekeeper, and hearing the story of Charles's trouble, quickly ordered her not to mention the matter to anyone else, saying, "I will attend to it," and hastening from the house, she sprang into the saddle, and in a moment was flying to the quarter. There Fillson stood, lash in hand, the witnesses in line, and Charles before him. Having vainly offered such plea for his seeming disobedience as his agitated state of mind permitted, Charles stood ready to submit to punishment. No thought of rebellion against what he considered his master's will arose in his simple, loyal mind. He was taking off his coat, in obedience to the order of Fillson, with no craven line in his face, but only grief; a figure suggestive of the poet's presentment of the genius of his hapless land:

"Swart Africa in dusky aspect towered,  
The fetters on her hand."

At this moment, like an angel of light, Barbara came upon the scene; took from the unresisting hand of Fillson the lash; ordered Charles to go at once to the "great house," there to await her coming, and soon after mounted her mare and followed him, leaving the manager and the attending witnesses in a state of mute bewilderment. What other words she spoke, if any, no one remembered. Long after it was said by one of the blacks, a witness of the scene, speaking with bated breath, that "Miss Barbara cussed." And this was for some time a standing joke of the household against her. But she could never recall her words, nor conjecture what she might have said that could be interpreted as cursing. Most of the witnesses said that they did not hear anything, nor see anything—"only Miss Barbara's eyes." And Fillson, speaking of it afterward,

said, with a strange, sickly laugh, the same thing. Some potent words she doubtless spoke, irrecoverable now as the songs of the sirens.

Meanwhile, Thornton was with Major Tinsley in town, where, unconscious of the revolution at Lastlands, he received the congratulations of McIntyre upon his change of method at the plantation.

Mr. White, having seen Dick Thornton's letter, still adhered to his offer, paying Thornton twelve hundred dollars, telling him that he had already been offered an advance for his bargain, and seconding Major Tinsley's advice, that he should say nothing about his plans, but write at once to his brother, acquainting him with the sale, and advising him to make another shipment of at least a dozen jackasses, assuring him that a ready market would be found for them, at even higher prices.

There were now many Bluegrass men in the town, most of whom came to attend a meeting of the Kentucky Silver Mining Company; and more than one of these interviewed Thornton about the French jackass. Major Tinsley kept himself close by, "on thorns," lest Thornton should reveal something to his own disadvantage; often giving him a cautionary nudge, when the inquiry was too pointed, and sometimes answering in Thornton's stead: and thus all went well.

In his prosperous days, when the stock was at a low ebb, Thornton had invested largely in the Kentucky Silver Mining Company. This was one of the very few things he had then touched that did not turn into gold. Opportunities to sell, at a price that would have made him whole, had offered, but he had declined to avail himself of them. Now, since the simple, regular, busy life at Lastlands had sobered his mind, he looked back upon this venture as a foolish—nay, a wicked—outlay, akin to gambling. And he regarded in the same way even his past fortunate speculations; for while these had brought him money, it had proved like fairy money, which glistens under the glamour of the moon, but in the light of the morning turns to dry leaves and rubbish. Wherefore, when Ould, who was still a zealous and sanguine member of the company, told him



that its prospects were now very bright, he paid little regard to it. "Another mare's nest, I suppose," he said.

"It may turn out so," said Ould, "but our men write most encouraging letters, and a committee is now here with specimens of ore obtained in one of their late explorations, and we are about to make a test of these."\*

"Well, before you make any test, I want it made known that my stock is for sale at cost and interest."

"I think that you will readily find a purchaser. Backstep is in a fever about the company, and wrote, a week ago, to Walter to buy any stock he might find at forty cents on the par value, which would about meet your terms. You know how I dislike to advise about money matters, but I tell you no man can buy my stock, now, at anything like that rate. If you are resolved to sell, you had better leave a power of attorney with Digby, and allow him to exercise his discretion. There is always a ferment when the members come together, and the stock will be sure to rise while they are assembled here. And depend upon it, Backstep has some grounds to go upon when he makes an offer like that."

"I don't care what ground he may have. I have known him to be sanguine before. But at all events, I want to sell. I desire to disconnect myself with all speculative ventures. Besides, I have a scheme in hand at Lastlands which the money from this stock may enable me to accomplish. I shall take your advice, and leave authority with Digby to sell. I hope it may make the purchaser as rich as he desires to be, if such a thing be possible to the speculating mortal."

Then Thornton wrote to Dick about the jackass market, and signed a power of attorney authorizing Mr. John Digby to sell his stock in the Kentucky Silver Mining Company, and then with Major Tinsley returned to Lastlands. There he had an interview with Fillson, whom he found

\* As it is the design of this chronicle that as little as possible of what may be found elsewhere shall be put into this book, readers who may be curious to know more of the Kentucky Silver Mining Company are referred to printed annals of the State. A full account of its transactions, by some member of the company, would be an interesting episode in Kentucky History.

*functus officio*, and desiring to be released from his engagement. "I can be of no service to you," he said. "The authority of an overseer once successfully interfered with or resisted is gone. I could possibly recover it if you desire that, but my methods would not suit you. If I had known more of your household I would not have undertaken to manage for you. I have no hard feeling about what has happened, but the highest respect for all concerned." Thornton gladly released him, and having once, for a short time, entrusted the management to old Tom Strother, whom he found to be an unmerciful driver, he resolved never again to delegate his authority over his slaves to any man.

Many members of the K. S. M. C. had now come to The Falls: Wilson and Bradshaw from Shelbyville, half a dozen Johnsons from Lexington, and others from the Bluegrass generally, and a very large delegation from different quarters was soon assembled there. Tom Long told Digby that meetings were held nightly in Ould's office. Pretty soon it came to be understood that some tests were making there, conducted with great secrecy, but under pretext of requiring more space they had that very day asked Mr. Jack Taylor to give them his room. Though this interrupted the regular course of Mr. Taylor's daily life, he had politely complied with their request, betaking himself for the time to the quarters of Mr. Russell, where he was industriously plied by that gentleman with questions about the proceedings at Ould's office, and where the talk of Mr. Russell was in such a diverting vein as to amuse Mr. Taylor, and put upon his placid face a broader smile than common. As for Russell, he kept studiously away from Ould's office, and aloof from all the members of the K. S. M. C. These gentlemen, after a few days, seeing Mr. Taylor always occupied in reading novels or in meditation, and thinking him unobservant, no longer put him to the inconvenience of surrendering to them his room, and he returned to his usual routine.

A vessel containing the ore and a solvent was usually locked in a closet in Ould's office, but was often brought out for exhibition to curious, excited members. One day

it was carelessly left out, and Mr. Taylor, on rising from his lounge and walking into the back office, found the precious vessel standing on a table before him. After gazing at it for a full minute, he walked within two feet of the table, and putting his hands deep into his trousers' pocket, and craning over the vessel, looked curiously into its depths. Then the muscles of his face became agitated, his mouth spread, his chest began to heave, an unearthly light shone in his eyes, and he seemed on the point of having another fit of that terrible laughter. But gradually his face resumed its normal expression, and he drew from his pocket a silver eighteen-pence piece, which he held suspended for a moment, and then let drop into the wide-mouthed vessel, where it sank into a yellow, chalky mixture. And then he walked away and out of the office.

At this time Digby had a guest at his house, Mr. George Woolfolk, who lived at the mouth of the Tennessee river, and the affairs of the K. S. M. C. coming up in their talk, Mr. Woolfolk said:

"A short time ago I had a visit from an old friend, Bradshaw of Shelby. He had some business in my county, and was my guest for several days. Knowing that he was a member of the K. S. M. C., I asked him about their prospects. They were not very bright at that time, but he warmed as he talked about the company, and expressed full faith in the existence of Swift's mine, and thought its locality would sooner or later be fixed. But he complained of a want of zeal among the members generally, the whole labor being thrown upon a few active men, of whom he was one. Bradshaw has little knowledge of mineralogy—the merest smattering—but he has an intense appetite for "specimens," and in our walks was constantly picking up and examining fragments of stones and pebbles. About the mouth of the Tennessee there is a peculiar coarse gravel, very heavy, and containing particles of yellow matter that shines with metallic lustre. As we walked along the shore there, I saw him picking up this gravel, and scrutinizing it, and slyly putting specimens into his pocket. I said nothing, pretending not to observe him,

and when he got back to my house he had a pretty heavy load of them.

"That night, after he had gone to his chamber and was in bed, as I supposed, I heard him repeatedly coughing, and thinking that perhaps he had not sufficient bed-clothing, I went to his chamber, where I found him sitting before a hot fire, roasting the gravel, a volume of blue flame filling the fireplace, and fumes of sulphur pervading the room. He looked quite embarrassed, and stammered something about being curious to know what elements the gravel contained, etc. I told him that he was not the first man whose curiosity had been excited by that gravel, but that it contained no mineral of value, only sulphur. Then I opened the window, letting out the fumes of sulphur from the room; and then, feeling inclined to a little mischief, I gave him an account of a supposed silver mine in our region, for we too have our mining traditions.

"We have no documentary proofs, as the K. S. M. C. claim to have, but only stories of old hunters coming down the Tennessee, out of the wilds, with bars of silver, and loading their canoes with supplies bought with this bullion, and of these hunters having been found in extremity, with their pouches filled with silver bullets for their rifles. There had never been any organized effort made to discover this mine, but many persons, having their imaginations inflamed by these stories, had for years made diligent search for it. The fever has subsided now, but there are among my neighbors men in whose breasts the fire still smoulders, needing only a breath to blow it into flame; for it is a fire that once kindled never goes entirely out while life lasts.

"As to the locality of this mine, I professed to have obtained much special information, and told Bradshaw of many circumstances and incidents, like those I have related, exactly suited to spur the zeal of a searcher for precious minerals. He was greatly excited, and, in return, gave me, in strict confidence, an account of the doings of his company, and of its prospects, which he now represented as in the highest degree hopeful, and only requiring energetic action to insure fortunes for all its members. Then he proposed that I should authorize him to move his com-



pany to permit me to incorporate my interest with theirs, and join our forces to discover this mine also, conceding me a very large interest in the joint concern. This I declined, telling him that I had such definite information as gave me the strongest assurance of being able to discover this mine; that I meant to set about it at once, and that I could not even consider the proposition to barter my interest for anything merely problematical. He was now greatly worked up. Then I addressed him in a solemn way. 'Bradshaw,' said I, 'I have, perhaps imprudently, acquainted you with my mineral secret. You are leagued with a number of inveterate mineral hunters, some of whom I know are not very scrupulous, especially when under the stimulus of the *'auri sacra fames'* (I quoted some of the little Latin I have; it always impresses these treasure hunters), 'and I must request that you will not communicate to any one what I have told you. I have been confidential with you because we are old friends, and I know I may rely on you to keep my secret.'

"'Oh, of course,' said he; 'of course.'

"And then, after he had again tried to induce me to join my interests with those of his company, which I again declined, I opened the windows and again let off the fumes of sulphur, which had set us both to coughing, and, advising him to put out the fire, bade him good-night.

"Next day he went home. I did not renew the subject, nor did he offer to do so, but as we shook hands at parting I said, in an undertone, 'Remember! not a word about my mineral secret.' He replied, 'Oh, no, not a word,' and we parted.

"About two weeks after this I was standing on the bank of the river, when a steamboat landed, and two men came on shore, whom I recognized as two of the most zealous and active members of the K. S. M. C., Mr. Jacob Walter and Mr. Abraham Backstep, each having a large pair of saddlebags on his arm. I suspected at once that Bradshaw had let my secret leak out, and that they had come in search of my mine. While they were walking up the bank to the town, I pretended to be looking away at the departing steamboat, but kept a side-glance on them, and observed

that they saw me, but that they desired to escape observation. They went directly to the tavern, and after a while I heard of them in search of an idle fellow of the town, who professed to know the whereabouts of the mine, and had often turned a penny with this pretended knowledge. Soon after, they hired three horses, and rode away with this fellow into the country.

"Two days after I was on the bank again, attracted by the arrival of a steamboat from below, and I saw the two gentlemen go on board of this boat, their saddlebags stuffed with something very heavy, each straining under the weight of his burden. I knew at once where they had been, and that they were carrying away a load of worthless material; for I had myself explored the mine the idle fellow had shown them, and had submitted specimens of it to experts, who had pronounced it worthless. But I wrote at once an indignant letter to Bradshaw, complaining of his breach of confidence, and upbraiding him for sending these hungry silver-hunters into my territory, and expressing fear lest they might have discovered my mine, and thus forestalled me in what I regarded as the most brilliant prospect for a vast fortune ever offered to man. He replied promptly. I got his letter the day I left home. He was full of contrition, confessing that, in the strictest confidence, and after the most solemn promise on the part of the directors of the K. S. M. C. that they would keep the secret, and that they would take no steps, directly or indirectly, toward the discovery of the mine, he had told them what I had communicated to him, expecting them to offer me such terms as would insure my acceptance, and that the result would benefit both parties. He took great shame to himself for his indiscretion, and, to convince me of his sincerity, stated that, although he now considered his interest in the K. S. M. C. worth a million of dollars or more, yet, in view of the bad faith of the 'management,' and the questionable predicament in which they had placed him, he had written to them an indignant letter, resigning his place as a director, and dissolving his connection with them. As for his stock, any portion of it, or all of it, should be transferred to me as indemnification for any loss I might sus-

tain. I wish I had his letter here to show you. It fairly fumes through four pages!

"I have no faith in the existence of Swift's mine. His journal, which they obtained at great cost, bears evidence of untruth. Even if true and made for his own use, the places of deposit of 'treasure' and 'prizes' are too vaguely indicated for guidance. I am astonished to see a sagacious man like Ould under this delusion. But the search for precious metals or hidden treasure begets a kind of mania, and obscures the clearest mind. They are all here now incubating something. If I had any stock in the company, I would sell out before the hatch."

Digby had not only no faith in Swift's mine, but no patience with these mineral hunters. He had always ridiculed them in such way that Ould, confidential with him in all other respects, never broached to him this subject. Digby also had observed what Ould had told Thornton, that there was always a rise in the stock when the members came together for conference, and, fortified by the views of Mr. Woolfolk, he resolved to sell Thornton's shares on the first favorable opportunity.

## CHAPTER XXXII

### THE K. S. M. C.

"There was a Machiavellian plot."

A FEW days after the events of the last chapter there was an unusual stir among the members of the Kentucky Silver Mining Company—such a stir as had never been known among them before. They were non-communicative, but that something of great moment had transpired was plain, from their movements, and was written on their faces. Tom Long, meeting Digby at the early market, told him that some ore from one of their late purchases had been tested, and was found to be marvelously rich in silver; that a very small portion, assayed in an imperfect manner, had yielded something over twenty cents in pure silver; that the board of managers and other members had been up all night, ciphering, to ascertain the net yield per ton, and that the result was simply stupendous!

On his way home after the interview with Long, Digby was overtaken by Mr. Twist. This gentleman had never before been known to visit the early market, not being a housekeeper, and something in his manner, as he saluted Digby, arrested that gentleman's attention. And when Twist joined him and walked with him homeward, he dismissed his first conjecture, that the young lawyer had been sitting up all night gambling, and made up his mind that he was abroad this early for a purpose, and this purpose he connected with the extraordinary revelation just made by Tom Long. Wherefore, when Twist at once made it known that his business did relate to Thornton's stock, Digby was completely on his guard. For a wonder, Twist went straight to his point. He told Digby that he had



heard that Thornton's stock in the K. S. M. C. was for sale, and that he, Digby, had a power to dispose of it. That, if such was the fact, he, Twist, was ready to buy it at a fair price. Digby answered that he was correctly informed in all these particulars, but that there was a buzz of great discoveries made lately on the property of the company, and that he feared that he would do injustice to Thornton if he should sell except at what might seem a very high price.

After some maneuvering by Twist, which was coolly and dexterously met by Digby, Twist suddenly halted and asked, "What will you take for the whole stock, cash down?"

"Ten thousand dollars, if the bargain shall be consummated within an hour."

"I will take it," said Twist, "and will bring you a check for the money within that time."

"Very well," said Digby, "but don't be a second behind, or I shall claim a right to decline the sale. Whose check will you give?"

"One that shall be sufficient," answered Twist as he walked rapidly away.

In less than half an hour he returned with McCrae's check for ten thousand dollars, and Digby went to the office of Ould, where the books were kept, and transferred Thornton's large "block" of shares to McCrae.

Great was the annoyance of Ould when he found that Thornton's stock had been sold—"sold to that confounded McCrae." He had intended to go early in the morning and caution Digby against the sale, but having been up nearly all night, ciphering with the rest, and talking over the affairs of the company, he slept late. He fretted very much over the matter, walking the floor of his office, and rubbing his black shock of hair into what Mr. Jack Taylor called a "hooraw's nest," whatever that may be. At last he quieted down, and said to Digby, "You have thrown away millions, but then my interest is so large, I shall be able to make you all rich."

All that day there was a ferment among the members of the company. Abraham Backstep was hurrying back and forth, from Washington Hall Tavern to Ould's office, gath-

ering about him groups of members, and talking, and gesticulating in an excited manner. Tom Long told Digby that a resolution had been passed by the company, after the result of the assay was known, that no member should purchase any stock without first offering it to the company, and that the purchase of Thornton's stock by McCrae was considered a breach of faith, and Backstep was busy organizing the opinion of the members, and bringing it to bear, to force him to turn over his purchase to the company. Such an angry feeling was manifested between McCrae and Backstep, that a hostile encounter between them was looked for at any moment. They had always been enemies. The fact that they were both birds of prey and rivals was a natural cause of enmity, but this was intensified and embittered by the fact that they bore to each other a strong personal resemblance. Both were large, bony men, both had yellow-red hair, light-blue eyes, and a thin, papery skin, and both carried habitually, beneath their left arms, great portfolios, which, at a distance, made their carriage and outlines precisely alike. Both had been told of this resemblance, and were themselves conscious of it, and each revolted from the other as from a personal caricature. There is no better foundation for a good hearty hatred, between men of a certain class, than a strong personal resemblance.

Under the lead of Backstep the members were wrought to a high pitch of excitement. The enormous wealth which seemed suddenly to have fallen into their hands only made them more covetous and greedy, and there was a general and fierce revolt against what they considered McCrae's sharp practice. At a meeting held in the dancing-hall of the tavern, his conduct was vehemently denounced, as it was also on the street, and in his presence in his office, whither he was followed and badgered by a throng of indignant members. But McCrae, having the law on his side, resolutely held his ground; sullenly champing his stump of cigar through all their excited declamations; his white eyes emitting at intervals a quick, sidelong, phosphoric gleam, like that often seen in the eyes of swine when feeding, and always in those of an old boar churning his chaps, at bay.

It is no part of the purpose of this chronicler to announce philosophical truths, nor to set up for his humble work any pretensions to philosophic history. "*Scribitur ad narrandum, non ad probandum.*" But having assigned as a cause of intense hostility between Backstep and McCrae their personal resemblance, he feels it incumbent upon him to offer some show of reason for this seeming paradox. He is not going to enter into the metaphysical reasoning by which, long ago, he reached this conclusion,—that he knows would cause most readers instantly to close the book,—but only briefly to submit the matter of fact that first drew his attention to this subject: In this chronicler's neighborhood there lived two idiotic negro slaves, who bore to each other the closest resemblance. Both were hideously ugly, both incapable of articulate speech, both deformed alike, and unable to maintain an upright position without the aid of a staff; and both were mild and affectionate in disposition, and could be trusted with children. They had never met, and their owners, being curious to know how they would regard each other, agreed to bring them together, and appointed a day for that purpose. Accordingly, in the presence of their owners and their families, and some neighbors, these idiots were confronted. Instantly, exchanging furious glances, they rushed together in fierce conflict, fighting with tooth and nail, like devils, requiring the united force of several strong men to draw them asunder. Here was humanity in its simple, unsophisticated state, kind to all others, but inflamed with inextinguishable wrath at the sight of its own counterpart!

Moreover, inasmuch as the poets are always first to discover and point out all occult traits in human character, this chronicler was, long after, gratified to find his conclusion fortified by one of these, in a song which he heard in the circus, and which is perhaps familiar to the reader, the whole burden of which is denunciation of a person described simply as "The fellow that looks like me."

To readers who take delight in metaphysical alchemy, he leaves the pleasing task of resolving in the crucibles of their philosophic minds the rationale of this seeming vagary, but fundamental truth of human character.

Before the intestine war in the K. S. M. C. was terminated other tests of the ore were made, all of which failed to show any trace of silver or other valuable element, and soon the eager throng of members was dissolved, all returning to their homes, to brood over their disappointment, and to renew again and again their hopes and their failures, and to transmit these to generations unborn.

Thornton was soon up to his eyes in business. The factory and a fireproof hemphouse were building, and a second shipment of more than a dozen jackasses was received from Dick, with letters informing him that he had established in a province of France contiguous to Spain an agency for the purchase and shipment of Spanish jackasses, and that regular monthly shipments should be made as long as the trade should be profitable. For more than two years shipments continued to come to The Falls, all of which were sold, the prices, instead of declining, advancing with every shipment, yielding a very great profit. Then, the price declining, Dick thinking the game at its best discontinued the trade.

Many readers will remember how this traffic after a temporary decline again revived, and grew apace, and became at last a craze, and seized upon some of our high officials abroad, involving in a scandal a naval officer of the highest rank, who was subjected to a court of inquiry for having brought home in a public vessel, to the great discomfort of his officers and the discredit of the service, a cargo of Spanish jackasses. It is curious to recall in illustration of the saying of the wise man, "There is nothing new," etc., the historical fact, that in the reign of George the Second, under the administration of Walpole, there was in Threadneedle street, besides the South Sea Company and innumerable other associations, a Spanish Jackass Company.

Major Tinsley was in his proper element while this business went on; busying himself with all its details, and rendering great service to Thornton.



## CHAPTER XXXIII

### JOHN D. RESOLVES TO GO TO COLLEGE

"When once you trust yourself you know the art of living."  
—MEPHISTOPHELES.

THERE came now a sad day for John D. when Bradstreet announced to him that he was going to lay by the old fusil and give up fishing and shooting, and betake himself to "business." To complete his unhappiness his classmate and friend, and sometime foe, Bond, announced that he was going to give up the "world," by which he meant not only these diversions, but every idle amusement,—the circus and the play-house,—and that he had already begun to study for the ministry of the Presbyterian church! Soon Bond went away to the theological school at Danville, while Bradstreet was to be found, dressed like a beau, in swallow-tail coat and standing dickey, and white cravat, behind the counter of his mother's store, or was seen hurrying along the sidewalk, up to his eyes in business—and happy! A dreadful sense of isolation came over John D. seeing this; a feeling not unlike that which possessed him when he and Bond had once made up their minds to run away. Bond seemed to have soared away to a higher sphere, and Bradstreet—"dear old B."—seemed to have stridden on seven-league boots far off on the highroad of life; abandoning to him the wildwoods, the shady banks of Beargrass Creek, the islands and all the enchanting precincts of the falls, so long their common property, leaving him desolate,

"Lone sitting by the shore of old Romance."

As he considered his position a dreadful sense of shortcoming possessed him; and this grew to such intensity as

racked his very soul! In announcing his change of life, Bradstreet said that it had now become necessary, and his *duty*, to help his mother in her business; that his brother Dudley was too delicate for any kind of work; that he himself was strong, and now glad to be able to make some return to his mother for the care and expense she had incurred in his behalf. "Dear old B.!" He was always a good and unselfish fellow, and now he proves to be a dutiful son. And have I not duties? Is there not something in life higher and better than mere amusement? Yes, surely. There is work for me to do. But what shall it be? Alas! why have I not been trained to some kind of business, and taught to look forward to some useful occupation?" Of what avail now was all the Latin and Greek he had been at such pains to learn? To Bond in his vocation it would be necessary, but to him it seemed only time wasted. He would beg his father to give him something to do at the warehouse. He would do—he knew not what. Yes, one thing he would do—he would go at once to see Mr. Ould and lay before him all his troubles. And now in hot haste he flew away to Ould's office.

The chronicler will not presume to interpret Mr. Ould for the reader, but it is proper to state some of his well-known characteristics. That he was unselfish and unambitious has been already shown, and it may be inferred, as it was certainly true, that he was a philanthropist, a lover of his fellowmen. A morbid optimist believing in the perfectibility of man, a hypochondriac in his ideas of moral and personal purity, despising everything unclean, and like Plato's scholar, Plotinus, revolting against the infirmities and necessities of his own humanity, a zealous Churchman, he was yet, as has been seen, addicted to drink. Perhaps in this he found some solacement, taking him for a time out of the current of ordinary life, where the greed and dishonesty, with which his profession brought him in contact, filled him with unutterable disgust. His strange sympathy for Stokes the robber, and his toleration of the gamblers, came of seeing worse men than they—men guilty of crimes from which John Lewis or Stokes would revolt—enjoying the respect of the world! To break into a man's stronghold

and carry off his goods or treasure is a heinous offense, and the petty thief is summarily consigned to the penitentiary. But to compass a man's ruin, and become possessed of his estate, by artful devices, under the mask and color of "business," is no crime at all, and entails no disgrace. Nay, if the transaction be a great one, it brings credit and renown, as the big wars make ambition virtue. Have we not now our Napoleons of finance?

As for Ould's fondness for John D. and the interest he so constantly manifested toward him, this sprang from a noble motive, a desire to open for another a career which circumstances and his own infirmities had closed against himself—to enjoy vicariously what he had known only in dreams of the imagination.

When John D. had ended his lamentation to Mr. Ould over his distressful state, he asked, "Don't you think I might learn bookkeeping? Mr. Anderson is growing very feeble. I may help him, after a little, and at last take his place." Ould did not answer this question at once. He was much surprised at the heat shown by the lad, and pleased by the sudden awakening of his conscience. But more than all he was touched by his humility. Ould had never had any instruction in the ancient classics. He had with the aid of the grammar and dictionary made some acquaintance with Latin—enough to make clear the Latin of the law books—and had often conned a lesson with John D. But he knew no Greek. He estimated very highly both these languages. Of the Latin he had come to know enough to see the merits of some of its great writers, and reveled in Horace, of whose poems he had many copies of various editions and translations with notes and commentaries. Of the Greek he had a still higher notion, derived from the testimony of authors, and perhaps because "*omne ignotum pro magnifico*." He believed John D. to be a good Latinist, having often applied to him for help in the course of his reading, and had listened while he had translated whole pages from the easy Greek of the New Testament and Xenophon or Herodotus. Thinking John D. firmly grounded for the attainment of ripe scholarship, he had pitched very high his forecast of the lad's future, and was now dis-

appointed and grieved to find him thinking of book-keeping!

"Wouldn't it be better to take to something requiring more scholarship, where your classical learning would be available?" he said at last. "How would you like to be a writer, an author? Here is a quarterly magazine" (taking up a number of the *Edinburgh Review* that lay on his table); "it is the work of a knot of scholars—writers. It contains well-considered thoughts on a great variety of subjects in which all the world is interested: political, social, philosophical, art, belles-lettres. Whatever advance is made in these is here recorded, and intelligently commented on. With this magazine alone a man may keep abreast with the progress of the world. Here is a band of scholars at work, giving themselves up to the enlightenment of the public. How would you like to be a member of that guild? If my life were to be gone over, I would live on crusts, if that were necessary, to enable me to take part in such work! No, John D., don't think of being a bookkeeper like old Mr. Anderson, nor a clerk like Bradstreet, nor a lawyer like me. Necessity has forced us into these narrow lines. Your father doesn't want you at the warehouse. Tell him that you would like to go to college, and consult your old master about what college it shall be, and then come to me again."

"Do you consider the lawyer's profession narrow?"

"Yes. How can it be otherwise while its ultimate reason is *'Ita lex scripta est'*?"

"I have often heard that the law sharpens the mind."

"So it does; so does horse-trading; but they both narrow it."

Mr. John Digby, though an imperious man,—born in the imperative mood,—was not often thus to John D.; choosing rather to force certain questions in the conduct of life upon the judgment or discretion of the lad himself: thereby teaching him self-reliance as well as prudence. Accordingly he would take no part in settling John D.'s plans, but only advised him to consult the master, who in turn would ~~not~~ recommend even his own alma mater, Harvard College, saying, "It makes little difference what college you



choose. All will depend upon yourself. None of them is what it ought to be, but all superficial, often working in the interests of some party in politics or religion, all lacking thoroughness, thinking more of big classes than of a high standard of scholarship."

Nobody being willing to take the responsibility of deciding for him, he decided for himself to go to Harvard College.

After a debauch or in times of mental depression, Mr. Ould had been long used to betake himself to the banks of Beargrass, with a fishing-rod, not for sport, to which he was not in any form addicted, but in this guise seeking only to divert his thoughts and to recover such good spirits as was possible to him. On these occasions John D. was his favorite companion. Avoiding all others, he kept himself as much as might be with the lad alone, pleased always by his honest prattle, and often discoursing to him from his own ample store. To John D.'s admiration always, and often to his edification, he held forth in his oratorical style, delivering himself in a free, careless way beyond anything he would adventure before a more critical audience.

Meantime, John D. was thinking seriously of his future, and the question of going to college suggested by Mr. Ould became a subject of constant and earnest meditation. Having passed the summer and a good part of the early fall at Lastlands, often attending Mr. Wall's classes, where Barbara astonished him by her recitals of Latin and Greek, and especially by attainments in prosody to which hitherto he had given little care, where the rules that govern long and short were at her finger-ends, scanning all measures with equal facility, and at the piano making sport with the Greek lyrics, he went back to his desk in the room of his old master to review his Greek and Latin and such parts of mathematics as he should advise, and resolved to set out for Boston in the early spring.

The association of Ould and John D. became now more intimate than ever before. They were together in John D.'s holidays, for which Ould contrived often to find leisure, and to receive as well as to impart frequent lessons. One day while the blue haze peculiar to the early fall enveloped

the landscape, they were sauntering along Beargrass fishing, John D. for the love of the sport, and Ould for the diversion and for the soothing influence of the fair scenes into which it led. Under the shade of a wide spreading elm whose feet were bathed in the stream Ould lay on the grass, while John D. continued the sport, and they fell into talk. "John D.," said Ould, "how does this fine autumn weather affect you? Does it make you merry or sad?"

John D., looking into the water at the fishes on the string slowly waving their fins, having given up all effort to get free by tugging—all except one little roach-backed perch which still struggled at intervals, scattering the water and making frantic efforts for liberty—John D. looking at these and feeling a sense of great satisfaction with his success, answered that he liked the weather very much, and that he was always in good spirits in fine weather, especially in the fall, as that was a season for sport.

"Happy John D.!" said Ould; "I hope you may always feel thus. I used to see all the beauty of this season, and to read with delight all that the sentimental poets have sung about it. Now it pleases me no longer, but fills my mind with pain, with a vague sense of something neglected—a sense of shortcoming akin to remorse—for which I can find no special cause. It deadens my sensibility, dims the light of the sun, robs the earth and the sky of their colors, and takes all the love and all the hate and every desire out of my heart. I feel as if my humanity had dry-rotted upon me, leaving nothing but the dry bones and tissues of a mummy. The only impulse I have is to flee away, I care not whither, which possesses me as it did Cain when he had done the first murder. You have never felt anything like this?"

"No, no, I have never felt anything like that. But I have felt like running away."

"Ah! When was that?"

"About a year ago. Bond and I had the same feeling, an awful dissatisfied sort of feeling. It was in the fall, now I remember, just before school took up, near the end of the vacation. We had talked it over for a good while in

secret, and at last made up our minds to run. We had both saved up our pocket money, and had packed our wallets ready for a start on Monday morning."

"Blue Monday, I suppose," said Ould, with a grim smile.

"No, it was not that. School was not to take up for a week yet. No, I believe if school had taken up at once it might have gone out of our heads."

"Well, did you run off?"

"No; you see the circus came to town on Saturday, and was going to show all the next week, and had their show bills all over town, and that broke it all up."

"You went to the circus, I suppose?"

"Yes, and we were glad that we had saved our pocket money. We went every night and to the day-show on Saturday."

While John D. was making this confession, Ould's face gradually relaxed from its gloomy expression, a smile overspread his countenance, and at the end he broke into hearty laughter. "Well, John D.," he said, "I shall always think well of the circus." Then he chuckled and said, "Yes, the circus is a good institution. And you are my circus, John D."

Soon after this, with their fish and rods, they were walking slowly homeward, when John D. resumed the talk. "Now I think of it," he said, "I have heard many boys say they had had this dissatisfied feeling, and had a notion of running away; and I have known some that did run away. What is the cause of this, do you think, Mr. Ould?"

"Well, we will talk it over some day. It may be an instinct like that which sends the birds and the squirrels, the wild turkeys, and even the bears across the country in hordes; an imperious instinct that forces them on over all obstacles—swimming rivers and scaling mountains, and never resting until the fever of migration has abated. They have a striking example of this in Norway, where a little animal of the marmot genus migrates, at intervals, moving in vast numbers always to the same point of the compass, toward the sea, into which they plunge and perish. It has been conjectured that this movement is made in obedience to an ancient, a paleontological instinct, which once carried

them to Plato's island of Atlantis, but, now that Atlantis has sunk into the sea, carries them only to destruction. It may be that man has some remnant of such an instinct. You know some philosophers have maintained that man has been raised to his present high state by infinitesimally small advances from the lowest order of being. That the primeval man had a tail, and that at the extremity of the spinal column we have still the remains of this disused member. Without subscribing to these extreme views, we may reasonably suppose that man, in his primitive condition, had need of many of the instincts of the lower animals; that, with a view to spread animal life over the globe from the center of creation, he was endowed, in common with the lower animals, with this instinct of migration. But now when civilization has developed other sufficient means for this purpose, the instinct has abated by disuse, and as the tail has done, is likely to disappear altogether. It may be a relic of this instinct stirring in youthful man that makes him inclined to run away. But this is a crude and unprofitable discussion, John D. Let us leave it, for the present, where we found it." And so the subject was dropped.

But John D. could not leave the subject where he found it. He turned over in his mind, again and again, all that Ould had said about Monboddo's theory of men with tails, and of instincts that had abated, and of faculties of man now in a rudimentary state, and yet to be developed in the higher civilization to which he is destined, and we know not what else, for Mr. Ould's talk was of much greater scope than is here set down. The more John D. thought of these strange ideas the more perplexed he grew, and having a high opinion of Mr. Russell's powers, from discussions heard between him and Ould, meditated submitting these puzzling problems to him. But chancing to meet the old herdsman, Kirby, that day in town, and loving a chat together, he submitted to him the problem about the inclination in youth to run away. It was not at first easy to get the old man to understand the proposition, but after a while he said, "Oh, yes! I understand—yes, yes. There used to be an old fellow about the settlement here that



talked a good deal about that. He was a hard old case! and when he was drinking about the groceries in town he used to talk about this and say that young men didn't grow up then as they did in his time. 'Then,' he said, 'when a fellow got seventeen or eighteen years old he just shook himself in his shirt collar and come out a man, and stayed a man. But now they get thirty years old and ain't men yet!' I think maybe it's owin' to the way they're raised now. In my time a young fellow generally had some trouble of some kind, a fight about a sweetheart, or got into some scrape that he come out of all right, and then he was a man from that time out. But they didn't mope around or run away. Yes, I think it's owin' to the way they're raised. You know the young turkey gobblers about the barn, with a warm place to sleep, and feed layin' around everywhere, when their snouts and wattles begin to grow 'most always have an ailin' and mope round and are inclined to wander—the old women call it the megrims; but the young wild-turkeys that sleep in the woods, and have to scratch for a livin', never have anything the matter with them. Yes, I think it must be owin' to how they're raised."

This exposition of the old herdsman did not throw much light upon the puzzling question, and John D., finding himself one day fishing beneath the elm in company with Mr. Russell, was reminded to submit to him the question, why there is at some time in youth a sense of shortcoming and a natural inclination to run away; telling him at the same time of his having already submitted the question to Mr. Ould.

"Ould!" exclaimed Russell. "Well, what did he say? He went back to the creation of man, didn't he?"

"Well, yes, pretty near there: he went back to a time when men had tails."

Russell shook with laughter. "Tell me what he said, John D."

Then the lad gave him a pretty clear account of the points evolved by Mr. Ould.

"Now," said Russell, "I am no philosopher as Mr. Ould is, but a plain man that loves the matter of fact. That there is such an inclination as you describe there can be

no doubt. It occurs about the time when we are approaching man's estate. It is manifested outwardly by an inordinate growth of the nose, which then sprouts into new dimensions, changing the whole countenance, and by a curious alteration in the voice, which seems possessed of a strange caprice, passing out of the control of its owner, being at one moment bass, and the next moment treble, just as it pleases!

"Inwardly, or metaphysically, it is manifested by the personal appearance of the individual becoming to him a matter of new and paramount concern; and this at a time when he is disfigured by that strange metamorphosis of feature and voice! The result is that, while his aspiration in the one direction of personal appearance is immense, it is attended by the utmost diffidence. He is sick of shoes and longs for boots, but is too shy to put these on. He despises his round jackets, but lacks nerve to put on a long-tailed coat. He admires and yet dreads a well-dressed man above everything except a well-dressed young woman. A first-class dandy is to him an awful object! Happily, this condition does not last long. Some escape it altogether. It is sure to be ended by any serious event or circumstance that puts the individual on his own resources, and forces him to act for himself. This at any rate was my experience.

"I remember well when I was in this state. I had saved my pocket money, just as you did, getting ready for flight, when I was saved by my first long-tailed coat. It was of blue cloth with gilt metal buttons. I had kept it for weeks without being able to muster the courage to wear it in public, revolving meantime my plan for running away; often in the privacy of my own room putting on the whole suit, when I rehearsed endeavoring to accustom myself to it; walking about the room and practicing an easy carriage before the glass. At last, one Sunday morning, full of trepidation, I wore it to church. Some of the youngsters there, of my age, still in round jackets, grinned maliciously, which galled me a little, but I got through the day pretty comfortably.

"Next morning, when I contrasted the new clothes with

the old ones, and especially with my round jacket, which I despised, I resolved to wear the fine suit to school. I had also a pearl-colored beaver hat and a pair of shiny boots with brass pieces, like horseshoes, on the heels. Arrayed in all this finery, with my heart in my mouth, I set out for school. I got along very well, people not staring at me as I thought they would. In fact, nobody seemed to notice my new garments until I got near the schoolhouse, when I saw an acquaintance of my own age, but still in his round jacket, standing on the opposite side of the street, staring as I advanced as if I were a show. When I got opposite to him, he opened his eyes wide and grinned, and cried out, in a voice loud enough to be heard over the whole street, 'Gre-a-t Cæ-s-a-r! Is that you? Why, I thought it was a man!'

"I gave him a vicious look and passed on, and I took then a dislike to that boy which lasted a long time.

"At school I got on famously. There I found myself an object of genuine admiration. Even the master treated me with more consideration than usual. Next day he came to school with his best suit, black with buff vest, and pretty soon a whole bevy of boys of my age and set were in long-tailed coats.

"But on my way home I had serious trouble. I had got pretty well accustomed to my finery, and walked along carelessly enough, in fact, not without a feeling of superiority, until I came to the corner where the apothecary had just opened his splendid new shop with its great bow window. There, to my horror, I saw advancing toward the corner, right in my track homeward, a whole bevy of the finest dandies in the State. Some of them were local dandies and others celebrities from Lexington, Mr. Dick Slaughter and Mr. Cates (Owen Glendower), and from Bardstown, Mr. Hill Rowan and Mr. Clayton Slaughter. They were clad in splendid new suits of cloth of various colors with great rolling collars to their coats, and wore bell-crowned hats, and had their hair frizzed! Their shirt-bosoms were of ruffled lace, and some of them went with their throats bare, after the manner of Lord Byron. (There were giants in those days!) Of all men else I had avoided these. They

filled me with dismay! I turned instantly to the bow window of the apothecary, pretending to be looking at the great globes of liquids there, glowing with all the colors of the rainbow, while they should pass by. As a further diversion, I began to pick at a huge stick of logwood that stood upon a bracket beside the window and was part of the show. I was pulling at a splinter of this log, when suddenly the distorted images of the dandies flashed into all the globes at once, giving me such a spasm of embarrassment that, somehow, I upset the great stick of logwood, and it tumbled headlong, smashing into the bow window among the colored globes, which instantly seemed to dissolve and vanish, like soap bubbles. I fled at once, clattering over the pavement with my brazen heels. As I crossed the street I glanced backward and saw a frantic, bare-headed man at the front of the shop, and I saw nothing more, and was soon in my room at home.

"The apothecary did not discover who had broken his window. The new suit had saved me, for though I had worn it to church and to school, and had taken it for granted that the whole town would be gaping at it, hardly anybody had noticed it. And though in my flight I had passed many people to whom my figure was familiar, the new suit disguised me, and I passed unrecognized.

"I kept my own counsel, but was greatly worried. I fancied that those beautiful colored globes must be very costly ornaments, and their destruction a serious loss to the apothecary. At last my conscience pricked me so keenly that I went down to him and made a clean breast of it, assuming to pay the damage as I should be able, and offering a present payment of all the pocket money I had saved. And in order to clear myself of any imputation of malice or wanton mischief, I told him, as candidly as I have told you, how I came to break his window. He is a real good man, that little Mr. Byers! He refused to take anything, laughing heartily, and shaking my hand, and making light of the whole affair. My notions about running away vanished as the shining globes had done under the shock, and never returned.

"As to the gentle sex, I believe they have at a certain



period something analogous to the state of mind we have been considering, but not manifested in the same way. They 'wear their rue with a difference.' In their case a kind Providence seems to have provided a remedy in a diet of slate pencils, popcorn, cucumber pickles, and other indigestibles, by means of which the crisis is safely passed."

Of course the reader will not give much consideration to these last speculations of a professed joker like Mr. Russell, though he may remember to have felt in his youth, when about to quit its flowery paths to tread the stony road of life, something of what has been here described. And doubtless the gentle sex, at a like period of life, looking forward with timorous distrust upon the new world they are about to enter, and backward with fond regret upon the happy days of girlhood, have their hearts filled as with some tender brooding sorrow. This feeling a poet of the day has finely expressed in words put into the song of a young maiden:

"Tears, idle tears, I know not what they mean—  
Tears from the depth of some divine despair,  
Rise in the heart and gather to the eyes,  
In looking on the happy autumn fields,  
And thinking of the days that are no more."

## CHAPTER XXXIV

### A MERRY JOURNEY

"A merry journey, rich in pastime, cheered  
By music, pranks, and laughter-stirring jest,  
And freak put on and arch word dropped."

RUSSELL and Stackpole had long meditated a visit to the Bluegrass region, and now made it. Early on Sunday morning they were on their way from Harrodsburg to Frankfort. Their road lay through a neighborhood composed mainly of sectarians imbued with old school Calvinism. The zeal of this community had been greatly quickened of late by the preaching of two eloquent divines, whose labors had been extended to almost every part of the State, and who numbered their converts by thousands. A new church had been built and these gentlemen were expected, on their return from the western counties, to hold a protracted meeting there.

As the travelers approached this neighborhood dun clouds were gathering in the western sky, and the deep growl of distant thunder warned them that they might find it necessary to seek shelter from a storm. They quickened the pace of their horses, and at last, finding the storm about to burst upon them, broke into a fast gallop. The rain was beginning to fall in heavy drops when, on rounding a turn in the road, they found themselves in front of a church. Seeing a long shed nearby, under which were fastened a great number of horses, they rode thither, and with some difficulty found room for theirs. Looking toward the church they saw at the door some persons holding it open and looking out at them. Hoisting their umbrellas they made a push for the house, which they found filled with people. In the vestibule were two persons, one of whom,

after taking a good look at the newcomers, asked Stackpole if he or his friend was Mr. Ross or Mr. Gallagher; and when Stackpole answered in the negative, he said that the congregation had assembled in expectation of one of these gentlemen being there to preach to them, but he supposed they had been kept away by the storm. Stackpole, who had heard of Mr. Gallagher as a great sensational preacher, potent at revivals, and, like Burns' Moodie, one who always

"Speeled the holy door  
Wi' tidings of damnation,"

expressed some regret, having long had a desire to hear him.

While this colloquy went on, Russell had been an attentive listener, though busy brushing the rain from his clothes. Suddenly he whispered in Stackpole's ear, "I am going to preach for them," and immediately folding his umbrella and carrying it on his arm, he walked slowly up the aisle and ascended the pulpit. Scared by this audacious act, Stackpole hesitated to enter the body of the house, but at last walked in, taking the least conspicuous seat he could find. It was some relief to him, he hardly knew why, to see the house darkened by the storm, which had now reached a great height, the rain pouring in torrents and almost blinding the window-panes.

"How in the world," he asked himself, "is he to get on with a sermon suitable to this audience?" He had heard Russell say more than once that he should like a chance to preach a "red-hot Calvinistic sermon," but he had thought this a joke. He felt assured of his power of elocution, which was of a high order, but where was he to find proper matter for a sermon?

He had not long to speculate; for Russell soon rose, and, with the air of a man long accustomed to the pulpit, began the service. He went through this smoothly and as impressively as the meagre formulary would admit, and began the sermon. The first words of the text, enunciated in Russell's clear musical voice, scared Stackpole afresh with what seemed a blasphemous pun suggested by the storm: "The Lord reigneth—let the people tremble."

It is not intended to reproduce at this day an old-fashioned Calvinistic sermon, but only to offer such a sketch of it as may help to picture the scene here presented. The discourse was thoroughly sound on all the points of faith, the clearing up of which occupied the first part. "Effectual Calling," which has been such a fruitful subject for disputation, and upon which even ministers have been known to come to blows, was handled deftly and smoothly, if not with entire clearness. Stackpole listened with great attention to this, but, somehow, lost the thread of the argument, and, though all was done in a logic-chopping style, and concluded with a Q.E.D. air that seemed conclusive, yet at the end his mind was left perplexed in the extreme. But what was obscure to him seemed clear to two old men sitting in front of him, who looked into each other's eyes and nodded emphatic approval.

Russell reached now what was indeed the heart of the sermon—that upon which he chiefly relied for an impression upon the audience—the fate of the unbeliever who obstinately rejects the one way of salvation. At this point a man entered the house, manifestly driven in, as he and Stackpole had been, by stress of weather. He was a man of middle age and middle stature, with dark hair and dark eyes, dressed in a faded blue-cloth coat with tarnished gilt buttons, light-drab pantaloons well worn and marked with grease spots, and a white vest and ruffled shirt-bosom stained by tobacco. His face was clean-shaven, but red with unquestionable marks of intemperance, and his gait, as he walked along the aisle, making a noise with the heels of his unblackened boots, and sprinkling the floor with the water from a broken drab beaver hat with a badge of mourning on it, which he swung before him like a censer, showed that he was then under the influence of whisky. Russell said afterward that he recognized him at once as a country raff, and that he saw all-fours, twenty-card poker, nine-pins, whisky-straight, and quarter-races all over him. He walked up the aisle until he found a seat in line with the pulpit, where he reclined against the wall, and soon fell asleep.

Stackpole was now quite free from solicitude about the



success of Russell's strange adventure. He had seen all over the house marks of approbation among the audience. The only remaining ground of apprehension, the possible coming of the other preacher, was disappearing as the time wore on, and now the increasing violence of the storm, with almost incessant thunder and lightning, put this contingency out of the question. His mind being thus relieved, he was enabled to give his whole attention to the sermon, which he always declared was one of the most "effective" discourses he had ever heard.

After the fashion of the emotional preachers of the day, Russell had arraigned the conventional sinner, that creature of straw they were accustomed to make up for the occasion, and endow with all the bad qualities that belong to humanity, and stain with all the sins of which the flesh is capable, and he was now buffeting this figure, to the manifest satisfaction of his audience. He gave it unusual vitality by frequent glances at the sleeping man below, thus keeping up in the minds of his hearers a close connection between the imaginary culprit he was belaboring and the live sinner before him. While he was thus engaged, there leaped into the house a vivid flash of lightning, followed instantly by thunder so sharp and rattling that it startled the whole audience, bringing many to their feet, and awakened the sleeper. The preacher made a solemn pause, and, stretching out his hand, and shaking it with the palm toward him, said, slowly and solemnly: "THERE SHALL BE NO SLEEPING IN HELL!" (A modern reporter would here write—Sensation.)

And now again falling upon the straw sinner, but keeping an eye upon the live culprit below, he banged him and basted and belabored him, and finally, denouncing against him all the stored vengeance of Heaven, he shook him over the mouth of hell—and heaved him in!

The audience seemed to catch a long breath as he concluded. They looked about, each curious to see the effect upon his neighbor. Admiration and approval were manifested all over the house. But there were, among the young people, faces marked by gloom and even terror. The two old men who sat in front of Stackpole again

looked into each other's eyes and nodded emphatic approval. One of them, who had held his hand to his ear during the sermon, asked the other a question which was answered in a slow, drawling voice, with a rising inflection, audible half over the house, "I do-a-n't know, Anderson, who he is, but he's deep in doctrine."

Then Russell gave out the hymn from the book on the desk, reading it with dramatic effect:

"Hark! hark! my soul, what's this I hear?  
What doleful cries assail my ear?  
What lamentation from below—  
The place to which the damned go?

"'Tis the lost sinner in his chains,  
Ingulfed in woe, and racked with pains;  
Plunged in a sulphurous lake of fire,  
Pressed down beneath Jehovah's ire.

"He says, "I'm gone, forever gone,  
My wretched soul is now undone;  
I'm full of hell, and devils are  
Tormenting me with keen despair."

"Come, then, poor sinners, warning take,  
Before you reach the burning lake;  
Repent, before it be too late,  
Or you must share his awful fate."

Then starting the hymn, and singing the first verse, and getting the audience under way, he walked slowly down from the pulpit, and, Stackpole joining him, they went out. The clouds were breaking away, but the rain was still falling lightly.

After leaving the church Stackpole and Russell rode for some distance in silence, broken at last by Russell asking Stackpole what he thought of the sermon. Having told him of the compliment paid by the old men, Stackpole said, "You are fishing for compliments, I suppose. Well, as a caricature, I thought it first rate."

"Caricature?"

"Yes; I have never been in the habit of hearing sermons of a sensational kind, but I think it must certainly be an exaggeration of that style."

"Not a bit of it. You may hear just such sermons as that any day when one of these great revivals is on foot. What did you think of my exposition of Effectual Calling?"

"I didn't understand it."

"Just what I feared. Now hear me attentively and I will make it plain." Here Russell pulled up his horse and took a chop-logic attitude.

"No, you don't," said Stackpole. "I won't listen; I don't want to hear any more on the subject. I can't stand it."

"Now, see here," turning up his cuffs, "Effectual Calling—"

"I won't hear it, I tell you. It's out of the question. I listened to you attentively this morning. I tried to take it in, but could not; and I felt as if something had given way in my brain. You must not go over that again!"

"Well, now, see here—"

"No, I won't hear it. I'll sing 'The Sea' if you say another word."

"Well, now here—"

"Here, too:

" 'The sea, the sea, the open sea,  
The wide, the fwesh, the evah fwee,  
The evah, evah fwee-e-e—' "

"Good heaven! Stackpole, stop that!"

" 'Without a mah-uk, without a bound,  
It wunneth the wahtuhs wide we-glons wound;  
It p-l-a-y-s with the clouds, it m-o-c-k-s the skies,  
And like a quadled queecha lies.' "

"Have mercy, Stackpole!"

Then facing Russell, as he lay on his horse's neck in an affected helpless attitude, and grasping his whip as a truncheon, and assuming a melodramatic attitude, Stackpole, with good accent and expression, exclaimed:

" 'Eithah be patient and entweat me fai-ah,  
Au with the clamowous wepote of w-a-h-h-h-h,  
Thus will I ddown yoah exclamations!' "

"I give up," said Russell. "I can stand anything but that song with all the r's ripped from it. How in the world

did you ever take a fancy to a song so full of impediments to you?"

"I took it for practice. It is a great deal better than that old hackneyed line 'unwestwicted, unwestwained, fwee,' because the difficult sounds occur at intervals and somewhat unexpectedly."

This fooling ended, they rode away in silence till Stackpole said, "Russell, I think it was carrying a joke pretty far to fly in the face of people's religious faith, as you did to-day, making light of what they deem sacred, 'mocking their solemn solemnities,' assuming the functions of a successor of the Apostles—by Jove, that was rather too bad!"

"It may be a little out of the way, Stackpole, but you need not speak of it in such strong terms. 'Rather too bad,' indeed! Those sectarians have no more right to preach the gospel than I have. They lack the Apostolic Succession. Besides, they preach such a horrible doctrine of eternal punishment in lakes of fire and sulphur, that I consider it a solemn duty, in the interest of true religion, to make war upon them, as I would upon heathen idolaters. Thinking that they possess the only way to salvation, they go on dealing out damnation to all the world beside, consigning to hell and its tortures even young children and the countless millions that have died in ignorance of Christ. What a libel on the good God of Heaven! Him whose mercy endureth forever! They degrade Him even below the gods of the heathen, converting Him into a fearful being, before whom Moloch and all pagan deities 'pale their uneffectual fires!'"

"Admitting this to be all true, what good did you expect from taking possession of their pulpit and preaching to them the same doctrine?"

"I thought that maybe they would gag at such an uncommon dose of brimstone as I should give them, but they did not. They took it in like maple sugar candy. When I described to them the tortures of the damned, I saw their eyes glisten, some of them partly rising from their seats, in their intense enjoyment of the broil. I would not have been surprised if they had sprung to their feet and sounded the scalp-halloo. *They* don't want a sinner



saved, except by their exclusive process! There is an element of hate in their very religious faith. Looking upon those who reject their dogmas as atheists—enemies of God—and themselves as God's exclusive champions, they think it their duty to hate and persecute them. They not only hate what they call false doctrine, but hate also those who hold that doctrine; like the man that not only did not like lobster, but did not like any man that did like lobster."

"If I understand you, you were fighting the devil with fire; and certainly you did give them an uncommon dose to-day. You must have been studying their books—you don't go to their churches?"

"No, I don't go to their meeting-houses, nor read their books, now. But in my childhood I was trained and disciplined in their faith, with all its horrors. I thought once that the souls of all, except those that could and would follow the narrow way they claim to occupy exclusively, would burn forever in hell. Of course this meant that the great bulk of mankind was predestined to this fate. I have lain awake half the night, after hearing one of their terrible sermons, thinking on its horrors, and so completely wretched that I lamented that I had been born. I shall never forget the misery of those early years. As I grew older, my mind revolted from these ghastly doctrines, and in doing that revolted from all religion. For years I secretly detested the whole subject, and, though compelled to go to their preaching and prayer-meetings, I sat under their teaching with a smothered wrath, such as I hope never to feel again. They poisoned nearly all the years of my boy life, and handed me over to infidelity—atheism, if such a thing be possible."

Stackpole's face grew serious as he listened to this talk from a habitual joker, and saw the flush of strong feeling upon his dark face. He made no response, and they rode for some time in silence, each communing with his own thoughts. After a time Russell resumed the subject, saying, "I cannot help thinking of the unfortunate waif that drifted into the house to-day. What hope for a better life can he have, if dependent upon their teaching? One thing

I know: they will never move him by the terrors of the law. I tried him to-day to my satisfaction."

"You came pretty near scaring me, while you were bombarding him. How did he look?"

"Look? Why, do you know that while I was doing my very best upon him, after that clap of thunder, when I thought to make him shake in his boots, he winked at me! Confound the fellow, he came near putting me out! I thought maybe he knew me."

"He got a cold reception from the congregation."

"Yes; they glared at him as if he were a wolf stealing into the fold."

At this moment the sound of a horse's feet was heard behind them, a voice called out, "How do you do, gentlemen," and the individual of whom they were talking, mounted upon a very large sorrel horse with his tail neatly "clubbed," rode up beside them. The travelers were somewhat embarrassed by his presence, and at a loss how to receive him. Russell resolved not to recognize him or admit that he had seen him in the church. So he said something commonplace about the storm and the weather probabilities. But the mind of the gentleman was upon the event of the day. After looking over their horses rapidly and keenly, and seeing no points in either of them, he began to talk about the sermon and the congregation: "Seems to me, gentlemen, that you left quite uncereemonious to-day: the brethren was looking for you high and low."

"Ah!" said Russell, "were you in the congregation to-day?"

"Well, I should think you ought to know I was there. I set right under you, and I thought that your whole entire sermon was p'inted right squar' at me—in the cool! It ain't the first time I have been under fire in that house, but yours was the all-firedest hottest fire I ever was under! Now, gentlemen, I suppose you are both preachers, and I'm a poor-devil sinner, and you'll think it mighty cool in me to give you advice. But if you'll think a minute you'll see that I'm the very man to give you instruction. Your business is to catch sinners; and I should like to

know who can tell you better how to catch them than sinners themselves. You know it takes a rogue to catch a rogue, and 'old smugglers make the best custom-house officers,' and I've always heard that preachers that had been pretty hard cases themselves make the best hands at ropin' in the wicked. Now, when I come into that church to-day, I had no idea of gittin' religion; because I've been thar before, and I know thar ain't any *thar* for *me*. But when I come thar, which I did to get shut of the rain, why didn't you show some sort of an openin' for me, and not close up your cheers—as you did—not leavin' me a seat at the table? Now, that's the way I've always found it, at that church. Freeze-out is the game thar. They looked at me as much as to say, 'We've got a soft thing here, and a sure thing, and you want to git in, do you? *You* want some of this chicken pie.' I don't know if you are much acquainted with the congregation, as you never preached here before, I reckon. But—I—tell—you they are a h-a-r-d set, they are—in the cool! And now, since there's been a couple of strange preachers through here whoopin' 'em up, they are more streenious than ever. Now, gentlemen, that's not the way to do—that is, if you want such as I am to come in at all. It looks, though, like they'd rather have me for fuel than for salvation! Now, I sometimes go to the Methodist church, and thar they come forward and welcome me, and shake hands, and beg me to accept the invitation of the good Lord, and encourage the good feelin' that made me come among them; and I have always felt that I was among good people that wanted every sinner to have a show. I once got on the anxious seat, and I hope I may some day be with 'em for good and all, and leave behind my bad ways; I do in—indeed! I'm goin', now, down to the big camp meetin'. I hope I may get religion; for my heart always softened before their lovin' kindness." Here he pulled up his horse and added, "But all the devils in hell can't skeer me into it; I tell you that—in the cool!" Then bidding them farewell he went his way on a branch road.

The travelers again lapsed into long silence, which was broken at last by Stackpole. "Russell," said he, "didn't

you tell me that the speech of the people of Kentucky is entirely free from provincialisms—that good English is universally spoken by them—that they speak better English than the English themselves?”

“Yes, I did, and I say so again. Why do you ask?”

“Because I think the English of our late companion would hardly pass muster among any average English-speaking people. What do you think of that phrase ‘whooped-up’?”

“Whooped-up? It is legitimate English. Whooped-up is good. It is made of two very common English words. It is a figurative expression, and very forcible. You would be at no loss to understand its force, if you had ever been chased by Indians giving the war-whoop at every step behind you. You will hear a good deal of figurative speech among our people. You will hear, for instance, that Prentice has tomahawked Shad Penn or some other victim; or both tomahawked and scalped them. These are very strong expressions. I do not mean to say that they ought to be at once incorporated with the language, but only allowed to take their chance with other new words and phrases that are constantly coming forward. Meantime, in colloquial use they are very expressive—highly figurative—and attest the poetic cast of the Kentucky mind. ‘Come to think of it,’ as you say, this phrase is used by Shakespeare. Coriolanus says he was ‘whooped out of Rome by slaves.’”

“I believe you are right. But what do you think of the word ‘streenious’? You remember that he said that the congregation since they had been ‘whooped-up’ by those new preachers had become more ‘streenious’ than before: is it good English?”

“Now, Stackpole, as you are a Yankee you can’t object to my answering your question by another. What do *you* think he meant by that word ‘streenious’?”

“It is a new word to me, and I can only exercise my peculiar Yankee faculty and guess.”

“Well, as you guess?”

“I guess he meant that the congregation, having been ‘whooped-up’ by the new preachers, had become more—particular—more exacting—more—strict—”



"Now, let me interrupt you for a moment, and give you time to find some word that will better express the idea. Meantime, I will state the case a little more fully than you did. He said that, having been 'whooped-up'; that is, having had their fears quickened by the terrible utterances of these new preachers—utterances as terrible in their ears as the war-whoop of Indians behind a fugitive for life, they had become more—what? More particular? More exacting? More strict? Not for a moment; no such commonplace words will answer here. They would make a horrible bathos. No, sir; more '*streenious*'! I confess the word is new to me, but it conveys a distinct impression nevertheless. It strikes me like that strange phrase in Shakespeare, 'cold obstruction.'"

"It strikes me in the same way; and I don't believe that Shakespeare ever wrote such nonsense. I believe he wrote 'cold abstraction.'"

"Well, well; if you couple us with Shakespeare, in your criticism, I rest content."

Here they came upon a house by the roadside, and Stackpole proposed to inquire how far they were from the Frankfort pike. Accordingly he rode up to the fence in front of the log cabin, where a woman stood by the door with a little flaxen-haired child by her side, and removing his hat in salutation, said, "How fah is it, madam, to the Fwankfort pike?"

The woman advanced a step from the door, and answered, "Whad did you saye?"

Stackpole repeated the inquiry, when, with a startled look, she lifted her child by the arm and went into the house, and closed the door, and the travelers, wondering at this, rode away.

Pretty soon they came to another house, where their hail brought out two women and a half dozen white-haired children, of various sizes. Stackpole rode up to the fence, and made the same inquiry as before. After having repeated it and failed to get an answer, the women gaping at each other with puzzled faces, Russell rode up, saying in an undertone, "Let me speak to them; this is a North Carolina

settlement; they don't understand you. I have traveled in that State and know the language."

Then he called out, "Saye! you uns, how fur mought it be to the Frankfort big road?"

"Oh!" said one of the women, brightening up, "it's nigh onto thirrerteen mile."

Russell thanked them and, riding away, said with emphasis, "What a strange lingo those North Carolinians make of the English language!"

The remainder of the journey to Frankfort afforded nothing of special interest. The travelers were weary and rode for the most part in silence, each absorbed in his own reflections or in observing the face of the country, which, as they neared the valley of the Kentucky River, became more and more uneven and picturesque; rolling away before them in vast billows of yellow stubble or shining blue-grass, or shadowed by the high arches of the primitive forest; and as they came still nearer to the river, there appeared deep gorges and dark purple glens, and abrupt heights fringed with cedars.

At last they reached the Frankfort big road, when their horses pricked up their ears and took a livelier gait, conscious that a place of rest and food was at hand. Just at sunset they reached the crest of the hill that overlooks the capital from the south, where a view expanded before their eyes which impelled them to check their horses and pause in admiration and delight. The chronicler will not attempt to paint the marvelous beauty of that scene of hill and valley and winding river, having no gift that way. The travelers were so absorbed in its contemplation that they did not for some time perceive what lay beneath them in a grassy woodland on their right hand, a gathering of hundreds of people, men, women and children, with tents and booths and fires, in a camp-meeting.

"Why, Russell," exclaimed Stackpole, "here are our old friends, the Methodists!"

In another moment there rose, swelling out of the valley, music from more than a hundred voices in harmony, singing that finest of all the sacred songs of the gentle brethren, "We shall meet by the beautiful river." With a start of

pleasure Russell and Stackpole recognized and united in singing the fine hymn. Blending their voices with the sacred harmony, they rode slowly in the shadow of the hill down the long, graded declivity. Soon they reached the level plain below and the wooden bridge that spans the river, when Russell gave the ancient warder there the countersign, which was a cut ninepence, and they passed over the bridge into the town.

## CHAPTER XXXV

### THE CIRCUS

"They strike their tents, like the Tartars, and away!  
The place grows bare where they so long remain,  
But grass will rise ere they return again."

—CRABBE.

OUR travelers were surprised to see a great multitude of people on foot and on horseback crowding the streets of the capital. They went at once to the "Mansion House," where they were informed by Mr. Taylor (Hopping Dick) that he could not give them rooms, nor even a room for the night. Such was the throng of people that had suddenly poured into the town, that every room in his house was occupied; and sending in their behalf an application to the other taverns, these were all found in the same crowded state. Then Mr. Taylor bethought him of a small unfurnished room, in the upper story, where cots or a pallet might be provided, and where he thought they might be made comfortable for one night. Content with this assurance, they got their supper, and then went out to explore the town, and to learn the meaning of the extraordinary influx of people there.

They found crowds besetting the pavements everywhere. The long rows of wooden racks, escalloped between the pegs by the teeth of horses, were strung with the nags of country people. Groups of men occupied the corners of the streets, and sat upon the goods boxes by the store doors, and upon the curbstones, and upon every place where a seat could be had. On a vacant lot behind the State-House a bonfire was kindled, around which was assembled a large number of the youth of the town, white and black, feeding its flames. People were still coming into the place on all the roads that entered it, on horseback and in vehicles.



Every horseman coming from the east was immediately surrounded and eagerly questioned for news. Various answers were given, such as, "Just beyond the forks"; then, "Just this side of the forks"; and at last, "Right out at the brick tavern." A countryman standing near Russell and Stackpole, with his ear cocked to the east, was heard to say, "I hear the wagons. I'd know the cluck of them wheels in Kamskatky."

A moment after there was a great commotion. Throngs of men poured toward the east end of the town, footmen and horsemen. The windows along the street flew open, and were instantly filled with the heads of women and children, their faces full of eager expectation. Posted advantageously at Weissiger's Tavern was the governor, surrounded by his military staff and the judges of the Appellate Court. Reader! along the Georgetown pike the *Circus* was slowly advancing upon Frankfort, and thus "far off its coming shone."

This was the famous circus of Monsieur Pepin, long domiciled at The Falls, whence in summer it made excursions to Cincinnati by steamboat, returning by land through Kentucky, and pitching its tents at the towns along the way. It was a circus pure and simple, without the sideshows of beasts, and learned pigs, and mountebanks, and giants and dwarfs, and other monstrosities that defile the modern circus. It was a prime favorite with the people of the capital, and was always welcomed there by everybody, from the governor down, as were the "tragedians of the city by the court at Elsinore." This chronicler owns to having had a weakness for this circus, which he well remembers, with its gaudy trappings and barbaric splendor. A glamour came over him always, with the smell of the sawdust or tanbark and the flaring oil lamps. The "grand entrée" of its plumed troop, amidst the blast of trumpets and the clash of cymbals, recalling the flowery days of Oriental chivalry—the royal banner, and all quality, pride, pomp and circumstance; and the starry beauty of those maiden princesses, Doña Josepha Garcia and Mademoiselle Celestine Vallière, riding on milk-white steeds, always led him captive. How much more sensibly

must they have moved these gallant, horse-loving, rural Kentuckians, to whom they were only occasional and transient visitants, flashing before them like meteors of the night, or like angels dropped down from the clouds

"To turn and wind a fiery Pegasus,  
And witch the world with noble horsemanship,"

and then vanishing—leaving behind no trace but the desolate ring, where the grass was trodden out; which, like those "green sour ringlets" that the fairies make, serve only to recall the enchantment of a night!

Russell and Stackpole did not return to the tavern until a late hour of the night. Then, tired by their long ride and by their tour about the town, they found their way to the room promised by the landlord. They found there not only the pallet promised, but also three cots, two of which were already occupied by sleepers. Stackpole at once took possession of the vacant cot, leaving the ample pallet to Russell. Both had got into bed, and Russell was about to put out the candle, when a fifth man entered the room, pulling off his coat as he came in. He was a young countryman, as Russell plainly saw by the cut of his roach. "My dear sir," said Russell, "where do you propose to sleep?"

The new man, having cast his eyes over the room, answered, "I reckon I shall have to sleep with you. I don't see any other chance."

"Well, come on," said Russell, "I suppose there is no danger."

"Danger!" said the new man, straightening himself with an air; "what kind of danger do you mean?"

"Well, I hardly think there is any danger *now*."

Then with a sudden change of manner the new man asked, "Is there anything the matter with you?"

"No, not now."

"Have you had anything the matter with you?"

"Yes, but I've been well for some time. Come on" (moving aside to make room), "I think you'll be quite safe now."

"What's been the matter with you?" said the other, still

holding his coat in his hand and looking uneasy, and all the "timbre" out of his voice.

"Well, I've had the smallpox, but—"

Before he could utter another word the stranger had fled from the room.

And now the two seeming sleepers in the cots sprang into sitting postures. Both stared at Russell with wide eyes, one of them saying, "Did I understand you to say you had had the smallpox?"

Russell hesitated for some moments, during which the eyes of the men were intently fixed upon his face, their lips apart—every hair in their roaches listening! At last he said, speaking slowly and solemnly, "Yes, gentlemen—"

At the first word the men leaped from their cots; clapping on their hats, and slapping their boots beneath their left arms, and scooping up their garments, they fled out of the door. Then Russell got up and closed the door and locked it.

Stackpole, from his cot, had been an attentive and interested spectator of the dramatic scene conjured up by Russell's mischief. He had put on his spectacles (now always kept at hand) when the young countryman entered, and had a clear view of the actors, and evidently considered it good comedy. His eyes were now glistening behind the glasses, and he was shaking with suppressed laughter. After a while, when he felt assured that the strangers had got out of hearing, he rose from the cot, and broke into such uproarious merriment as Russell had never before seen exhibited by his apathetic friend. Then Russell put out the light, and disposed himself for sleep. But Stackpole lay a long time awake, breaking out at intervals in giggling and sputtering laughter. Then, revolving the matter in his reflective way, serious apprehensions obtruded themselves upon his mind. What might be the consequence of sending down into the crowded tavern intelligence that an occupant of one of its chambers had lately recovered from smallpox? Might not those frightened countrymen spread a panic through the house and the town? And might not the town authorities take the matter in hand and put them under some sort of quarantine? Harassed by these appre-

hensions, he resolved to communicate them to Russell, and called aloud to him, but found that he was fast asleep.

This chronicler does not know whether, after the lapse of so many years, the circus still finds a warm welcome at the capital. But that more than a quarter of a century after the time of which he writes, these shows were still held in high esteem by the greatest dignitaries there, the following facts will attest: A circus company was leaving the town, and the horses and wagons and all the paraphernalia had passed over the river, when the elephant (then become an attachment to the circus), refusing to trust his weight upon the wooden bridge, it became necessary that he should swim the river. To witness this came a great throng of people, who passed noisily by the courthouse, where a venerable judge was presiding over the trial of an important case, and a distinguished lawyer was addressing the jury. Hearing the commotion in the street, the venerable court pricked up its ears, and, learning what was afoot, instantly arrested the eloquent counsel in his address, saying, "Suspend your argument, if you please, Mr. Lindsay. The elephant is about to swim the river. I have never seen an elephant swim a river. I am an old man, and I may never have another opportunity. Mr. Sheriff, adjourn the court for two hours. Gentlemen of the jury, you can go and see the show."

A moment after the courtroom was empty; the last "O yes!" of the sheriff being uttered as he flew out of the door.

Lest the chronicler, in relating these instances of the fondness of the great dignitaries of the capital for shows, may seem to intend something derogatory to them, it should suffice to remind the reader that a certain simplicity always attends true greatness of mind, and to cite examples of this from history, as Epaminondas, and Socrates, and the philosopher Seneca who used to run races with a young slave in his garden. But a modern instance will perhaps serve better, and therefore he submits what has been said by Lord Brougham of the great Lord Stowel, the acute author of the celebrated judgment in the case of *Dalrymple vs. Dalrymple*, by which was determined the



nice point of what constitutes a marriage under the Scotch law. Lord Brougham says, "It was at all times a common observation, that the person who first saw any sight exhibited in London, be it production of nature or of art, or of artifice (for he would condescend to see even the juggler play his tricks), was Sir William Scott; who could always steal, for such relaxation, an hour from settling the gravest questions raised on the rights of nations or the ecclesiastical law of the land."

## CHAPTER XXXVI

### THE PRESS

"Is it not beautiful to see five million quintals of rags picked annually from the gutter, and annually, after being macerated, hot-pressed, printed on, and sold, returned thither, filling so many hungry mouths by the way?"

AMONG the notable things in Frankfort are its printing offices. Two newspapers have always been maintained there, and sometimes as many as four, while Lexington and The Falls, each claiming to be the commercial emporium of the State, could not at any time maintain more than two, one of which had only a sickly existence, and was always in peril of starvation. The advantage possessed by Frankfort consisted in the great amount of public printing done there. The multitudinous acts of the legislature, the reports of its various committees, the messages of the governor, the reports of heads of departments of the State government, and of the charitable institutions, all these constituted a vast fund of printing, the profits from which were sufficient, not only to sustain a newspaper, but often to place its proprietors in affluence. The desire to compete for this prize assured always to the capital an adequate number of printing offices and newspapers. The public printer, elected by the legislature, had then, as now, the exclusive privilege of doing all this printing, and belonged, as a matter of course, to the dominant party; though, when it happened that parties were pretty evenly divided in the legislature, or when some "outside barbarian," from Lexington or The Falls, entered the field, adroit compromises and combinations were often made between the rival papers at the capital against the common enemy. But, as a rule,

the public printing was always in the hands of the paper in the interest of the dominant party.

Meantime, the unsuccessful papers kept alive as they best could, starving along cheerfully enough, each sustained by the hope of a change that should bring its eager muzzle to the public crib. An empty stomach is always dispiriting, but it did not dispirit these newspaper men for any great length of time. After defeat they were sure to addict themselves to idyllic topics, "babbling of green fields," and writing chiefly agricultural matter; chronicling the huge beets and pumpkins sent in by their country subscribers—solacing themselves with these delightful homely topics. Gradually they recovered their normal tone, and it was observed that their zeal for the public service, and their acuteness in discovering the political shortcoming or profligacy of their adversaries, was always vastly quickened, as was the high moral sense which revolted at these, by a short respite and a light regimen:

"The truth that flies the flowing can  
Will haunt the vacant cup."

And so these unlucky editors went on with their accustomed work cheerfully enough, reminding people of those gay cavaliers in Mexico, who, when their party has been put down by a bloodless revolution in the capital there, yet continue to prance about the "Prado" on their little, fiery steeds, awaiting some new pronunciamiento which shall bring them again into place.

Every visitor to the capital in the day of which we speak must have been struck with the great profusion of public documents found there, serving for wrapping paper and other homely uses. Russell and Stackpole found them literally snowed over the little town. If they lighted a cigar they used a fragment of the report of the Register of the Land Office; a piece of tobacco purchased was wrapped in a sheet of the governor's message; a bottle of whisky bought by Stackpole, "just to see how it would compare with the whisky of The Falls," was enclosed in the report of the superintendent of the lunatic asylum. Russell made a collection of these documents, and took them to their

room at the tavern, where, in a few moments, they both fell asleep over them. To this day, as is well known, these documents have upon most persons a soporific effect. Upon some few individuals they act as irritants, exasperating them in such a degree that they throw them away in a huff. It is a strange fact that whoever may write one of these State papers, whatever may be his reputation as a writer in other fields, the moment he undertakes one of these, is sure to fall into that prolix, drawling, humdrum, droning style, which, according to the temperament of the reader, puts him in a rage, or gently composes him to sleep. As for the legislature, for whose enlightenment all these documents are composed and printed, no member was ever known to read one of them through. A new man will make an honest effort, but to those who have served a single term the general title, "Pub. Doc.," is enough.

One evening Russell and Stackpole were present at a symposium in the rooms of one of the heads of department, in which most of the leading officials participated, among these Mr. Rattle, the Register of the Land Office, an old friend of Russell. In the course of the evening there occurred, between one of these officials and Rattle, a colloquy by which a little more light was thrown upon the lavish use of paper and printer's ink, mentioned above. "Rattle," said the official, "your report last year was entirely too short. I hope you are going to make a full report next season."

"If you mean a longer report than my last, I don't know how I am to do it. There is really so little doing in my office that I shall have hardly anything to report. I believe the whole of it may be put on three pages."

"Don't talk that way, for mercy's sake! Three pages? That won't do at all! Let me tell you that your report, last year, made a very bad impression in both houses. Such a meagre document makes members suspect that there is very little work in your office, and inclines them to lower the salary. It was talked about, last session; and it was as much as I could do to restrain some of my friends from moving in the house to reduce the salary, or to take away one of your clerks, which amounts to the same thing."



"You are right there," said Rattle, "for one of my clerks is just no clerk at all, only a conventional clerk whose pay is one of my perquisites—part of my salary. If they take away my real clerk they had as well shut up my office, for he is the only man, in or out of it, who knows anything of its business."

"Goodness gracious!" exclaimed the official, in unaffected amazement. "Who ever heard such talk from a government official? Shut up a department! Think of your talking in that way, while we've all been thinking how we may open at least two new ones! We must strengthen ourselves. There was a set of inquisitive fellows in the house last session (and they will be there at the next session) who were making all sorts of impertinent and disagreeable inquiries. They even wanted to know all about the fees of the secretary of state—fees, mark you, that don't come out of the public treasury, but out of individuals. Hang it! the governor can't issue a batch of pardons, nor remit a lot of fines, nor do anything that puts a dollar in the pocket of the secretary, but these fellows begin to suspect that the whole thing has been contrived for his benefit. But the 'Old Chevalier' was a match for them. He didn't answer at all until near the close of the session, and then he told them that the business of his office occupied all his time, and that to furnish the information in season would require the services of twenty clerks. If these should be furnished he would be happy to give the information required. That was the last of that business! And that's the way for every incumbent to act. His first duty is to stand up for his department and all its emoluments; then to stand by the co-ordinate departments. And—let—me—tell—you, that nothing helps a department like a voluminous report, properly drawn up. Then, if assaults are made upon your office, you seek the member complaining, and ask him, 'Did you read my report?' He is sure to answer no, for, if it be artistically written, no member can possibly go through it. And then you have him, and you express a just surprise and a virtuous indignation, that a man should have attacked your department without having gone to the official source for information. Fortified by a

properly written report you answer all assaults and complaints by saying, defiantly, with a wave of the hand, 'Gentlemen, read my report.' They can't do it! They would rather give up and let you alone. Now, to-morrow bring me the official figures from your office and I will set Scribble to work on them, and he will get you up a document of some two hundred pages—"

"But I tell you," interrupted Rattle, "that my whole material will not fill more than three pages."

"No matter; give us that. Scribble will attend to the remainder, and furnish one hundred and ninety-seven pages of leather and prunella. Hang it! this thing of meagre reports will discredit us all and starve the public printer!"

"But," said Rattle, "won't a report with so few figures, and with so much leather and prunella, be rather absurd, like Falstaff's bill at the tavern?"

"Not a bit. I'll see to that. I'll vary the order of the figures, repeat them in new forms, and put in a few algebraic signs, and altogether make it look so formidable that a member will no more think of tackling it than he would a treatise on conic sections."

Scribble was a "little old bald shot," who made his living at the capital by his pen. For a time his strong point was to write biographies of all the new members. But the novelty of this soon wore off, and the time came when, if a member was assured that Scribble was going to write his life, he would have been held justifiable in taking *his*. He had received his early lessons in writing and composition in a county clerk's office, where he had acquired that prolix style so much in vogue when the fees of the clerk were measured by the number of words in a legal instrument. By diligent study of prolixity, and a habit of writing while half asleep, he had attained great eminence in this style. He was indispensable to heads of departments, and his peculiar graces were often detected even in the messages of the governor.

Of the further transactions at this symposium we are unable to give a clear account. The journal of Russell, from which this narrative has been mainly derived, has

here a hiatus marked by asterisks. He was quite unwell next day. This he attributed to the Frankfort water, which he said always did disagree with him. Stackpole was up next morning early as usual. He was heard exercising his fine baritone voice, cooing like a cock pigeon, and when Russell got up he found on the table a tumbler and a spoon, and the dregs of a whisky cocktail. That day there were sent to their room—a present from their host—more than a dozen bottles of old whisky, of as many different brands, each bottle having the name of a particular brand upon it, with the following memoranda in pencil: “Tried and approved by Messrs. R. and S.”

Russell ascertained, during the day, that Stackpole had bought, through one of the public functionaries, a barrel of old whisky, which he sent to Boston as a present to a social club there, of which he was a member. Attention is called to this as a notable historical fact! This was the first genuine old Kentucky whisky ever sent to that town, and, in time, it led to the present immense demand from Boston for that class of goods; a demand which has been of inestimable benefit to Frankfort, and to the Blue-grass region generally. As to the effect upon the town of Boston and the good people of the Bay State this chronicle is not clear, but submits to the reader what has been said on this point by a Boston man, New England's favorite poet, and withal a sharp practical philosopher, well known now, and well beloved, all over the land:

“Intoxication offers the weak or ill-managed brain a strange state of confusion, a kind of Brahma's heaven, where ‘naught is everything and everything is naught,’ and where all perplexities at last resolve themselves into the general formula, ‘It's of no consequence.’ Whisky exactly suits the American tendency to simplify all contrivances, and reach the proposed end by the shortest route. It furnishes an economical, compendious, portable, manageable, accommodating and not unpalatable method of arriving at the Brahma's heaven above mentioned. And there is good reason to fear that it is breeding a generation of drunkards.”

This is certainly deplorable! But the intelligent reader

will readily detect here the error, common to New England writers, of attributing to all America what is peculiar to New England. Kentuckians with weak or ill-managed brains will be surprised to find themselves credited with a tendency to reach the end proposed by the shortest route, having heretofore borne the reproach of always going the longest way round. And all Kentuckians will revolt at the suggestion that, at any time or under any circumstances, the end proposed by them is that "Brahma's heaven." They know of no such paradise. But they do know what is perhaps a kind of way-station or half-way house—like the Azores, half over the seas. But even when bound for this they are apt to loiter and dally by the way; and, arrived there, their state is nothing like that perplexing metaphysical condition where "naught is everything and everything is naught," but, as this chronicler has learned by the "perfectest report," is a state of somewhat vague and indefinite blissfulness, where "all things are lovely and the goose honks high."

Yet, what is said by this poet and philosopher may be true of New England; for once, while this chronicler was traveling by rail in Massachusetts, a countryman whom he had permitted to scrape acquaintance, after some talk, finding that he was a Kentuckian, and captivated by his affability, went to the door of the smoking-car and thence signaled this chronicler, in a very mysterious manner, to join him; and when this request had been complied with, in a sly way drew from his breast pocket a flask of liquor, and offering it said, "Here's suthin' that mayn't be as good as yeaou hev in yeaure kedentry, but it'll dew the *biz*." And when, out of complaisance, this chronicler tasted this liquor, he found it to be not Kentucky whisky, but a kind of liquid lightning, "calc'lated" to "do the *biz*" with electrical swiftness.

This chronicler is no advocate for any kind of spirituous drink: he is far from that. Nay, though grounded in opposition to all sumptuary laws, he yet stands always with uncovered head before a procession of that new party in the land, whose banners are borne by such unusual hands, by wives, mothers, sisters, brought to this uncommon work



by the wreck of some idol of the heart—husband, son, or brother—fallen into the dread slough of drunkenness. Still, it is his opinion that the change made by the people of Massachusetts from New England rum to Kentucky whisky, to the extent that change may have been made, *must* have proved salutary.

## CHAPTER XXXVII

### POLITICAL APPOINTMENTS

"In political appointments, not he that is ablest to perform the duties of the office is appointed, but he that is ablest to get appointed."—CARLYLE.

"Jamais ceux qui ont veilli dans les emplois laborieux et subalternes ne parviennent aux dignités."—VOLTAIRE.

THE colloquy between the register and the public functionary, overheard by Russell, made him desire to know more of the working of the government machinery, and he resolved to seek Rattle, the register, a man of remarkable candor, and inform himself thoroughly upon this subject. Accordingly, next day after breakfast he went to the office of the register (which I may say parenthetically was the last place he ought to have gone to find him) and found there only "old Dick" Blunt, the clerk. He was busy, with spectacles on nose and pencil in hand, poring over books, but quitted his place at once and came with a smile to greet the visitor. Russell explained that he had not called on business, but only to pay a friendly visit to the register. He was not likely to be found in the office at that time of the day, Blunt said, but would probably be found at the printing office or on the street.

Russell was inclined to know more of this old man, of whose long and faithful service he had often heard, and therefore, when invited by him to take a seat, accepted it, and they were soon engaged in familiar chat. The first discovery that Russell made was that "old Dick," as he was familiarly called, was by no means so old as he had supposed. He looked not more than fifty, and seemed as vigorous and active as any man of that age could be, who had passed so many years in an office, turning over musty

books of record. He had that sliding gait—not lifting the feet—which men acquire by passing all their lives on floors, and wearing slippers, but he had a solid frame, a bloom on his face, and every appearance of a man of good habits in excellent health. In the course of their talk, Russell chancing to speak of Thornton and Lastlands, the clerk at once recognized both, not because he had any personal acquaintance with either, but because he remembered the patents and the original surveys on record in the office. He opened one of his books and showed Russell the record of the Lastlands patents and the original surveys in the vicinity of The Falls. He showed him also the patents and surveys and maps of the several islands in the river about there, all which interested Russell very much. "There is not much," said the clerk, "to amuse one in this office, but I have observed that people like to look over the original title deeds and surveys of their particular localities. They are a part of local history."

"You have been a long time in this office, Mr. Blunt," said Russell.

"Yes, sir; more than twenty years."

"How has it happened that you have never been displaced? There have been many changes of the party in power within that time. I wonder they have never ousted you according to the usual practice."

Blunt smiled, with a humorous twinkle in his eye, and answered, "Well, I suppose that they thought it would be difficult to find a man capable of filling my place."

"You are not a Vicar of Bray—I'll swear to that."

"No, sir; I have always maintained my political opinions, and voted in accordance with them."

Russell was about to ask him why, in the name of common honesty and fairness, some governor had not appointed him Register of the Land Office, but feeling that this might not be quite proper he restrained himself, and thanking the clerk for his polite attentions went away in search of Rattle.

Finding Rattle and proposing a walk, they climbed the hill that overlooks the town on the north, and strolled long and far about the beautiful environs of the capital. In the

midst of the romantic beauty of these precincts, Russell forgot the politicians and their plottings, giving himself up to the contemplation of the enchanting scenes before him. But as they descended to the plain on which stands the little capital, and its red walls and chimney tops and other commonplace features came into view, he recurred to politics by asking Rattle suddenly why Dick Blunt had never been made Register of the Land Office. Rattle stopped short, and looking hard into Russell's face, and shutting one eye very tight, answered, "Dick has no political influence."

"Political influence!" exclaimed Russell, "what has that to do with it? He has eminent qualifications for the office, and, as I heard you say last night, has done all the work of the place for twenty years. I never heard of your having any political influence, and yet you are register."

"Yes, but you see I married into a political family. My wife's family have always been in political life. From a time beyond the memory of the oldest inhabitant they have subsisted by office. They hold now in our county all the clerks' offices; they have a representative there on the bench of the circuit court; they are deputy sheriffs, constables, magistrates, and notaries. When I was married into the family they began at once to look up an office for me. In fact, they began to scheme for this as soon as we were engaged. I had no inclination for office, for I love country life, and I liked better to stay on my farm; but this the family considered preposterous. The farm, they said, could be worked as well in my absence, and my salary would be just so much clear money. I urged my utter ignorance of the business of the Land Office, but they laughed at this, and told me that 'old Dick' was there, and would manage the whole business; and that I would have nothing to do but to receive the salary and enjoy the official dignity. I am ashamed to tell you that I did not resent this humiliating suggestion. But you must remember that it was in the midst of the honeymoon, and my wife, poor child, had been imbued with the family notions about office, and had no idea how any man could get on respectably in life without an official salary. They kept her head full of the dig-



nity of the office, and used to call her the 'Registress of the Land Office,' before I got the place. As for her father, he had no more idea of the iniquity of holding a sinecure than a Thug has of the crime of assassination. I was obliged to give in: and here I am with nothing to do but receive and spend the salary. All the work is done by "old Dick," while I 'disport myself as any other fly,' as the poet says. I am positively ashamed to look him in the face, and I am going to give it up. I would have given it up long ago, but the family got frantic when I talked about it. Of course Dick Blunt ought to have the office, but he'll never get it. A man's fitness for office is measured by his capacity to bring support to the governor. To get this support the governor uses the patronage of his office, usually promising each office to ten or a dozen different men, in different sections of the State. Our governor did this. Protesting all the while that he had not given a pledge to anybody, he came into office mortgaged over head and ears, and among these incumbrances was my lien upon the Land Office."

After some further talk Rattle stopped suddenly, saying, "Here we are at the public binder's establishment; let us go in and see Randall."

They went up a flight of stairs, and entered a large oblong room, where a number of men and women and boys were busily working at bookbinding. Rattle asked for Mr. Randall, and a man came forward, in his shirt sleeves, wiping his hands with a towel, and was introduced to Russell, with whom he shook hands, and, after some little talk, invited him to inspect the work going on. He explained with clearness all the details of the art, much to Russell's edification. They then thanked Mr. Randall, and went away, Russell saying, when they had reached the street, "Well, there seems to be a fit man in office; a man of intelligence and practically acquainted with the business of his office. But then it would be too obvious an absurdity to elect a man public binder who is ignorant of bookbinding."

Rattle was seized with an uncontrollable fit of laughter. When the fit was over he said, "It would be too obviously absurd, would it? Why, that man is not the binder! That

poor fellow is in the same boat with poor old Dick Blunt. He has done all the public binding for I don't know how many years, and has worked in the office nearly all his life. The official binder don't even give countenance to the 'obvious absurdity' by his presence here. He lives three hundred miles away. He knows no more about binding a book than you know about making a gun flint. He's a Jack-of-all-trades except bookbinding. He's a doctor, a farmer, a storekeeper, and owns a horse-mill, but he's especially a politician. He came to the legislature on purpose to get this office, and succeeded. He takes the lion's share of the profits, and leaves Randall barely enough to keep the pot simmering for a wife and a half a dozen children. You look shocked! I was at first; but I've got used to these things."

"I *am* shocked, and amazed. What a vile, corrupt system! And this is 'politics.' This is what is meant when, on the eve of an election, we are exhorted by the constituted authorities of the party to stand by our principles, shoulder to shoulder, and never let the proud old banner go down in defeat and disgrace, etc."

"Yes," said Rattle, "this is politics, but only a small part of it—a sample. But I must not be disloyal to my brother officials, and discourse further on this subject."

Russell stood musing for a few moments in silence, and then broke out in these words: "The arts by which the few govern the many! Shall they always prevail? Must that honest old Blunt wear out his life in the drudgery of the Land Office, and Randall in the bindery, while an idler like you basks in the noonday sun, and pockets all the fruit of old Dick's labor, and a wretched, humbug doctor and Jack-of-all-trades takes all that of poor Randall? 'Arise, ye Goths, and glut your ire!' I'm for a constitutional convention, a new constitution, and the election of all officers by the people! We must get down toward the hard-pan of democracy, and put an end to patronage, or it will demoralize and enslave us all."

There are some persons now living who remember with what ability, and zeal, and perseverance this proposition was advocated by Mr. Russell, in the public press, and how,

many years after, it found acceptance with the people, and culminated in the convention that made our present constitution under which almost all officers are elected by the people. Unhappily, the plan has not answered all the favorable expectations of its advocates. The corrupt politicians, like the poor, are always with us. It seems vain to erect barriers against them. The evil seems to lie in the infirmity of man, and to be incurable. Can it be true—what has been so irreverently said—can it be true, that the public is an ass? The proposition is not without the support of the very highest authority; for every one that has read Shakespeare (who never erred in a diagnosis of human character) must have observed, that always, in his dramas, he represents the first and second citizens (which are his public) as consummate asses.

## CHAPTER XXXVIII

### THE PENITENTIARY

**"Lasciate ogni speranza voi ch'entra te."**

**"All hope abandon, ye who enter here."**

THE penitentiary is one of the notable things in Frankfort. It is one of the sights of the capital, and all curious people who go there visit it. Even young ladies, under proper escort, are shown its presentable features. They are all curious to see the man sent there for marrying six wives, and always have pointed out to them this handsome, black-eyed rascal, appropriately employed in the varnishing and veneering department; a warning to all inclined to love not wisely but too well. They leave the place usually with a not unromantic impression. The massive stone building, with its lofty vaulted doorway, its strong iron gates and fastenings, and gratings, and the high, battlemented walls by which it is surrounded, makes a profound impression on the visitor. Moreover, it stands opposite to the Governor's Mansion, and is sure to suggest to readers of the sentimental poet those famous lines,

**"I stood in Venice on the Bridge of Sighs,  
A palace and a prison on each hand."**

Russell had an old friend employed as clerk at the prison, and took Stackpole there, that under the auspices of this friend he might get a good view of the interior. While the clerk was waiting the return of his assistant to accompany them through the wards, Russell walked to a window of the office which opened upon the prison yard, and looked out there. The day was lowering, and the window panes were begrimed with dust, so that he could see but indistinctly



through them; but his curiosity being excited by the movements of a knot of men in the yard, who were gathered about another man in the garb of a prisoner, he rubbed away the dust from a pane of glass, and got a clearer view. The man in prisoner's garb was stripping off his clothes, while two men stood idly by watching him, and a third, a very large man and very powerful, held in his hands a stick about two feet long, attached to which was a leather strap of about the same length, four inches wide. Russell called the clerk to the window, and pointing out to him this group, inquired what they were about. "They seem," said the clerk, "to be getting ready to give that fellow the strap."

"What is the strap?" said Russell.

"The strap is the implement in the big man's hand. I have never seen it applied. Indeed, I have seen but one man punished in all the time I have been here. I was looking through this window, just as we are doing now, when I saw a man lashed with a cowhide right where they are now standing. But I did not see it to the end. When I had seen a half dozen stripes laid on with a regular slope toward the spine, which marks the work of an expert, and saw a rivulet of blood flow down the hollow of the back, and form a puddle on the ground, I had enough, and turned away. I am rather chicken-hearted."

"But this strap," said Russell, "this can't cut like a cowhide. It must be, I think, a light punishment for petty offenses—a mere spanking."

"I have never seen it inflicted; I think it must be as you say. Will you go in now and witness it?"

"Well—yes. I should not like to witness any of the severe punishments of the prison, but I should rather like to see this spanking."

And then they walked in through the heavy gateway, where a sentry stood to open it, a loud bell sounding as they entered. Making their way to the group they find the prisoner standing, naked, awaiting his punishment. He is a tall, athletic young fellow, straight as an arrow, with fair red hair and blue eyes, and a skin like silver. He does not seem much concerned. Meantime, the large man, who

is peculiar in form, having a very small head with an immense body and powerful limbs, holds the strap in his hand and is busy manipulating it. He is soaking the leather, which is very heavy sole, in a basin of water, as if humanely softening it before applying it to the naked back.

The prisoner's arms are now fastened in front by a strap; he is made to kneel, and then to rest his forehead on the ground, like "Orientals in prayer" in the illustrated geographies. The big man with the strap then comes forward, takes off his coat, and rolls up his sleeves. He stands for a moment contemplating the back of the prisoner, and carefully measuring his distance. Russell now looks again at the strap, black and heavy, with an undulating motion in the grasp of the big man, and begins to fear that the punishment will be something worse than a mere spanking. But he has little time to speculate. There is a flame in the big man's eyes, the implement flies aloft, and, as he tiptoes, it describes a circle in the air, and comes down upon the white back. Horror! horror! what a blow! The man writhes under it, the muscles of his face and of his whole body draw up into knots and cords, and his eyes seem starting from their sockets. Again it flies aloft, and now he sinks under it, his muscles all relaxing as in death. The big man keeps his position, posing there, while the two others hasten to the head of the prisoner, and, after some whispering, one of them runs for the hospital steward, who comes out, and, feeling the pulse, waves away the big man, saying "No more." Russell and Stackpole look on with grim faces, while the clerk grows pale and walks away.

The arms of the prisoner are now loosed, and some restoratives are administered to him, and after some moments he revives and is helped to his feet. And now are seen two great blisters a foot in length, which have risen along his back parallel to each other, puffed up and shining like two huge fish bladders. The man is led off and Russell and Stackpole walk away. They did not fail to notice a look of intense admiration in the eyes of the two assistants, as they viewed the shining marks on the man's back, one of

them saying, "Don't he lay 'em on squar? If I'd seed that at the world's eend I'd knowed it was the old man's work."

The big man was a distinguished character in the prison. His fame as an expert with the lash and the strap, and in the art of torture within the law, extended far beyond the prison walls. Within these walls his memory was long kept green, his exploits related with pride, and his name mentioned with reverential fondness. Old employees of the prison, when they witnessed some bungling work upon a man's back, used to heave a sigh, and lament the decay of art, and despair of ever seeing any "*work* like the old man's." They would have laid a wager that he could, without once suspending the play of his lash, cut on the back of a man a wreath of roses, with his monogram in the middle. We do not know that such ghastly and absurd blazonry was indeed ever practiced, but doubtless he did execute some quite fanciful work—light caprices—what he called his "cock's-combs and rosettes." He has long ago gone to his account. He was but a part of a vile system of prison management and discipline. Peace to his ashes!

## CHAPTER XXXIX

### AN ANONYMOUS LETTER

"Our Repentance is not so much Regret for the Evil we have done as Fear of its consequence to us."

MR. GEORGE D. PRENTICE was now conducting with great vigor, at The Falls, his famous *Journal*. Before the advent of the *Journal*, the *Advertiser*, a leading Democratic paper of the State, had its own way in the matter of personal controversy, common between editors of that day. The *Focus*, the organ of Mr. Clay at The Falls, edited by a gentleman of the old school, a Churchman wearing gold spectacles and modified knee breeches, and discoursing politics in a mild, academic way, was no match for the keen wit and rough irreverence of Mr. Shadrach Penn of the *Advertiser*, who spoke always of his adversary as "Little Decency." No answer in kind was possible to the venerable and dignified editor of the *Focus*, though he did often, as this chronicler happened to know, on reading the personal paragraphs of the *Advertiser*, flush up and stamp and angrily exclaim, "The dirty dog! the dirty dog!" which, when reported to Mr. Penn, only moved that saucy wit to hearty laughter. But when the *Journal* entered the arena, the *Advertiser* found its master. The editor, hitherto so formidable in the field of personal and party abuse, became in time helpless in the hands of Mr. Prentice, and after a struggle of many years abandoned the field.

The extraordinary fertility and power of Mr. Prentice, who could sound the scale of expression from that of sublime poetry down to that of the lowest stinging ribaldry, enabled him to drive every antagonist before him. The *Argus* of Amos Kendall, hitherto famous in personal controversy, and which had received from the party head-



quarters at Washington the doubtful compliment of having "a spice of coarseness suited to the West" (a compliment resented by both the *Argus* and the *West*), was soon compelled to withdraw from the field, and, possessed of a sudden decency, to protest against a mode of warfare in which it had once delighted to lead. The power of the *Journal* was at once recognized in the State, the name of the editor was sounded all over the country, and his witty paragraphs copied everywhere. No politician—no man—would for any reasonable consideration expose himself to attack by the *Journal*. Besides his intrinsic power, the editor had a habit of persistence in attack, which would pierce the thickest skin, not even a pachydermatous politician being proof against his repeated assaults. With what must have seemed to them "damnable iteration" he struck his victims again and again in the same tender spots, until they fled howling, or lay prostrate before him. Even then, if they showed signs of life, he gave them a finishing kick, and afterward threw upon them "shards, flints and pebbles," to mark the place of an unhallowed burial. Men grew pale at the prospect of being the object of his assault. Sometimes personal satisfaction was sought, which he seemed always ready to accord, happily, in every instance, without harm to himself or his antagonist.

It chanced after the visit of Russell and Stackpole to the penitentiary, that, going to the newspaper office, where they had been so often hospitably entertained, they found nobody there; and the newspaper mail lying on the table, they had an opportunity to quietly read the news from home, and enjoy the lively passage at arms which went on daily between Penn and Prentice. Suddenly Russell, who had the *Journal* in hand, made an exclamation of surprise, and then pointed out to Stackpole some verses in the paper, signed with the initials of the editor, "G. D. P.," which verses he (Russell) declared he had seen at Rattle's office, in an old file of a newspaper "printed when Prentice was a baby." Afterward, on their way to the tavern, they went by Rattle's office, where Russell got this old paper and took it to his room.

That night there was another symposium, to which they

were invited, but from which Russell begged off on the plea of a headache, leaving Stackpole to bear the brunt. Late in the night, returning to the tavern, Stackpole found Russell sitting by a table in his room, with writing material before him. He again showed to Stackpole the verses in the newspaper, identical with those in the *Journal*, and printed at a time when Prentice, they were sure, must have been a child in frocks and slips, or, at best, a very small boy. Both agreed that it was out of the question that he could be the author of these lines, and that it was a clear case of plagiarism. Then Russell exhibited an anonymous letter he had written to Prentice, charging him with literary theft, and rapping him over the knuckles in a very lively way—something after the editor's own fashion. Stackpole was delighted with this smart letter, and Russell went right away and put it into the mail.

"In general," said Russell when he came back, "an anonymous letter is a base mode of assault. But the case of an editor is exceptional. He has such an advantage, having at hand a press by which he may appear daily, in the regular course of his business, and without cost, while the layman has to buy or beg his way to the public ear, and must be inevitably overwhelmed, even with right on his side. In this case, although I am unquestionably in the right, I should be assaulted venomously for six months without intermission; and I have no notion of being served up in broil, and roast, and finally hashed, for the readers of the *Journal*. So I think it but fair to give him this righteous thrust from behind a mask."

Russell and Stackpole resolved to set out on the following day on their homeward journey—to ride for dinner to Shelbyville, to "peruse that little spot," and thence ride leisurely on to Lastlands. But first they determined to give, that night, in return for the hospitality shown them, an entertainment to their polite hosts at the capital. Of this entertainment we will only say that it was in the highest degree satisfactory, the worthy landlord having made ample provision for the delectation of their guests.

At breakfast on the morning after the entertainment Russell was out of spirits, silent, and apparently absorbed

in painful meditation. While Stackpole exhibited his usual fine appetite, Russell ate daintily, and was so abstracted that he accepted coffee instead of his usual cup of tea, and afterward scolded the servant for having brought the coffee. All of which Stackpole attributed to "the Frankfort water," and prescribed a whisky cocktail, which Russell solemnly declined. After a while he said, in a very low tone, "Stackpole, did you tell anybody about that letter I wrote the other night?"

"What letter? Oh, that letter to Pren—"

"Hush! speak low."

"Yes, I believe I did. Why?"

"I'm devilish sorry you did. But say no more now; wait until we get into our room—I'll explain."

After breakfast Russell led the way to their room, where, after closing the door and locking it, he said, "There's going to be the devil to pay, I'm afraid. Whom did you tell of my having written that letter?"

Stackpole had not thought to speak of the letter to anybody, but having imbibed something of Russell's mischief he answered, "How can I remember now? Perhaps four or five of our friends. I thought it highly creditable to you; it was such a plain case of plagiarism, and your letter was such a smart one, could I keep it?"

"Well," said Russell, speaking with a solemn, prophetic air, "I shall figure in that confounded paper for the next six months, under various captions: 'The anonymous scoundrel at the capital'; 'The anonymous scoundrel at the capital again'; 'The anonymous scoundrel once more'; and finally, 'The anonymous scoundrel at the capital UNMASKED!' And after that the deluge—Damnation! I wish you hadn't spoken of that letter. Now just read this paragraph in the *Journal* of yesterday."

Then he handed the paper to Stackpole, who read aloud from it (we quote from a good memory) the following paragraph:

"We have received from Frankfort an impudent anonymous letter charging us with having stolen, from an old newspaper, some lines printed over our initials a few days

ago in the *Journal*. Need we say it?—the verses are our own.

“Some years ago (we will not say how many—but not many), when we were a schoolboy in Connecticut, wearing a round jacket—when our “young muse just waved her joyous wing”—we wrote these lines. They were printed in a Hartford paper, and were generally copied and commended by the press. Subsequently, when we had taken charge of the *New England Magazine*, we printed them again in that paper. Still later, after we had come to Kentucky, and were engaged upon a literary work at Lexington,\* we printed them there, in the *Observer and Reporter*; and the other day, for the fourth time, we printed them in the *Journal*. So much for justification.

“We do not know who is this anonymous scoundrel at the capital, but his letter bears earmarks by which he will be inevitably identified; and, by the way, he writes as miserable a scrawl as if half the fingers of his right hand had been cut off by a steel trap, while robbing some henroost. We pledge ourselves that when we do find him out, we will put a mark upon him that shall neither rub out, wash out, nor burn out. Our detective force is already on his track.’”

Stackpole looked up from the paper to Russell’s face, and burst out laughing. There is no man so sensitive to ridicule when directed against himself, as a professional joker, and Russell’s rueful visage was now a sight to behold! Then Stackpole, compassionating him, gave assurance that he had not said a word to anybody about the letter, and so set his mind at ease. Soon after they set out on their journey home.

\*The Life of Mr. Clay.



## CHAPTER XL

### MR. JOHN DIGBY VISITS LASTLANDS

**"God made the Country, and man made the Town."**

ABOUT this time Mr. John Digby visited Lastlands and for a wonder passed the night there. Averse to the country as he was, such visits were always sacrifices, which he was capable of making only under a strong sense of duty. Long before this, seeing the bad courses into which Mr. Joe Sterrett was falling, he had availed himself of the sad occurrence of Captain's Shelby's death, which had brought Sterrett for a time to sobriety and to himself, and conspiring with Sterrett's wife he had changed their residence from town to country; and to fix him there had induced him to lease for a term of five years his house in town; and then to keep him in heart, had contrived that Ould and Mr. Jack Taylor and other friends should visit him, and had himself gone to see him and even sometimes passed the night there, a thing very irksome to him.

The purpose of Mr. Digby's visit to Lastlands was now to inform Thornton of a correspondence he had lately had with his brother Dick at Boston, and to discuss the probability of his early return to Kentucky. Robert Thornton had also been in correspondence with his brother, and had been led to expect him home some time in the then present month of September. But Digby informed him that in his late correspondence Dick had written altogether about sugar, making particular inquiries as to the market in the Ohio Valley, and of the quantity on hand in the several leading towns there, and at Nashville; and that he had been at pains to give him accurate information as to all this. He believed that Dick and Stackpole now contemplated a large venture in sugar, and that as it was

Dick's practice always, in such cases, to make a personal inspection of the great sources of supply, he believed that he would go first to Havana, thence to New Orleans, and thence home by the rivers; and so would not reach The Falls before December.

The coming home of Dick Thornton, now so long away, was a subject of almost paramount interest in both households, and was discussed until a late hour in the night. Robert Thornton was desirous that he should come in September, in the rich maturity and beauty of the early fall, while the leaves were still on the trees, and amidst the changeful glories of the season, and had obstinately disputed Digby's conclusions. But next morning as they stood on the veranda while Tom Strother held two saddled horses on the gravel, he had given up all his grounds of objection save one—which had occurred to him after they had parted—that Dick would not venture to Havana in the "yellow fever season." But Digby scouted this; and said that Dick would not for a moment consider this, any more than a soldier would, seeing a great strategic advantage. Then Thornton gave up, saying, "Come and ride with me around the plantation and let me show you what Dick will miss."

"No, Bob; I take no interest in green crops. I hardly know one from another. I am not sure that I can distinguish oats from wheat or rye."

"Why, only the corn is green now. The others are harvested and housed. I want to show you the hemp in the stacks."

"Hemp? Why, I know nothing about that either. I should not know a good crop from a bad one. I like all these things very well in their matured state, as commodities on the market, but not at all in a crude condition." And when Thornton persisted, he said positively, "No, no, Bob; I am not going to let you ride me around the plantation in the dew. I used to let your father do that when I was courting my wife, when I rode around the fences pretending to admire what I knew nothing about. But I am not going to let you do it. I have no liking for the country. I am a town pigeon. I would rather live in a box nailed against a wall, or up in a belfry in town, than any-

where in the country. What I like is people, people, people. The stillness of the country depresses me, and the monotonous whistle of the toads at nightfall gives me the blues. When the blackbirds come in to roost there is a momentary stir, and when they leave the roost in the morning their boom reminds me of the cannon of a little river steamer. But they are the only things that seem wide awake out here. It is a veritable Sleepy Hollow!"

Strange to Thornton, once himself a denizen of the town, seemed now Mr. John Digby's insensibility to the delights of the country life. And strange to every settled dweller in the country seems that strong centripetal force which draws men together into towns, and ever growing stronger, packs them there like herrings in a box, and amidst smoke, and dust, and "thousandfold exhalations," while fresh land lies around inviting them to possess it.

As to the coming of Dick Thornton, the conclusion of Mr. John Digby, spite of its seeming justness, proved to be wrong; for a few days after Dick arrived at The Falls and was soon settled at Lastlands.

A separation for so long a time, and so complete as that of these brothers had been, seems often to abate the warmest affection. But the old feeling now came back to their hearts with even more than its pristine force, and they fairly reveled in mutual love and admiration. They were now constant companions. On horseback and on foot they rode and walked over the wide domain. Dick was ever praising Lastlands, especially its beautiful woodland pastures,—parks, he called them,—declaring that there was nothing anywhere abroad, even in the demesnes of royalty, superior to these. "Why, Bob," he said, "you have what abroad can be had only by people possessed of princely fortunes; splendid natural parks, and fish and game in abundance, without the expense or the odium of preserving them. Until I went abroad I did not know what a veritable nabob a Kentucky planter is. And few of them know it themselves."

All this praise of Lastlands, though Dick's long residence in England enabled him fairly to appreciate the beauty and completeness of the plantation, was not inspired

by this. There lay behind another motive. He had himself no love of country life, and he knew that his brother in the beginning had accepted Lastlands only as a place of refuge, and now he wanted to ward off from him any feeling of dissatisfaction, dreading lest he should be tempted back to the perils of town life. But it was not long till he came to know how firmly rooted was his brother at Lastlands. Freed from this, the only apprehension that had disturbed him, Dick's heart expanded with wide benevolence, and he wanted to bring together at Lastlands, to witness his brother's happiness, all their old friends, and he began to make particular inquiries about these; but most particularly about Mr. Joe Sterrett and his household. Thornton's account of Sterrett gave Dick great pain. And when he was told that Bob himself had been obliged to cease to visit Sterrett because company only stimulated his appetite for drink, Dick cried out, "Oh, Bob, this will never do. We must save him. He must come here and go with us to the parish church. It will do him good to see all that you have done. We must get a hold on him while he is here, and we must not let him loose until he is safe. I will go and fetch him."

"I am glad you are going to see him. I could do nothing with him. He only laughed at what he called my homilies. Perhaps he will have more respect for you as an older and altogether more serious and solid character. I once thought that Digby would straighten him, but Sterrett took to hiding away from him, and Digby was forced to give him up."

"I will go to see him to-morrow."



## CHAPTER XLI

### THE MEETING OF OLD FRIENDS

**"To make a happy fireside clime to weans and wife,  
That's the true pathos and sublime of human life."**

NEXT day Dick Thornton went to see Sterrett at his home. As he rode through the grove to Sterrett's house many marks of slovenly management arrested his attention. Fragments of limbs blown from the trees lay on the ground through the beautiful, grassy woodland. In one place a whole tree lay uprooted, pointing its ghastly toes toward the sky. In the pasture were only a few sheep and some cows, and an old white mare with a foal by her side, who stood in the road confronting Thornton. The old dam laid back her ears as he rode toward her, and putting herself between her colt and danger moved slowly away, while the foal cut a caper and then turned about and stared with wild eyes at Thornton, making little menacing gestures with its head. He saw at a glance that they were thorough-breds and knew that Sterrett still adhered to his old love, the racehorse.

As he neared the house two dogs came out, barking fiercely; but when he dismounted and stretched out his hand they both approached him, crouching and wagging their tails, and he laid his hand on the silken coats of two fine setters, lemon and white, the color by which Joe always swore. As he pushed open the wicket a bevy of partridge-colored hens with slim necks, like wild birds, came out of the shrubbery, shaking clouds of dust from their feathers, and a black and red gamecock interposed, and putting down his burnished wings, cackled loudly and defiantly, until his dames were all safe out of the way, when he paced after them, chuckling and congeeing like a French beau.

Hearing a strain of music, a lively dancing air, he looked

aside beyond the vines of a trellis and saw there a negro girl dancing. She was making her own music, which had a nasal sound like a violoncello with an accompaniment, all ingeniously executed in some way by her lips and nose. At a short distance it might have been easily mistaken for the music of a violin and a violoncello.

"Forward two!" says this dancing nymph, in a loud chanting voice, and immediately floats away and back, and then forward again, and turns an imaginary vis-à-vis. "Dos à dos!" she cries in the same loud chanting tone, and swims away and gracefully back again. "Lemonade all!"—away she prances in a circle, giving her hand to an imaginary partner. Then walking up and down, manipulating an imaginary fan, and leaning on the arm of an imaginary beau, apparently in answer to something this beau has said, she laughs out—"hoo-hoo-hoo-hoo, hah-hah—the—i-d-e-a-r!"

Just as she had done this, which Thornton felt assured was an imitation of the manner of some reigning belle, a voice was heard from the house, a wheezy voice like that of a man with a cold, "You, Jane!"

She paused an instant, and Thornton surveyed her figure with an amused countenance. She seemed about twelve or fourteen years old, a pure African, of slender form, clad in a blue linsey frock which reached the middle of her legs, which were slim and black, with an indefinite shade of ash color, contrasting with the soles of her feet, which, coming into view as she danced, showed a bright tan. She had full, bright eyes and regular small features, a not thick-lipped though wide mouth, constantly showing glimpses of white teeth; a small, well-shaped head scantily covered with short, kinked, sunburned hair—upon the whole a very lively and not uncomely African lass.

"You, Jane!" sounds again the wheezy voice, apparently strained to its utmost.

Her only response to this was a new air with the words:

"Bullfrog laid in de bottom ob de spring,  
He was so cold he could not sing;  
His tail was tied to a hickory stump—  
He r'ar'd and pitched, but couldn't make a jump."

Then she seemed preparing to dance a breakdown to this lively song, but suddenly changed her mind, resuming the dancing air with which she had begun, and was beginning to exhibit again her fine-lady airs, when, seeing Thornton looking at her, she suddenly dropped them all, as a peacock drops his plumes, and, with a frightened look, ran away out of sight.

Thornton, walking along the front of the house, saw seated within the hall door, in a rocking chair, his old friend, Joe Sterrett. He was in his shirt sleeves, without cravat or stock, his shirt-bosom open, and a long beard trailing on his breast. Shaking his head slowly and mournfully, he muttered to himself, "O Lor—Gor—A'mighty, O Lor—!" Then he called out in the same wheezy voice, "You, Jane!" Then he renewed his lamentation, "O Lor—O Lor—Gor—A'mighty!" Then seeing Thornton but not recognizing him, "Come in, sir, and have a seat—You, Jane!"

Then Jane came skipping through the back way into the hall, and, confronting Thornton, looked excessively foolish, and halted behind her master's chair.

"You, Jane!" he called again.

"Yas, sir; here I is."

"Where the devil have you been? Take a seat, sir, and have something. Where is your horse?" Then he looked at Thornton, staring like a man that sees a ghost; then jumped to his feet—"Why, great Pompey's statue! The dead's alive! Where did you come from? Why, Thornton! my dear old friend!" seizing his hand. Then looking eagerly into each other's eyes they had a long and hearty handshaking. Then Sterrett called out, "Jane, get me my coat—lay me out a clean shirt in my room—get my things." And Jane disappeared up the stairway. "Thornton—Dick Thornton, sit down here while I get on something decent. I'll not be long."

Jane now appeared again, announcing all ready upstairs, and Sterrett, telling her to make Mr. Thornton a julep, went up the easy stairway to his chamber.

Soon Thornton heard a hammering and then a jingling sound in a room near by, and, a few minutes after, Jane

made her appearance. She had put on a white apron, and smoothed the scanty wool on her head, looking quite polished up. She brought in her hand a small silver waiter, on which rested a large goblet covered and tightly packed with crushed ice, through which a handful of mint seemed to be growing. A spoon was frozen in on one side, and a rye straw projected two inches above the glass and reached the bottom. Thornton was little given to drink, but he had had a long ride, and felt in need of a gentle stimulant, and thinking it good policy not to make any abrupt movement against Sterrett, his nose was soon buried in the fragrant mint.

Jane stood by looking at him attentively while he drank. She asked if the julep suited him.

"The best julep I ever drank," he answered.

"Is you Mr. Bob Thornton's brother? I used to make him juleps when ne comed here—he likes my juleps."

"Yes, Mr. Bob Thornton is my brother. I don't wonder that he likes your juleps. But, Jane, why didn't you make one for your master—don't he like your juleps?"

"Yas, sir; he *do* like 'em, but he's done had his, dis mornin'—all he's gwine to git"—here she looked up the stairway at the tall clock on the landing—"till two o'clock. We only 'lows him three a day. If you's a brother of Mr. Bob Thornton, please not to take any mo' till dat time, an' den you can drink together, an' chink glasses."

Thornton promised not to take any more until two o'clock; and indeed not to take any more at all, if that was desired.

"Oh, no, sir; if you wants it, take one when he takes his at two o'clock, an' den no mo' till nine o'clock; den he gits some hot punch in de libr'y, an' dat's all."

"Jane," said Thornton, "why did you go on dancing out there while your master was calling you?—Didn't you hear him?"

"Yas, sir; I heered him. I knowed what he wanted; he wanted mo' julep after he done had all we 'lows him till two o'clock. 'Twawn' no use for me to go to him—he'd jes' keep beggin' for mo', an' scoldin', an' makin' out he's sick



an' like to die. He couldn't git no mo' outen me till de time come, sho'!"—with a resolute toss of the head.

"Jane, where did you learn to make that music with your mouth? I thought it was two fiddles."

She laughed out, showing all her teeth, and then caught her mouth with her hand, suppressing the laugh as an impropriety.

"I learnt dat at de balls, down at Spring Station, at Mr. Beall's, an' over at Major Floyd's, an' at Locust Grove, an' at Lastlands, an' in town all around at de parties. I always went wid Miss 'Manda, an' I set behind de musicians an' I kep' tryin' to mawk dat music till I came pretty nigh it. Miss 'Manda don't go to parties no mo', now."

"I suppose you learned at the same places to dance and fan yourself, and to laugh with that 'hoo-hoo-hoo, hah-hah—the—i-d-e-a-r.'"

"Yas, sir," she said, breaking again into a laugh and then taking her mouth into custody, "I was mawkin' de young ladies den."

"Jane, suppose your master, when he comes down, tells you to make him a julep, won't you be obliged to do it?"

"Yas, sir; 'cause you is here; but if you warn't here I wouldn't do it."

"How would you help it?"

"I'd run away."

"Do you keep the keys?"

"Yas, sir; when Miss 'Manda is away"—then in a lower voice, "He's comin' now, please not to take any mo' till two o'clock; if you do I'll have to make him one, too." Her ear was turned all this time toward the stairway. "He's comin' now," she said in a whisper, and then, seizing the tray and empty goblet, skipped away out of sight.

Soon after this Joe Sterrett came down the stairway dressed in new clothes, and clean linen, and shining boots, his long, curling locks brushed back behind his ears, and, barring the long beard, looking almost as young and handsome as the Joe of other days. Thornton looked with surprise at the metamorphosis, and complimented him upon his good looks.

"Well," said Sterrett, "I always had great recuperative

powers, and I take a polish very readily. But I am soft metal, Dick, and tarnish just as quickly. When you came I was awfully down in the mouth. 'Manda went away to a business meeting at the church this morning, and I let all the servants except the old cook and that little girl go to hear a funeral sermon over at the Fork, and I have been moping here alone. I had a julep before you came, but I wanted another, because I was suffering with an awful depression, a dreadful sinking sensation, and was trying to get that little hussy, Jane, to come and make another, but I couldn't get her near me. I didn't expect her to come, for she is under orders not to do it, but I was just killing time by practicing on her fidelity, and groaning away my low spirits. Of course, she would obey if I were to put on my paint and give the warwhoop; but I can't do that, for she is acting under my own orders. The fact is, Dick, I got into a very bad way there in town, having no occupation, and before I knew it I became a confirmed, habitual drinker—no mistake about it! I was going to the devil as fast as Paragon could gallop, when John Digby prevailed on me to come to the farm; or rather I ought to say that he ordered me out of town, and never let me rest till I came here to live. Since that time I have mended my ways considerably. My wife is the dearest and best wife on earth, and I submit myself almost absolutely to her guidance. I take three drams a day and no more, except when the presence of a visitor makes more a necessary act of hospitality. After a while I expect to take only two, then one, and so work down to the plane of total abstinence. Of course, after such a long separation, we will be justifiable in taking to-day as much as we please."

"No, no," said Thornton, emphatically; "I will not on any account break in upon your regular order."

"Well, then, we will take one together at two o'clock, and a little punch to-night, and that will close my account for the day."

After much talk, Thornton told Sterrett he would like to walk over the place, which he had very often visited in Captain Shelby's time, and the two friends went out for a stroll. Sterrett was all the time apologizing for the neg-

lect of which they found evidence everywhere. Thornton did not say much, oppressed by a feeling of sadness at seeing the beautiful place, in which the good old Captain took so much pride, and which he maintained in such perfect order, showing so many marks of neglect, and so much disorder. And Sterrett, carefully avoiding all those points where neglect was most apparent, soon tired of the inspection, and led the way back to the house. There, as the clock in the hall struck two, Jane was summoned to bring them some drink. But Thornton promptly declined, saying that he would rather not drink; that the julep he had already drunk had made him uncomfortable; that he knew that he would be better without it; and at last declared with much positiveness that he would not have it. He had interpreted correctly what he had seen and heard, and had now a clear view of the sad condition of his old friend, and resolved that he would not only not abet his drinking, but would at once use all means in his power to discourage it. There was more seriousness in his manner of refusal than he knew, which touched, and rallied a little, Sterrett's pride, and he also declined the two o'clock drink; to the manifest amazement of Jane.

It is not certain that Sterrett would have been able to forego an indulgence upon which his mind had been fixed for the last three or four hours, but for the opportune arrival of Mrs. Sterrett with her children, a fine lad of ten and two little girls of six and eight. They all flew to kiss "father," and were introduced to Thornton as the friend of their father and mother, and of their old grandfather whom the children held in tender remembrance. They soon got familiar with Thornton, and prattled away in the liveliest manner, telling him of all the acquaintances they had met at the church, and giving to Sterrett's heart an exhilaration beyond reach of the wine cup. And so the two o'clock drinking was bridged over, and there remained only the punch at night, about which Jane was wondering greatly.

The rest of the day was filled up by dinner and talk. Joe's wife was in high spirits, which seemed to spread by contagion through the household. Thornton afforded them

much entertainment; relating interesting and amusing incidents of travel, and describing people and things abroad. Jane, in a clean frock and apron, and shoes and stockings, stood behind her mistress's chair, listening with a countenance all ablaze, but with a decorous gravity of which Thornton would not have believed her capable, and did not once have occasion to put her mouth under arrest.

When tea was served Sterrett drank two cups and got into a full flow of spirits, coming out strong with his old power of talk; mounting his favorite hobby, Native-Americanism, and showing much of his pristine eloquence.

About nine o'clock Mrs. Sterrett announced to the children that their bedtime had come, and Sterrett invited Thornton into the library. The children protested that they were not sleepy, and begged to be allowed to stay up and hear more talk. But Joe good-humoredly forbade this, kissing them good-night, and telling them that they would see Mr. Thornton next day, and that he intended to keep him for some time. Then he and Thornton went into the library. But soon the children followed them there, insisting on kissing Thornton good-night, to which he gladly acceded, and the mother then led them away. Outside of the library door they were heard renewing their petition to their mother, who was engaged in quieting and persuading them to bed. Meantime, Sterrett, who felt that he had carried his forbearance to a most meritorious pitch, and had made up his mind to do full justice to the nine o'clock punch, was growing very impatient of his wife's delay in bringing it forward, as she was accustomed to do, presenting it with her own hands. At last he went out to find the cause of the delay. He left the door ajar, and Thornton was thus made an involuntary auditor to a short colloquy between Sterrett and his wife, in which she explained that the delay had been caused by the lingering of the children downstairs, and her unwillingness to allow them, especially the boy, to see her in the act of providing drink for their father. Joe made an ambiguous ejaculation in answer to this, and returned to the library with a decided cloud on his face. But he soon put on a look of jollity and asked Thornton if he had ever drunk any juleps



abroad. But before this question was answered Mrs. Sterrett came in, bringing the coveted punch—two tumblers—on a waiter. She put it on the table and graciously bade Thornton good-night. But it was plain to him and Sterrett that her face had lost the light with which it shone an hour before. When the door closed behind her, Thornton answered Sterrett's question:

"No, I saw no juleps anywhere abroad. Mixed drinks are little used there. But you know I was never much as a drinker, and the more I have seen of the world, and of the disastrous effects of drink everywhere, the less I have been inclined to it. Look here about us at The Falls. How many of the men there whom you would have classed as moderate drinkers, when I went away, are now alive? And of the survivors how many are reputable men? Some few have been snatched like brands from the fire; the rest have gone to drunkards' graves, or have sunk into utter degradation, carrying with them their innocent wives and children. There was my brother Bob—he little knows how near he was to this fate!"

"You are right there," said Sterrett; "I remember well when I thought Bob was going to the bad, and it grieved me sadly, and made poor old Captain Shelby miserable. I never dreamed then that I should be in the same box myself. But—"

"The descent is so easy," quickly interrupted Thornton, "that men don't know how fast they are going down, nor how far they have gone down, until some shock rouses them, and they try to get back to their former plane; and there the trouble lies. A man's power of will weakens every day under indulgence, until there comes at last a time when it surrenders altogether, and he submits—humbly submits—to utter degradation. There is a fatal period in the career of every drunkard when his self-esteem is undermined and overthrown. From this recovery is hopeless.

"I knew in my young days the celebrated Mr. Ashley. He went into political life very young, and it was thought that a brilliant career lay before him. He was eloquent and popular, and as beautiful as Apollo. His friends

thought that some day he might rival even Mr. Clay. But he fell into the fatal slough of drink, and in a few years died a drunkard. I had an interview with him, a short time before his death, down at my little office at Digby's warehouse. A claim against him had been sent to me for collection by a friend. It was for money borrowed. I was instructed not to have him sued, my correspondent saying that he would rather lose the debt than that this should be done. Of all this I informed him when, in answer to a note, he called on me at my office. There were several persons there when he came, all of whom rose out of respect to him, but it was impossible to get him to sit down; and he continued standing until they all went away. When we were left to ourselves he sat down, but all the while holding his hat in his hand, and demeaning himself before me as if he were in the presence of a superior. I tried to change this relation by treating him with marked respect, but in vain; he still maintained the humble attitude and manner of an inferior, which gave me great pain. Moreover, when other persons came into the room, he immediately vacated his seat, deferentially offering it to them, and withdrawing himself from the fire: and all this not in the manner of ordinary complaisance, but with utter and pitiable humility. He had reached that fatal stage, of which I spoke just now, where all sense of self-respect had died out of him. Poor gentleman, what a noble wreck he was! He had forgotten the debt, or, as it was incurred at a watering-place, in a community of purses common among intimates then, he was unaware of it. His friends, who had got his property out of his control, were not inclined to pay it, but he told me he would not rest the sole of his foot until it should be paid; and he made good his word. He dogged them, as I learned, like a man possessed, until it was paid; protesting that he would not die owing any man, and showing in this such a spirit of determination as leads me to think, now, that he was not beyond hope, if the proper means had been used. I saw no more of him after this money was paid, and soon after he was buried in a drunkard's grave." During this narrative Sterrett's eyes

were fixed intently upon Thornton's face, his features showing manifest emotion.

"I had not thought of him," continued Thornton, "for a long time, when I met the other day in town his son, a noble-looking young fellow, the very picture of what his father must have been at the same age. As I looked at his bright face I could not shut out from my mind a melancholy foreboding of his future. For it is indisputable that as the sins of the fathers are visited on the children of the third and fourth generation (by hereditary taint, if you will), so vices are also transmitted by the natural aptness of children for imitation. The loving, admiring son can see no fault in the dear father, but is apt to think even his vices decorous, and is prone to copy them—"

Here Sterrett made a movement which arrested this discourse. He arose suddenly and walked along the floor, running his fingers through his hair, and walking to and fro across the room. Then, stopping and looking intently at Thornton, he seemed about to speak, but forebore, and resumed his walk to and fro, with manifest agitation.

"Joe," said Thornton, "what is the matter? Have I offended you?"

Sterrett did not answer, but continued to pace the floor, but now more slowly, and at last, standing in front of Thornton, he said, "No, you have not offended me"; but holding his head high, and turning aside with an air that seemed to qualify this disclaimer.

"Surely," said Thornton, "you cannot think I meant to make a personal application of what I have been relating to you, who are no longer in the category of drinking men, but on the highroad to the plane of total abstinence."

"No, no; you have not offended me. That was a foolish speech of mine, and false. I am not out of the category of drinking men. Nor am I on the highroad to total abstinence. I am a drunkard in heart, in spirit, in deed; drinking only three times a day because I am restrained from drinking more; taking just enough to keep in remembrance the infernal poison—the best device in the world to keep me from ever quitting it altogether. And now so lowered—so sunk in manly tone, that I grow maud-

lin even on that allowance, as I was when you came here this morning. I am far down that easy declivity of which you have spoken; and I have seen through a glass darkly, yawning in my path, that dreadful abyss you have so well described, where all hope must be abandoned. I have been a madman, Thornton—a madman! But your visit has brought me a lucid interval, in which I have been able to see myself. I have been spoiled—spoiled all my life by indulgence; first as a boy by my dear kind guardian, then as a man by my loving wife—spoiled until my selfishness has grown beyond measure. I have missed happiness by seeking it within myself, when it can come only reflectively, from happiness bestowed on others. I have been blind to this. Instead of making my wife's happiness the main object of life, I have made her miserable by a vile habit; filling her mind with vague but terrible apprehensions, which she bears about with her everywhere; poisoning all the pleasures of her innocent life. Did you observe to-day when she came home, and saw that I had company, how pale she grew?"

"No, I did not observe that."

"Well, I did. You see, it *scares* her, when she comes home from visiting or from church, to find that I have company. You know I am not restricted in drink when I have a guest. Did you think that she showed enough cordiality to you, considering that you are such an old friend, and have been away so long?"

"Well—yes. I thought her quite cordial—as much so as I could expect."

"Well, let me tell you: her first—her paramount thought, when she saw you, was, 'Has Joe been drinking unduly because of his company?' Didn't you see her look quickly into my face and how she scrutinized it? how eagerly her eyes scanned every feature of my countenance? I *felt* them prowling over it from line to line, in search of evidence of drink. But she found none, and then her face glowed, and she sprang to you, and said that after such a long absence she must shake hands again."

"Yes, yes; I remember that."

"Well, if she had found a trace of drink on my face



she wouldn't—she couldn't have done that. I laughed outright" (here he laughed hysterically) "when I felt her eyes taken off me, and looked at her, and saw the light in her eyes: that and the second handshaking said as plainly as if she had spoken the words, 'He has *not* been drinking with Joe!'"

Thornton made no response. He was the graver man of the two now, and waited for Sterrett, who had resumed his walk up and down the room. After a few moments he confronted Thornton, and said, with a strange air of exaltation, "Dick Thornton, my old friend! I must not continue in this wretched course. I must quit drink altogether, and at once. This resolution has been maturing in my mind ever since we were at dinner to-day, and I have been struggling to fasten it there. Your visit and the happiness it has diffused through my little household have opened my eyes to possibilities which otherwise might never have occurred to me. I had thought to drink that tumbler of punch, but that it should be the last I would ever drink; but now I will not touch it. Moreover, I declare and promise to you what I will declare and promise to my wife to-night, and what I have often refused to her tearful entreaties, that I will never again drink spirituous liquor."

Thornton rose with outstretched hand, and Sterrett clasped it, but said, with a deprecating gesture, "Don't glorify me, Dick; nor encourage me to put on the airs of a man who has saved his country, because I have resolved to give up a vile habit. But promise to stay with me a little while. I have a great trial to undergo. I shall suffer mental and physical agony of which you can have no conception. Even now, when I have just announced this good resolution, the demon is tugging at me, and offering relief in the old, bad way. You are so strong, Dick; I want to lean upon you just a little while. Will you stay with me?"

"Surely, I will. I will do anything in my power—you can't tax me too heavily in such a cause as this."

"Well, stay with me to-morrow, and then we shall see what else I may need to ask. You are tired; you would like to go to bed. Yes; and I want to tell my wife what

I have told you. Her heart warmed to you to-day just because you did not drink with me. What will she say, when I tell her that you have turned me away from my evil course, and that I am done with drink forever?"

As he gave Thornton his candle at the door of his chamber he said, "Dick, you were sent here to-day to save me."

"I came with that hope, Joe."

"You were sent. There is a special Providence in the fall of a sparrow." And then they said good-night.

Next morning Thornton was up very early. He walked for half an hour about the place, attended by Joe's setters, meditating upon the events of the past day, and revolving a plan to give Sterrett occupation and an interest that should hold him fast in his good resolution. Then he went into the library, where the bright fire of light brushwood was very grateful, for the heavy dews of the early fall had filled the air with dampness. The two tumblers of punch were still upon the table. While he stood with his back to the fire looking at the portraits on the walls, familiar to him in past years, and reckoned now among the household gods of the family, and had his eyes fixed upon a youthful picture of Mr. Randolph, brought from Virginia, and was scrutinizing its delicate, wan features, a light, swift step was heard in the hall, and then the door was opened and Mrs. Sterrett entered. Her eyes were radiant with happiness as she looked at Thornton. Then, as she cast a glance about the room, and saw the two glasses on the table full as she had left them the night before, a cloud came over her face. She stood still, looking wistfully at Thornton, and as he advanced to greet her, she put up her lip like a little child and burst into tears, and fell on Thornton's shoulder and sobbed convulsively. "Oh, Mr. Thornton," she said, with broken voice, "my dear old father loved all you Thorntons. He was the friend of your father. He used to tell us over and over what true friends you are. How can we ever thank you enough for what you have done? You can't know how happy you have made us all. Joe is safe now. He will never break a promise!"

Sterrett did not make his appearance till late in the morning. Then he looked a little haggard, but was by no means so nervous as he had himself apprehended. Thornton had arranged the programme for the day—indeed, for a week or longer—and had got Mrs. Sterrett's consent that they would all go to Lastlands for a week or more. But Sterrett demurred. He would go the next day or the next week. Familiar as he had been there, and for so long a time, he felt now a strange shyness at going to Lastlands. He remembered some failings there, and a sense of shame came over him at the thought of facing that household. He took Thornton aside, and tried to convince him that some delay would be best. "I want to get off this beard," he said. "You don't suppose I wear it from affectation? No, indeed! I never had any of that. I must explain: I never had a servant that could shave me, and when I got my nerves upset my hand used to shake, and I cut myself. At last, one morning, while shaving, a dreadful idea entered my mind—an impulse to draw the razor across my throat. I recoiled from it then, but it came back to me again and again, stronger at each recurrence, and, at last, so vividly that I could see the purple gash already there, and feel the hot blood rushing out. This feeling was no doubt akin to that strange perversity which impels men to throw themselves from high places, and which has sent its victims even into the crater of Vesuvius. But in my case it was born of drink. It was one of the terrible suggestions that the demon of the still is ever whispering. I became at last so fearful of a catastrophe, that one day I bundled my razors and rode over to the Fork, and threw them all far out into the 'Deep Hole,' and have not shaved since."

"You have given excellent reasons why you should go at once to Lastlands. You want a change of scene. Old Tom shall take off the beard; Russell is coming out this week; I have had a nice light boat put in the Anser; we shall fish and shoot and divert ourselves in the preserves there, and in any way we please. Bob can't say me nay to anything. The laws of Lastlands are at my command. So boot, boot, Master Sterrett! Your wife has ordered the

carriage for herself and the children and her maid, and you must ride with me."

This jovial eloquence was soon after reinforced by Sterrett's wife, who came in, a picture of happiness, and in an hour after the carriage rolled away with Joe's happy household, escorted by himself and Thornton as outriders.



## CHAPTER XLII

### MAJOR LECOMPTE

"I am no orator as Brutus is;  
But, as you know me all, a plain, blunt man."

THE route of Russell and Stackpole returning to The Falls lay through a part of the Congressional district represented by Major Lecompte, where a warm and active canvass was then going on. Major Lecompte was a substantial farmer, a Jackson Democrat, who, in spite of the majority of the voters of the district being Republican, or Clay men, had by his personal popularity carried the elections, year after year, against many of the strongest men of the opposition. And this, it was said, he did without having any marked talent, but only simplicity of character, a kindly temper, immaculate integrity, and great industry and perseverance. These qualities and a good record as a soldier in the war of 1812 were said to constitute his qualification for success in politics. As to eloquence, he was not even suspected of that.

Curious to see and hear this famous man,—famous by reason of repeated victories won under adverse circumstances, and with supposed slender resources,—Russell and Stackpole went some miles out of their direct road through Shelbyville, to hear a debate which would take place that day, between him and a new antagonist, Mr. Wilson, a novice in politics, not well known to the people, but an able lawyer and an adroit debater. They found the place of meeting in a primitive forest, where a great number of people, old and young, male and female, were assembled, not only to hear the political debate, but to enjoy also a barbecue and dance. Narrow tables of boards were stretched in long lines beneath the trees, a circular space had been

cleared, and the surface of the ground beaten hard and smooth for the dancers, and a stand set up for the speakers. Dinner was just over when our travelers got on the ground, but a man came forward, a large man dressed in light homespun, with a whip under his arm, and courteously conducted them to the tables, now deserted by the people, who were thronging toward the stand where Mr. Wilson was about to open the debate. Being within easy earshot of the speaker, the strangers did not abate anything from what was necessary to satisfy their sharp appetites, but leisurely took all they needed, from the ample stores before them; the man with the whip politely supplementing these with what Stackpole called "vin de pays," a French name given by him to our native beverage.

When their repast was ended, and they had joined the crowd about the speaker's stand, Mr. Wilson was nearing the close of his speech. His general aim had been to show the unfitness of his opponent to represent the district, chiefly on account of his hostility to the tariff and the internal improvement measures brought forward by Mr. Clay, which measures the speaker maintained to be vital to the prosperity of the country. These had been the chief topics of Mr. Wilson's speeches in the canvass, and had been well studied. His address, as Russell bears witness, was fluent, methodical, and very plausible. He elaborated especially the tariff question here, because this was a hemp-growing region, and many of the people were interested in maintaining the duty on foreign hemp. To this direct interest he appealed, denouncing the opposition of Major Lecompte to these measures as hostility to the best interests of his constituents. And, strange to say, all that were now engaged in the cultivation of hemp, even they that heretofore steadfastly held the Democratic doctrine against protection, now insisted that the duty on foreign hemp ought to be maintained! Just as we see Democrats in Pennsylvania, while maintaining the conclusiveness of the arguments against protection generally, yet insisting that, somehow, these arguments do not apply in the case of pig iron!

The last point made by Mr. Wilson was entirely per-

sonal, that Major Lecompte was an unfit representative of the district, because of his want of education. This was illustrated by quoting from his speeches specimens of bad English—what Mr. Wilson called “murdering the King’s English.” This attack, so pointed and personal, incensed the friends of Major Lecompte in such a degree that some of them made demonstrations to interrupt the speaker, and a Mr. Onan called out, “Oh, we’ve had talkin’ enough; what’s the use of interruptin’ the people’s amusements? They want to dance.” And he even took his fiddle in hand, as if about to play. But Major Lecompte arose at once, and with much dignity rebuked his partisans. “No, my friends,” he said; “no, John Onan; put away that fiddle. Remember, *Mr. Wilson is a stranger here!*”

This was said in a very impressive manner, and the disorderly movement was instantly checked. But it was manifestly not agreeable to Mr. Wilson to be treated as a stranger, since in the course of his address he had labored to identify himself with the district and all its interests. No further attempt was made to interrupt the speaker, though some of the audience behaved very impolitely; Mr. John Onan often yawning ostentatiously, stretching his arms above his head, and opening his wide mouth to its full extent. And many persons began to move out of the crowd, making confusion, while others straggled away from the stand, so that Mr. Wilson could no longer maintain a hold on the audience. Few besides the hemp growers maintained an attitude of attention. Under these discouraging circumstances he closed his speech.

A moment after, when Major Lecompte rose to reply, the aspect of the assembly was instantly changed. The people once more crowded about the stand, the stragglers fell into line, the large audience was silent, and the eyes of all were turned with a look of quiet expectation upon the kindly face of the speaker. He began by lamenting the offer that had been made to interrupt the speech of his opponent, again rebuking his friends, reminding them of the traditional hospitality of their fathers, whose latchstrings were never pulled in, and with whom *stranger* was a sacred name. This he insisted upon with such seriousness as made

Mr. Wilson seem a stranger in his own land. Then he paused a moment, surveying the audience and giving a sharp, scrutinizing look at the hemp growers, who had gravitated together and now stood in a group. He had observed on their faces a look of satisfaction when Mr. Wilson promised that, if he should have the honor to represent them in Congress, "they should have ample protection for their most valuable and important staple."

It is necessary to inform the reader that Major Lecompte had hitherto by his votes in Congress supported the tariff measures of Mr. Clay, and had voted for the then subsisting tariff, that of 1828. But after the adjournment of Congress he had repudiated that measure, and announced his resolution never again to cast a vote in that direction. It was plain that it would not be good policy for Major Lecompte to express here his now strong hostility to the protective policy. In other places where he and Mr. Wilson had met—where the people were known to be opposed to this policy—he had bared his arm and spared not. And Mr. Wilson, on his part, had there used great moderation in his advocacy of that policy. But here these conditions were reversed. These hemp growers, most of whom had been warm friends of Major Lecompte before, in an evil hour for him, they took to growing hemp, now showed to his practiced eye symptoms of revolt, and might be all turned into active opponents if he should not use great discretion in this debate. Over his usual look of frank kindliness there was spread a thin veil of circumspection. "When the clouds threaten rain, wise men put on their cloaks." He said:

"By the terms agreed upon by Mr. Wilson and me, each is allowed an hour in this debate. He has occupied his time almost exclusively with the discussion of the tariff, and has challenged me to give full expression to my opinions upon that question. This I cannot possibly do in the short time allotted to me. It is a great question, and a complex question. It was a simple enough question when our fathers first dealt with it, when it was called by its right name, a name that expressed its purpose, a customs tax, and, like all taxes, justified only by necessity. But it



has become now the knottiest question before the country, knotted and tangled by the cunning of men, and twisted up with private and sectional interests, until there is no task more tedious or more difficult than to unwind its multitudinous folds and involutions, and show its precise relation to the various interests of the country. With the change of its name, it has sprouted and branched into so many new shapes, that I should tire your patience by only enumerating them. There is your *ad valorem* tariff, your tariff of specific duties, your foreign valuation and your home valuation tariffs, your tariff of minimum valuation—”

“Oh, never mind the tariff, Uncle Joe,” cried voices from all sides.

“But, fellow citizens, how am I to decline Mr. Wilson’s challenge? I am ready to take up this subject with all its ramifications. It will take the remainder of the day; it is a dry—”

“Oh, never mind it now—some other time!” came vociferously from all quarters.

“Well, as you please. But I must be allowed to say just a word upon the subject. I am not, as Mr. Wilson seems to think, opposed to all tariffs. Nor is the Democratic party opposed to all tariffs, as he has unjustly charged. But I am opposed, and the Democratic party is opposed, to all taxes upon the people, whether by means of a tariff or otherwise, except for the necessities of the government. Mr. Wilson has cited my votes in Congress in support of the present tariff—votes for which I now do penance in sackcloth and ashes! That you may know the character of this act, I will cite just one of its provisions: that which provides for what is called a minimum valuation. Here is the section: ‘All cotton goods that cost twenty cents a yard shall pay a duty of thirty per cent. All cotton goods that cost less than twenty cents a yard shall (nevertheless) be *deemed* to have cost twenty cents, and shall be rated accordingly and pay a duty of thirty per cent.’

“Accordingly, cotton goods that cost twenty cents, fine chintzes and cambrics, worn by the rich, are taxed thirty per cent., or six cents, while the cotton that costs six cents,

worn by the poor, is falsely *deemed* to have cost twenty cents, and is also taxed six cents, which is one hundred per cent.! And thus, while the rich city dame pays on her fine French and English fabric only thirty per cent., the poor country girl is taxed on her cotton frock one hundred per cent.! Could unscrupulousness and audacity in laying unequal taxes go beyond this? No wonder the act has been called 'a bill of abominations.' Of course I am ashamed that I did not vote against it. But I did not then see the force and effect of this provision, and it deceived better men than I am. There are plenty of such contrivances, the devices of cunning men, experts in this business of plundering the poor.

"But it does not follow, because I am opposed to such unfair discrimination as this, that I am opposed to every tariff, as Mr. Wilson would have you believe. Nor is the Democratic party opposed to all tariffs. But we want fair play, and if I shall have the honor of again representing you, and if protection shall be the order of the day, and no form of labor protected except manufacturing labor, I shall insist that Kentucky hemp shall stand on as favorable a footing as any other manufactured article; for I maintain that as it is sold by our farmers it is already a manufactured article, and should not be longer classed as raw material. The manipulation and labor required to convert it, from the crude stalk, into the fine textile material of commerce entitles it to be so considered. Moreover, this labor is all manual labor, unaided by chemical art or the genius of the mechanical inventor.

"I will say only a few words more; for I know the young people here would rather be dancing than listening to an old man's talk; but I want to offer an explanation in answer to Mr. Wilson's reproach to me that I lack education, which is quite true; and that I have been guilty of murdering the King's English, which I will not deny."

The speaker now changed his position, walking forward to the edge of the platform, where he stood a moment, silent, looking with a serious face over the assembly, and then continued: "You know, my friends,—certainly all the old men here know,—that when I was young there was

not much school teaching in these parts. The schoolmaster was not abroad here then, and your fathers and I got but little learning. Besides, the war with the British came on, and we left everything to join the army, and march against the enemy. While Mr. Wilson was learning his lessons at the academy, we had muskets in our hands, and were wading knee-deep or up to the middle in the swamps of Canada, fighting the enemies of our country. But the army is itself a great school, and it was there, in that three years' war, I got the best part of my education; and it was there, perhaps, that I learned to murder the King's English."

As he paused after this fine passage, there was none of the usual applause, but there was the best of all applause, almost absolute silence, the audience only fetching an audible breath, and pressing forward by a common impulse, and gathering more closely about the speaker. The man with the whip, stretching his long arms over a number of those in front of him, enfolding some half dozen, said in a stage whisper, "Boys, old Joe's a-talkin' now."

Then Major Lecompte resumed, saying, with a smile, "I don't think I ought to say anything more to keep you from your amusement. I know that you old men here, many of whom have marched by my side, elbow to elbow, shoulder to shoulder, are not going to turn me off now for a raw recruit that has never smelt powder. And you young men" (looking now away from the hemp growers to the throng of stalwart youth too poor to own slaves and plant hemp, and independent of protection), "will you turn out an old horse that any of you can plough with a single line, and put in a proud, high-headed young steed that you have never tried, and don't know, that comes nickering through these woods to-day for the first time?"

The yell that sent back the negative answer to this question left no doubt that victory was with the Major! There was a proud air about him now, as he stood with head erect, victorious, triumphant, and yet magnanimous; for in a moment he added, "But Mr. Wilson must be met kindly here. Take him around and introduce him to the ladies, and let him have a dance and take away with him a pleasant impression of our people."

With this fresh appeal in his behalf to the hospitality of the people, which made Mr. Wilson seem as alien to the precinct as if he were an unnaturalized foreigner, Major Lecompte concluded.

Then everybody repaired to the dancing-grounds, where a reel was soon afoot, to the lively strains of Mr. Onan's fiddle, Major Lecompte capering with the rest. Meantime, the man with the whip was busy with those that loitered about the outskirts of the dancing-ground, shaking hands, and putting his arms over their shoulders, and embracing them in his affectionate way; often taking a group of them away behind the pawpaw bushes, where his horse stood with a large pack, from which he dispensed "refreshments."

In Russell's journal, from which this account is taken almost literally, is the following dramatic sketch, which throws further light upon the methods of Major Lecompte's canvass:

*Scene.*—Barbecue grounds behind the pawpaw bushes. Enter man with the whip, bearing a jug with a corncob stopper, followed by several countrymen.

*Man with the whip.*—"Boys, it's no use talkin'—the old man is too good-natured. He ought to have let him have it right between the eyes!"

*First Countryman.*—"Whaddid he mean by talkin' about old Joe's killin' the Briddish?"

*Second Countryman.*—"Yes, that's whad I want to know."

*Third Countryman.*—"Why, he called it murderin' 'em!"

*Man with the whip.*—"Boys, you've heerd of such things as Tories, in the old war. They ain't all dead. He's ag'in' old Joe because old Joe went ag'in' the British."

*Countrymen, speaking all together.*—"Hell!"

It is a historical fact that Major Lecompte was elected by a handsome majority, and that he voted for Mr. Clay's compromise measure, providing for the gradual reduction of the tax to the revenue standard, twenty per cent. But there was a falling off in his vote in the hemp region, and two years after, when the cultivation of hemp had been



greatly extended in this district, he was defeated, and died without going again to Congress. It is also true that since the introduction free of duty of many cheap substitutes for hempen fabrics, the cultivation of hemp has declined in that district, and that with this decline the people have returned to their old political allegiance, and are now represented by an anti-protection Democrat. All of which is commended to the philosophic student of history.

Russell and Stackpole made their way to Lastlands, where they passed the night; Stackpole going next day to look after business in town, while Russell remained, finding Mr. Joe Sterrett and his wife there.

## CHAPTER XLIII

### AN OLD ROMAN

**"Other Romans shall arise,  
Heedless of a soldier's name;  
Sounds, not arms, shall win the prize."**

JUST before Russell and Stackpole set out for the Bluegrass, Col. Jonah Swell, of Tickville, who had been for several years a member of the State Senate and now aspired to a seat in Congress from the district of which the new city was a part, came on an electioneering visit to The Falls. It was early spring and the election more than two years away, but it was important to make an early start in the canvass, and Colonel Swell was taking time by the forelock. He was a solid man of fair ability, but like many village great men, quite spoiled by vanity. He came to The Falls expecting an ovation on account of the aid he had given in the legislature to the act incorporating under a new form the little municipality, and placing it in the category of cities. He regarded this visit to The Falls as a very important step in his canvass. He was prepared for a speech, in case of a reception by the mayor and board of councilmen, or an address of a more popular character for a public meeting of the citizens, if the demonstration should take that shape; and he had given the two representatives of the city timely notice of his intended visit. The gentlemen who then represented both city and county in the Senate took counsel with the representatives of the city in the lower house, as to what was proper to be done in behalf of the distinguished visitor. Ignorant of the high expectations of Colonel Swell, they concluded that the most suitable thing would be to take him to Drake's theater, where he would see assembled all the beauty and

fashion of the town, and be entertained by an excellent dramatic company. Accordingly, a few hours after his arrival, Colonel Swell, under the escort of these representatives, entered the playhouse already filled from pit to gallery. The only vacant seats were four reserved for them in the front boxes, the most conspicuous part of the house. Attended by the senator and the representatives of the city, Colonel Swell entered, clad in his ample blue cloth cloak faced with velvet, wrapped about him after the manner of an "old Roman," as he was proud of being called. He was always playing this rôle of "old Roman"; not any particular old Roman, but sometimes one, sometimes another. Indeed, he was often an "old Greek," according to his mood or the exigencies of politics.

Colonel Swell glanced at the great multitude in the house, and concluded at once that it had been assembled to do him honor. He knew that if there were a playhouse in Tickville, and he should enter it in this fashion, the house would shake with applause, kicking with boot heels, and yells and screeches. What manifestation, he wonders, will be made by this gay, finely dressed audience? Will there not be waving of fans, and handkerchiefs, and clapping of tiny hands in kid gloves, and the thud of canes upon the floor, and, mayhap, from the pit and gallery, some old-fashioned, familiar yelling and screeching? As he found his way to the seat assigned him, closely attended by the city representatives supporting him by his elbows, he forebore to look up, not caring to meet the blaze of so many eyes, now doubtless fixed upon him, but, with an air of old-Roman-proud-humility, cast down his eyes as he slowly passed through the throng. Being seated, and hearing no manifestation of applause from any quarter, and seeing the pit beneath apparently unconscious of his presence, he stole a glance around the glittering array of the boxes, and lo! not an eye was upon him!

He did not enjoy the play, but lost the thread of the plot, and was moody and unhappy through it all, and gloomily meditated upon the ingratitude of cities. As he stole another glance at the array of female loveliness in the boxes his grim mood relaxed, and his thoughts were

tinged with sentiment. He was now Timon of Athens, and romantically fancied himself buried

"Upon the beeched verge of Salt River,  
Whom, once a day, with his embossed froth  
The turbulent surge shall cover."

The play over, he stayed for the farce, in which Mr. Aleck Drake was excessively funny, and he laughed so loudly that a great many people stared at him, and he was somewhat mollified, and quitted the playhouse in pretty good spirits.

But next morning when he walked down the streets in his best array, with all the bravery of velvet-lined cloak and waterproof beaver hat, nobody seemed to know him. The sidewalks along the corner of Main and Wall streets were so lumbered with boxes of merchandise that he could hardly make his way through them. At the crossings the drays came near running over him, or with their long tails sweeping his legs from under him; and as he walked in his slow, stately way along the pavement the throngs of clerks and draymen jostled him, and were nigh knocking him down. "The vile money-changers!" They didn't know an old Roman when they saw him! He was getting into a rage now, untinged with any romantic sentiment. He was no longer Timon going to be entombed by the salt flood, but Coriolanus meditating a revolt to the Volscians, and making the ungrateful city feel his power. First, however, before taking this final step he will go to the office of the *Journal*. If overlooked by the populace and the wretched slaves of Mammon, *there* he will find recognition. At the *Journal* office his card was sent upstairs, but by some mischance did not reach the editor. After waiting an hour without getting an invitation to the editorial room, and finding not only no notice of his arrival in the morning paper, but a paragraph recommending another candidate for Congress, he is Coriolanus once more, and strides away full of wrath toward the home of Aufidius. He is going to "make Rome howl!"

The requisites for success in politics were then very different from those of the present time. It was necessary



then to stand upon one's dignity; to be very polite in a stately way; to be well dressed, and clean shaven, and to bear all the insignia of a gentleman; and not to do any electioneering in person, but to leave that to friends and agents. Any direct personal efforts, indicative of self-seeking, would have been fatal to a man's prospects. Of course there was still room for that fine art which can do a thing without seeming to do it, but the coarse demagogue was not then a power in the land. People took pride in their representatives. No man aspiring to public station could curry favor with them by putting on a poor appearance, or by dressing like a slouch. Above all, as was said by a distinguished and eminently successful politician of that day, the people liked a "clean man." The modern fashion of beginning a political career by going to grog shops and drinking like bacchanals, in a canvass, expecting to redeem themselves after the election by clean shirts and stovepipe hats, was happily unknown. Equally unknown were those vulgar artifices by which men now bring themselves before the public, enlisting the press, and giving douceurs to reporters and claquers, and getting up what is called a "boom."

Colonel Swell was mindful of all these requirements. Though stung by the cold reception he met in the town, he did not act hastily. Taught by a large experience that wariness and caution are necessary in treading the slippery way to political preferment, he hastened slowly. Slowly he rode away on his sturdy roan, a genuine "McKinney," that had borne him safely through many a hard campaign, revolving a scheme for making an independent race for Congress. Homeward toward Tickville his horse's steps were now turned. There he would plan his campaign, and make a thorough, quiet canvass of the district, under the guise of business, not disclosing his purpose. His well-known reputation as a practicing lawyer, supplemented by visits to the public offices in the county towns, would easily cover his real purpose. In his list of places to be visited he had given Lastlands a prominent place. He had long known of the knot of free-traders there, among whom was Thornton, conspicuous as a proselyting disciple, who had

won many to his side by his clear exposition of the impolicy and the injustice of the tariff and internal improvement schemes of Mr. Clay, then known under the captivating title of "the American system." He had heard much of the "Yeoman's Club," which had been organized in that neighborhood and was now a recognized power in the county, and he resolved to pay a visit there, and cautiously ascertain how the "yeomen" would be disposed toward an independent candidate.

To most of the leading lawyers of the State it was well known that the husband of Mrs. Scudamore had a large claim for lands surveyed by him in partnership with another, and fraudulently patented by his partner in his own name alone. Many lawyers had given the case attention, with a view to a large contingent fee. Colonel Swell was one of these, and he now had in his saddlebags memoranda of such facts as he had ascertained bearing upon this case. Now, having eaten of the insane root, and being possessed by political ambition, it had occurred to him to make a show of interest in the widow's claim, and present her with these memoranda, and thereby establish an interest for himself in the Lastlands neighborhood. But of this he would think further.

It was late in the summer when, in the course of his tour of inspection through the district, Colonel Swell reached Lastlands. He found Thornton not at home. Business often called him now to The Falls, whither he had gone, and was not expected home before the evening of the following day. But Colonel Swell was received by Mrs. Thornton with such cordiality as warmed his heart, and was a balm to the wounds he had got in town. He stared with surprise at the elegance as well as the substantial character of everything about Lastlands. The broad, well-rolled gravel road, the wide, shaven lawn, the gorgeous flower beds, the variety and number of beautiful shrubs and graceful plants, and the absolute neatness and order everywhere filled him with admiration. He had come through the pastures along the Anser, and had seen the herd of fine cattle and the flock of high-bred sheep, and the evidence of thrift on every hand, and had marveled that

a man whom he had known a few years before impoverished, with nothing left but some slaves, and these the subject of a lawsuit—that this man should now have gathered about him all this wealth of “land and beeves”! And when he stood in the house at Lastlands, “a baronial hall,” as the old Roman emphatically called it, adorned with paintings and statuary, and beautiful things from many parts of the globe, it seemed to him like the work of enchantment. He thought of his own home near Tickville, and of his farm there, with its briery fields and broken-down fences, and dilapidated buildings, and for once in his life there came over him a sense of inferiority. And then this high-bred hostess, so gracious and so hospitable! He thought that there might be possessions in the world better than political honors. He thought that the possessor of this beautiful place must be a very happy man, and he meditated upon the possibilities of his own seat, “Briar Hill.”

Mrs. Thornton expressed her regret for the absence of her husband, but hoped that Colonel Swell would await his return. Meantime, Mr. Russell, and Mr. Joe Sterrett and his wife, then at Lastlands on a visit, would help to make his time pass agreeably. They had walked out toward the highroad, and if Colonel Swell was not too much fatigued by his ride, they would walk out to meet them. “Fatigued!” Not he. Accompanied by the children, who had just been made ready for the walk, they strolled away toward the new highroad. Just as they reached the gate that opened into the new avenue they saw the walking party returning, and awaited their coming. As Sterrett’s children ran forward in a race to the gate, Colonel Swell, with a gallant air, said, “Flowers and sweets are everywhere,” and in his ignorance of flowers smelled at the tall hollyhocks grouped like grenadiers on each side of the gateway.

He was warmly greeted by Russell and Sterrett, and was presented to Mrs. Sterrett, and then the whole party retraced their steps toward the house. The gentlemen finally gravitated together, engaging in talk, while the ladies and children went off on a by-path to look at a plantation of flowers. Russell saw at once the salient points of the old

Roman's character, and led the conversation into politics, saying just enough to encourage him in the line of policy he had taken up, and adroitly ministering to that leading trait, personal vanity. The effect of this and of the beautiful surroundings, and the warm hospitality of Lastlands, was manifested by the old Roman in a look of supreme satisfaction, and a certain elevation of manner, intended to bring up his personal bearing to the standard of his environment. He contrasted the noise and dust of the town with the quiet and beauty of Lastlands, and the insolence of the "sordid votaries of Mammon" with the elegant and cordial hospitality which now rested like a healing plaster upon his wounded pride. As Colonel Swell in his simplicity revealed his self-esteem, and gradually unfolded to that keen observer the purpose of his visit to Lastlands, Russell often tweaked his nose. Such a character was meat and drink to him, as was a clown to Dogberry. "He would be flouting; he could not hold." He was soon so far advanced in the confidence of the old Roman as to make an appointment for a conference, after tea, with himself and Mr. Sterrett. Accordingly, finding him inclined to linger at the table with the ladies, Russell and Sterrett, asking to be excused, quitted the table, saying they would await Colonel Swell in the library, leaving him in a fine flow of talk with the hostess and Mrs. Scudamore.

Finding Mrs. Scudamore graceful and intelligent,—“a woman of soft speech, and with a lady's mien,”—Colonel Swell was surprised, having somehow associated with her misfortune a necessary shortcoming in other respects. Finding, also, that she held a high place in the Lastlands household, he made up his mind to put at once into her hands the papers in his possession. Accordingly, in the presence of Mrs. Thornton, with a very formal explanation of their significance, he gave them to her, saying that the information contained in them had come into his possession in the course of his practice, and advising her to place them in the hands of some discreet attorney, who might be able to supply missing links in the chain of evidence, and recover the title to land of which he believed her husband had been fraudulently divested, concluding with his bow



of old-Roman-proud-humility. The good widow received these papers with manifest emotion, and thanked him warmly. And then Colonel Swell, saying that the gentlemen were expecting him to discuss some political matters, in which he was afraid the ladies would take no interest, excused himself, and a servant showed him into the library, where Russell and Sterrett were awaiting his coming.

Colonel Swell was glad of an opportunity to sound an intelligent town man, like Russell, on his prospects in the city, but was distrustful of himself, doubting his power to talk much about The Falls and keep down his wrath. But Russell, who had seen him that night when he appeared in Drake's theater, and again on the street, and had accurately diagnosed his case, quickly relieved him, by coming out without reserve, and denouncing the want of independent spirit in the people of the town, and their exclusive devotion to money-making; charging them with sinking all the nobler impulses of humanity in their sordid hankering after wealth; permitting the entire control of public interests to fall into the hands of a set of professional politicians, who turned everything to their own private account.

Joe Sterrett, who was an original native American (that early Americanism born in the camp of Washington, and flourishing long before the day of Know-nothings), and who rode his hobby in all weather, and in all company, seconded this; alleging, as a radical objection to growing towns, the influx of the Irish, who flocked wherever digging was to be done, and had swarmed about the canal; and of the Dutch, who gathered wherever there was a population sufficient to enable them to live upon what other people wasted, or threw away, or failed to stand guard over. Russell put in a good word for the Dutch, insisting that they were a frugal, thrifty, industrious people, and already a valuable addition to the industrial force of the country, and a strong element in its progress.

"Progress!" exclaimed Sterrett, "I hate progress! I don't want to see this land filled with people vomited forth from their overcloyed countries, indiscriminately, Parthians and Medes, and Elamites, and those that dwell by Mesopotamia—filled as sausages are filled with a patent stuffer,

without regard to the quality of the stuffing. If this tide of immigration goes on for sixty years, there will be nothing American left. These plodding foreigners, schooled to patient industry and self-denial, will possess the land. They may be cheap laborers now, but they will be masters at last. They are the blessed meek that shall inherit the earth! When we invite them here, we are selling for a mess of pottage the birthright of our children. They will be eaten out of house and home, as the sleek native blue rats have been eaten out by the hungry Hanoverians. To find a new home, they will have to take the wings of the morning and fly to the uttermost parts of the land. I am against immigration, and against everything that may invite or facilitate it; against turnpikes and all devices for rapid transit, and in favor of dirt roads and travel on horseback. I am a native American dirt-road Democrat!"

Sterrett had a certain rude, fervid eloquence, and was always at his best on this topic, warming often into a bold figurative style, reminding one sometimes of Danton, the great Jacobin orator. A modern historian, as the reader will remember, speaking of what he called Danton's "all-too-gigantic" rhetorical figures, cites from his speech made soon after the execution of King Louis, the following fine specimen: "The coalized kings of Europe are marching in arms against us. We throw at their feet, as gage of battle, the head of a king!" The following specimen of Mr. Sterrett's talk on this occasion will show his power of amplification, and the figure with which it concludes, taking into account the inferior dignity of the topic, will not unworthily compare even with that of Danton: "These Dutch immigrants are in every sense old soldiers. They carry double-barrel guns, and big leather haversacks, now turned into game-bags, and with these they make daily forays into the country. They put into the field little bench-legged dogs trained to start hares, which the old soldiers, sitting on the fences, shoot as they run. They kill everything, furred, feathered, and haired. They cut up all the mint along the branches, and all the water-cresses. They strip all the blackberries, pokeberries, and elderberries. They peel the bark from the wild cherry and slippery

elm. They gather all the hickory nuts, and all the walnuts, and all the pawpaws, and wild-grapes and wild-cherries—in one word, gentlemen, THEY GUT THE WILDERNESS!”

This passage was not lost on a practiced public speaker like Colonel Swell, himself at heart an “American,” and he thought how with that he could move a crowd, and following it with hearty denunciation, make them yell and screech. But he continued noncommittal on the question, in spite of Russell’s repeated efforts to draw from him some expression favorable to the foreigners. He did not like to agree with Sterrett lest he should lose Russell, and he could not think of going with Russell lest he should lose “Joe.” Russell enjoyed his perplexity, and the more strenuously Sterrett attacked the foreigners, the more stoutly Russell defended them. He insisted, moreover, that now that these people constituted so large a part of the voting population of the town, it became necessary to look to their influence as a factor in politics. That, increasing, and acting together as they did, they would soon hold the balance of power, and that if he were a politician he would set about establishing an interest among them. “The fact is,” continued Russell, “the *Journal* and a few leaders and supporters of that paper assume to control the politics of both town and country, especially within this Congressional district, and I should be glad to see this foreign element brought into play, as a counterpoise to their undue influence.”

“*Some* counterpoise,” said the old Roman, very seriously, “is unquestionably necessary. The self-assumption of the editor of the *Journal* takes the lead of everything I have ever seen. I was, as is well known, put forward by my friends in different parts of the district, as a candidate for a seat in the Congress of the United States; and I believe I am recognized as a man that has done the State some service. I was thought to have a special claim on the people of the new city, which was brought into corporate existence by my instrumentality. I advocated in an exhaustive speech of nine hours the bill conferring municipal functions upon that community, and I received the hearty thanks of their immediate representatives in the legisla-

ture. Yet, afterward, when I made a visit to the new city, I was hardly more noticed than if I had been some mule driver come to town for halters. Not even the usual complimentary notice of my arrival was made in the paper. Nobody recognized me as I walked through the streets, and when I called at the office of the *Journal* and sent up my card, no notice was taken of it, but I was left waiting in that dirty office, with the clerk, for two hours; after which I went away in disgust."

"Is-it-possible!" said Russell, with dramatic emphasis.

"Yes, sir," said the old Roman, warming; "that is the return that I get for my services. And, moreover, I saw by the papers that a sort of primary meeting had been held there, by which I was completely overslaughed, my claims ignored, and a little skyrockety, oratorical whipper-snapper recommended, who is no more fit to represent the district in Congress than he is to preach the Gospel."

"That," said Russell, "is the work of the *Journal* clique. For one, I am tired of the rule of that set. Prentice is getting too big for his breeches. He thinks himself invincible in newspaper controversy, and people seem to stand in awe of him, and hardly dare say their souls are their own. It is a humiliating thing, but it is true. I wish I had a faculty for writing and the power of sarcasm of some people! I'd give him what he has long wanted, a thorough dressing in the public prints that should last him all his life."

"Gentlemen," said the old Roman, slowly elevating his head with a vibratory motion—as a rattlesnake elevates his crest, when he has made his coil—"gentlemen, I am credited with having some power to express myself in writing, and I say, though perhaps it would come better from another, that if I have any special merit as a rhetorician, it is my faculty for uttering the most withering sarcasms. I make no threats. But I say in a general way, that no man shall ill-treat me with impunity—*nemo me impudente lacussit*." Here Joe Sterrett, struck by the idea of an old Roman speaking such Latin as this, was seized with an irresistible inclination to giggle, and under some idle pretense quitted the room.



Glad to have the field to himself, now drawing his chair close in front of the O. R., Russell said: "Colonel, *you* are the man to take this editor down. I remember that contest you had with Badger for the Senate. You did use him up most effectually! I watched your canvass with great interest. He was considered an able man, but you had the whole State laughing at him. The *Journal* clique were heartily for you then, because your victory would enure to their benefit. The paper published interesting letters from the country, giving the details of your meeting."

"Yes, yes," said Colonel Swell, with a beaming face; "that was a great—a gre-a-t canvass! I shall never forget it. Many people thought that I had found my match in Badger. He was one of those literary fellows. For years he had been fitting himself for politics; studying for it, as a man studies for the ministry or any other profession. He wanted to reform all sorts of abuses before anybody had complained of them. He arraigned the magistracy and even the judiciary; charging these with nepotism, and magistrates with being self-perpetuating, and with trading in office—farming the sheriffalty. I knew the fate of all pioneers in reform too well to take any hand in that game. I knew that these abuses had more friends than he could muster against them; and so I did not answer him on these points, giving him rope—until the magistrates, and the sheriffs, and the clerks, and the constables and their deputies fell upon him like a nest of hornets, and then I joined in. It was at Tickville that I first opened on him, before a great crowd. It was there that I gave him that nickname, 'The Wildhog Democrat!' You ought to have heard the boys yell, when I came out with that! There is nothing like a good nickname to put a fellow down. That was such a hit that afterward I had only to mention him by that name to set a crowd to laughing and yelling and screeching. He left the field before the canvass was over, and has never been in politics since."

"Now, Colonel," said Russell, "why can't you do the same thing for this fellow Prentice? Like all bullies, he wants only the right man to get hold of him, and after

that everybody will kick him. Let me get you a toddy. I'm fagged out by my ride to-day, and I am sure that you must be, and a little of Bob's old whisky won't hurt either of us."

Then Russell went into the dining-room and brought out a decanter and tumblers and spoons and sugar, and making a great stirring and jingling, said to the old Roman, who was now reclining in his chair listening to these sounds with a look of intense satisfaction, "How do you like it—sweet?"

"Sweet," said the O. R.

"Just my way,—nutmeg?"

"Nutmeg," said the O. R., placidly.

"Just my figure," said the artful Russell. Then not hastily, but with more stirring and jingling, to whet the old Roman appetite, he mixed two toddies, one "craftily qualified," but the other what McIntyre called "a real stiff-facer." This latter he gave to Colonel Swell, and they nodded to each other, and took a few good swallows. Then Russell, after listening to further accounts of the famous Badger canvass, and on his part urging Colonel Swell, as a thing certain to redound to his own glory, to make an onslaught on Prentice, and squelch this doughty editor, and then hobnobbing until the old Roman's eyes began to snap, he suddenly opened a table drawer, and taking out paper and ink, and placing them before him, said, "Now, Colonel, here's writing material—at him with half a column or so, in a letter to the *Gazette*. It is a sort of neutral paper. They will gladly print anything you may offer them." Then, as the O. R. took pen in hand, Russell excused himself for a few moments, under pretense of having to order his horse for an early start in the morning, and leaving Colonel Swell to his toddy and the exercise of his powers of sarcasm upon the editor of the *Journal*, went out.

After a while Russell walked softly, on tiptoe, to a window of the library, and looked in. He saw the O. R. writing furiously, an intellectual fire blazing in his eyes, and an occasional smile wreathing his face. Then he tiptoed away, tweaking his nose. "He is about it," he said, quoting Lady Macbeth, perhaps unconsciously, yet having in

his mind's eye a view of the horrors to which the old Roman would be subjected when he should fall into the clutches of that terrible editor of the *Journal*. He saw again and again paragraphs headed, "Colonel Swell of Tickville"; "Colonel Jonah Swell of Tickville"; "Colonel Swell again"; "Colonel Swell once more"; then "The late Colonel Swell"—and so on to the crack of doom. After an hour spent in going in and out of Mrs. Thornton's small parlor, where Sterrett and the ladies were seated, and occasionally peeping into the library, he went back there, and found the old Roman just putting the finishing stroke to his letter to the *Gazette*. He was jubilant over it, and read the manuscript to Russell, giggling over some of his pet sarcasm, so as to be almost inarticulate. It was duly signed, in propria persona, and folded neatly, and committed to the care of Russell, "For the Editor of the *Gazette*." Then, after further jingling of spoons and glasses, they retired for the night.

## CHAPTER XLIV

### COLONEL SWELL RETRACTS

"In all the trade of war no feat  
Is worthier than a brave retreat."

NEXT day, after the interview in the library, Russell and Colonel Swell left Lastlands. Russell went away after a very early breakfast, while Colonel Swell rose late and lingered until near mid-day. Old Tom had appeared at the proper hour and shaved him, and had polished his boots with "Day & Martín" so that they were hardly recognizable, and with the cordial invitation of the hostess sounding in his ears, "to come again to Lastlands," he rode away on his McKinney. Still, he did not have that alacrity of spirit he was wont to have when nothing crossed him, and which seemed warranted by present circumstances. He had begun to have some misgivings about his letter to the *Gazette*. His remembrance of its contents was imperfect and confused, and he was now haunted by an apprehension of mistakes and shortcomings in the composition. It was not long until he bitterly repented having written it, and thus precipitated a war with the formidable editor of the *Journal*. Veritable old Roman in point of personal courage, and ready as he was, when it was his cue to fight, to do battle with the fiend incarnate, he had a mortal dread of ridicule. Besides, his present policy was not war, but only a peaceful and quiet inspection and husbanding of the strength he might muster for a revolt against the constituted authorities of the party, as an independent candidate for Congress. Now his design would be exposed and perhaps frustrated. "Confound that smooth-tongued Russell!" he muttered to himself, "and doubly confound that fatal toddy!" remembering how,



after having drunk that, his anger against the editor had flamed up afresh; how he had flung behind him all consideration of prudence and caution, and felt his soul in arms and eager for the fray!

“Inspiring, bold John Barleycorn,  
What dangers thou canst make us scorn!  
Wi’ tippenny we fear nae evil,  
Wi’ usquebae we’ll face the devil.”

And now suppose this truculent editor of the *Journal* shall bespatter him, the old Roman, with filth! turn against *him* the slings and arrows of his outrageous wit! Tortured by these apprehensions, he resolved to make his way to a distant tavern and stage-stand on the highroad, where the mail coaches passed daily, and there lie in wait, and see an early copy of the *Gazette* and read his letter in print, and also see the *Journal* and know what Prentice should say in reply, and so at once look the worst in the face.

On the following day at noon he reached this tavern and stage-stand, where he found the *Gazette* containing his letter. It was introduced by an editorial paragraph eulogizing Colonel Swell, and commending his “able and caustic pen.” Something was said also about his touching the editor of the *Journal* with the spear of Ithuriel, and revealing him to the world in his natural, hideous shape and monstrous proportions. The old Roman’s heart sits lighter in his breast on reading these delightful paragraphs. His letter he reads with increased delight. He does not know that Russell and the editor of the *Gazette* had spent an hour or more in pointing and polishing his shafts. He is surprised and rejoiced by its felicities of speech. The vanity of authorship takes possession of him. Some local politicians coming in and complimenting him upon it, he invites them to join in a mint-sling, and once more inspired by bold John Barleycorn, he becomes jubilant, and says, with a triumphant air, that he has many more “shots in the locker.” In this agreeable state of mind he sees the day pass away, and early in the night retires to his chamber. There, pausing before the short

tallow candle he was about to extinguish, he stood for some moments in rapt meditation. Then, striking a dramatic attitude, and extending his right arm with the fist clenched, he exclaimed, "Lay on, MacDuff, and damned be he who first cries, Hold—enough!" Then he put out the light; and wrapping the drapery of his couch about him, laid him down, and in the course of the night, after the manner of old Romans, when great issues are pending, he had a dream. He dreamed that he was once more a school-boy in the old field schoolhouse in Virginia—the old log schoolhouse in which he had learned his a, b, c's, and where he had first heard of old Romans—a little bare-legged, barefooted country boy, with a sore toe tied up in a rag. He was up for punishment, with two other little boys, standing before the old master. That worthy, instead of a hat, now wore upon his head a huge wide-mouthed ink-horn filled with the coal-black liquid. In his left hand he grasped a bundle of newly sharpened quill pens, spread abroad like the arrows in the claw of the American eagle. Dipping one of the pens into the inkhorn, he gave it a quick flirt, sending the ink into the face of the boy in hand, making him writhe and roar as if touched by liquid fire. Sometimes it alighted on his hair, scorching it to a crisp. In this way he went through with two of the boys, the room resounding with their cries, and filled with an odor like burned lambs' skins. Then he was about to take Jonah in hand, but seeing how frightened he looked, and considering how he had suffered by anticipation, in witnessing the punishment of the other boys, he hesitated a moment, and then said, "Jonah, if you will ask pardon, and promise not to do so any more, I will let you go free this time." And Jonah asked pardon, and promised, and went free.

In his delight at being delivered from punishment the old Roman awoke. It was yet dark, the darkness that goes before the dawn, and already he heard the landlord, a big-boned, fox-hunting old Virginian from the mountain region, with a great Roman nose, and dewlapped like a Thessalian bull, walking the porch; hawking and spitting loud enough to be heard a mile. He had not yet taken his

mint-sling to clear his throat, and his voice was wheezy as he called his negro factotum, "You, Ja-c-k!" and prepared to set his house in order for the day.

Now the turkey cocks are heard coming down with heavy rustling from the trees, and gobbling vociferously. Soon they begin to strut with all their feathers spread, in gorgeous rivalry, sailing like full-rigged ships, yardarm and yardarm, before their dames, and thundering with their wings. A little later the ducks, with loud "day-daying," announce the perfect day.

Under ordinary circumstances these peaceful and familiar rural sounds would have brought solace and repose to the mind of the old Roman, but he was now lying uneasily. The feather-bed, which the night before had seemed to him, tired by his long ride, so inviting—plump, as if stuffed to the full capacity of the ticking—had proved but an unsubstantial pageant of down, erected by the skilful housemaid, and long before morning its airy substance had fled from beneath his too solid flesh, and left him lying on the griddle of rigid hempen cords that formed its base. Moreover, that dream now forced itself upon his mind, and there was no augur to interpret it! Once more he was filled with uneasiness, and thought, with great concern, of the *Journal* which would come by the stage at breakfast time. Not willing to be present when the throng of stage passengers should come to the tavern to breakfast, when the whole house might be buzzing with the reply of Prentice to his letter, he went down a short time before the breakfast hour, and telling the landlord that he felt a little unwell, and had a bad taste in his mouth, and would take a walk to get up his appetite, and declining the landlord's panacea, a mint-sling, he strolled away into a beech grove across the road. He did not hear the muttered prediction of the landlord, that "he would have a worse taste in his mouth before Prentice was done with him." Soon after, he heard the winding of the driver's horn, and saw the stage, filled with passengers, dash up in a gallop to the tavern. When with fresh horses it had dashed away again, in the same animated style, he went back, and having secured the *Journal* and put it in his

pocket and got his breakfast, he walked back to the grove to read.

Again and again, with nervous haste, he ran his eye over the paper without seeing his name or any notice of his letter. He found two notable paragraphs in the paper: one upon the editor of the *Natchez Free Trader*, giving a summary of the editor's life and character (Mr. Prentice could "get up" a biography of any adversary at the shortest notice); the other a characteristic assault upon the editor of the *Advertiser*, his regular, chronic, resident enemy. Both these paragraphs were written in the style always assumed by Mr. Prentice in these personal assaults, when, throwing away the weapons of civilized warfare, with tomahawk and scalping knife he engaged his enemy at close quarters. It was a very coarse style. It was worse than coarse. But if it made the sensitive reader shudder, it moved him also to "endless laughter." It was a terrible weapon. It will not do to quote at this day.

The paragraph upon the editor of the *Advertiser* was grounded upon some heroics expressed in his paper about "dying in the last ditch." It warned him to beware of ditches, first and last, and gave a circumstantial account of his narrow escape from death a few nights before, having fallen, not into any metaphorical last ditch, but into a real pit of the most offensive character, which came nigh being his last ditch, and from which he was rescued by the timely arrival of the night-watchman, who, not having the nerve to lay hands on him, fished him out with a boathook. Then followed a description of the watchman steering him home at the end of the boathook, keeping all the way carefully to windward of him—

"Wi' mair o' horrible and awfu',  
Which e'en to name wad be unlawfu'."

As the old Roman read these paragraphs his face lengthened, his under jaw relaxed, his eyes expanded, the blood left his face, his scalp began to creep—he was like a man looking on at the flaying of Marsyas, knowing that his own turn would come next. And now his eyes fell upon the



following short, inconspicuous paragraph, which in his eagerness he had all along overlooked:

"The letter of Col. Jonah Swell on political management in this Congressional district, with some reflections upon our conduct and character in that connection, has been read by us with great surprise. Believing this letter to have been written under a grave misapprehension, we give Colonel Swell forty-eight hours within which to retract all he has said of us. If within that time it shall not have been retracted—every word and syllable of it—we shall flirt into his face a few penfuls of the murkiest ink from our trusty horn."

In the light of the two paragraphs upon the editors, Colonel Swell read the meaning of the threat with which this editorial reply concludes. It meant that he would be pilloried in the *Journal* for an indefinite time, and on that bad eminence, in view of the whole State, nay, of the whole world, for the *Journal* was now quoted everywhere, pelted with rotten eggs, and dead cats, and innumerable foul missiles, made a laughing stock—infandum! infandum! Flesh and blood could not stand it! He would retract—and he did retract, sending a letter by the stage that passed on its way to The Falls that day, and following it himself next day, when he visited the editor in his office, and after mutual explanations Colonel Swell was once more in harmony with his party, and no longer an independent candidate for Congress.

## CHAPTER XLV

### THE RACES

"Let me not live  
After my frame lacks oil, to be the snuff  
Of younger spirits, whose apprehensive senses  
All but new things disdain."

ABOUT this time the little town at the falls had begun to assume city airs, the fathers, the seven trustees, having been superseded by an act of the legislature raising it to the dignity of a city with a charter providing for its government by a mayor and a board of councilmen. The inhabitants of a city must put on city manners, and adopt city customs, and even a city manner of speech, but especially must dress in city fashion. Accordingly, there were many innovations upon the old manners. The fashion of short clothes had been long generally discarded. The old gentlemen had stoutly protested against the new trousers, but at last succumbed, only a few distinguished men refusing to adopt this fashion; many, especially lawyers and magistrates, still wearing queues. Especially noticeable was the change in the manners of the rising generation, who now manifested the utmost intrepidity in dress, and a falling away in politeness. The old-fashioned high-flown speech, and the demonstrative courtesy observed in the intercourse among gentlemen, and which, on the appearance of a lady, made every hat fly from the head, was now fast disappearing. Nay, there were not wanting among the young men some that openly derided these old manners, irreverently describing them as "too much on the jaybird order."

But what marked more distinctly than anything else the great change impending was the advent of the trotting

horse. Like all the new things, these came first from the East, from Philadelphia. As with all the instrumentalities of sport, these horses were first commended to public consideration on the ground of utility. This plea for sports is of very great antiquity. We know as a historical fact that as early as the eighth century a dispensation of the forestry law was granted to the Monastery of St. Denis, allowing them to hunt, on a representation to Charlemagne that the flesh of hunted animals was good for sick monks, and that their skins would serve to bind the books in the library. Racing has been, time out of mind, recommended on the ground that it leads to improvement in the breed of horses, and fox-hunting on the ground that it develops hard riders suitable for cavalry service in case of war. And now the trotting horses were recommended, as in the case of the monks of St. Denis, on hygienic grounds, as an important agent in the cure of dyspepsia or liver trouble; and, though hitherto clean out of the category of horses for the saddle, they came somewhat into use as hackneys. Dyspeptics and gaunt men with sallow complexions were often to be seen trotting along the road, with solemn faces, rising and falling in their stirrups, jolting their livers into action. But this exercise, requiring more energy than any man with dyspepsia or a tucked liver is apt to possess, soon went out of fashion, and the horse as a trotter lapsed into the hands of the few that had been inoculated with the trotting mania in the East. These were for the most part bachelor merchants, who had caught the fever from Philadelphia drummers, a part of whose business equipment was then a tilbury and a trotting horse. Besides these, there were lottery agents from Providence, Rhode Island, and insurance agents from Hartford, Connecticut, to the manner born, who now brought out trained animals for their own use, and Stackpole had a pair of grays driven all the way from Boston, good trotters. Then, a skilful trainer of trotters having connected himself with a leading horse-dealer of the town, the trotting horse became one of the recognized sporting elements in the community. The patrons of this sport now put up some purses to be trotted for in the week following the regular running races, and

there were already in the stables at the course a number of trotters in training for these purses.

Great was the disgust of the old racing gentlemen and their trainers at the appearance of these trotters. Looking them over they walked away contemptuously, denouncing them as "cold-blooded scrubs," and expressing amazement that men could be found to take pleasure in their performances. Mr. Joe Sterrett, still a patron of the turf, though his stable had declined in its fortunes since the "letting down" of the great Ormus, was eloquent and vehement in his denunciation of the trotting horse. He looked upon his coming as ominous of the decay of Kentucky, fatal as the Greek horse taken into their city by the foolish Trojans. "*Timeo Danaos,*" he would exclaim, "*et dona ferentes.*" When Kentuckians shall give up their blooded horses and take to riding in buggies behind little ewe-necked Narragansett ponies, *their* age of chivalry will have departed. The Kentuckian of the future will be no more like the Kentuckian of to-day, bestriding his thoroughbred, than a modern Italian, with his organ and monkey, is like a Roman knight of the days of the Republic."

But then Mr. Sterrett was full of Kentucky prejudices, and opposed to all "new things." Moreover, against these strange horses he had a private grief. Going out to his racing stable one morning, to inspect the horses and to confer with his trainer, "old Beard," he found him in a very ill humor. To Sterrett's question, "Well, Mr. Beard, how are the colts doing?" he replied, "Bad enough, bad enough! They are scared every day half out of their skins by these all-fired huckars. They come by here yelling like wild Injuns, and scare the colts, and make 'em rear and pitch, and bump their heads against the loft floor. I expect every one of them will have poll-evil. The Eclipse colt has got it now."

"What do you mean by huckars?" said Sterrett.

"Why, them all-fired trotting fellows. Here comes one of 'em now; just listen to him! I must go in and stand by the colts and try to keep 'em from butting their brains out."

Then there was heard, along the track, a wild, unearthly



screaming, and Sterrett saw coming a man driving a horse in a sulky, yelling at the top of his voice, "Huck-a-r-e, huck-a-r-e!" followed in a lower tone by what seemed a reproachful interrogatory, "Whadder ye bea-oute?" while the little horse spun along, lifting his legs with marvelous quickness in a trot. This was one of old Beard's huckars.

On his way returning to the town, Sterrett met Russell and Mr. McKay, a bachelor merchant, one of the patrons of the trotters, accompanied by a little gentleman from Rhode Island who had a "string" of trotting horses in training at the course. They invited Sterrett to go back and see the trotters, expressing at the same time a desire that he should show the stranger his racers. This last request made it out of the question to decline, and he went back with them to inspect the trotters.

As they passed through the gate into the inclosure of the trotting stable, a fierce Newfoundland dog, fastened by a tether long enough to allow him a wide range, dashed at Russell and Sterrett, who were in advance, and came nigh snapping them. A man sitting in front of one of the stable doors, seeing this, did not rate the dog, but only called a boy to shorten his tether. This man was very peculiar in appearance, tall and slender, with long, straight, light hair, tallow-colored eyes, long, tortuous nose, lantern jaws, a cavernous mouth, and a general hungriness of look. He was whittling a stick of wood when the visitors appeared, slicing off long shavings. But as his employer came into view and he seemed to comprehend the purport of the visit of the strangers, the shavings grew smaller and thinner, and at last he subsided into minute whittling, and seemed to be carving a figure on the end of the stick. The proprietor said to him, as the strangers advanced, "Littlefield, tell Zeke to c'm out and show these folks the hossis." Then a neat, rosy little man, in his shirt sleeves, wearing a jockey cap, came forth, and, one after another, led out the trotters. Sterrett looked at them with ill-concealed disgust. They were small and coarsely bred, and all had their tails cut short and cocked up, as we see in the pictures of the English cob. To the eyes of any lover of thoroughbreds they presented a sorry appear-

ance. Russell, growing tired of the exhibition, and struck with the physiognomy of the man whittling at the stable door, approached him and engaged him in talk. Seeing a horse in the stable before which he sat, a roan horse with black points and having a long tail, the only one of all this "string" of trotters thus furnished, and observing that he was highly groomed, and that a boy was then kneeling at his side rubbing his legs, Russell asked, "What horse is this, and what are his qualities?"

The man again began to cut long shavings from his stick, slicing them clean to the end, in a lavish way, but after a time again settled down into minute whittling and answered, "Wall, that hoss is nothin' perticular."

"You seem to take especially good care of him, and he seems very highly groomed."

"Wall, yis, we try to take middlin' good care of all on 'em, but this hoss is nothin' alarmin'. Wall, he's a hoss—a middlin' good hoss o' the kind—a hoss that 'ud do to go for cider, or suthin' l'k that, abeaout villages. That's abeaout the kind of a hoss he is—nothin' alarmin'—not's good's he looks."

Russell would gladly have made a further study of this man, but Sterrett now invited McKay and the stranger to go over to see the thoroughbreds, and he went with them to Sterrett's stables. There old Beard led out the racers for inspection. The Eastern gentleman was filled with admiration of the beautiful colts, and looked them over carefully from every point of view—from the front, from the rear, and in profile. He felt their silken coats, and praised them extravagantly, much to the gratification of the old trainer. Then Sterrett had led out the great Ormus, the victor on so many fields, but now disabled and withdrawn from the turf. "Jerusalem! Jehosaphat! Lands sakes!" exclaimed the little man. "That is a hoss!"

The hero seemed to know that he was on exhibition, and held his head high in air, and glanced over the field of his former triumphs, his great eyes blazing with their ancient fires, and neighed and pranced and reared, and gave occasion to the trainer to lead him around in a circle and to show his form and action in their best light. Then as

he was led back the little man, putting his hand upon his fine silken coat, exclaimed, "What a cut! I dun't know as I ever felt a cut l'k that, on a hoss." And then, stepping back and placing his thumbs in the armholes of his vest, and surveying the horse in profile, he exclaimed, "How he would style up in single hairness!"

It was a sight to behold old Beard's face at this suggestion—Ormus, "the great Ormus," in single harness! or in any harness but the snaffle bridle and the racing saddle! Not Rob Roy, when the good bailie, Nichol Jarvie, proposed to make his sons weavers, and Rob swore that untranslatable Gaelic oath, felt greater wrath than now burned in the heart of the old trainer. But he said only, "You must excuse me now, gentlemen. I must put the horses away."

Then he led back Ormus into his stable, and fastened the door on the inside. Sterrett, seeing the wrath in his face, obvious to all, said something about the inviolable routine of a racing stable, and the absolute rule of the trainer, and soon after the visitors went away. Then Sterrett heard the old man growling in the stable: "Put him in harness! If he didn't kick the brains out of any all-fired man that would come about him with harness, I'd never feed him another quart of oats! I don't know what this world is coming to! It ain't your fault, my beauties. The horses are all right; it's the men that's falling away and going to the devil with their new-fangled notions."

The trotting races excited very little interest at The Falls, and had only a slim attendance. They will not be further noticed in this chronicle. But the great races for thoroughbreds, now at hand, beginning on the Tuesday of the following week, excited intense interest. Already, during the last days of the week preceding those races, great numbers of strangers had come into town. But on Monday afternoon they fairly poured in. Rattling over the stony street came stage after stage, all four-in-hands, filled with people, outside and inside. Load after load of dusty men, their very eyebrows filled with the white dust of the turnpike road, got off at Allen's tavern, and hurried into the house to secure quarters. Crowds beset the shop of Jerry Wade, the fashionable negro barber opposite, making

themselves presentable for the supper table. In the throng of people who stood in front of the tavern or sat upon the settees there, was our young friend, John D., and by his side Henry Allen, a son of the proprietor, a knowing youth, who was pointing out the notabilities and giving short summaries of their quality. "There," said he, "is Major Buford," pointing to a large gentleman who drove up in a dearborn, "and there is Captain Viley; and hanged if there ain't Uncle Ned Blackburn! He can out-talk 'em all! And there's Paddy Burns from Frankfort; he can out-brag 'em all." And so he went on as the different notabilities came into view. Then, as a stage drove up filled with men, he cried out, "By George! Digby, here's a stage-load of gamblers; there's — and — and — and —. And there's old Algeyer, the Dutchman; they say he can beat 'em ail."

At this moment the stage door was opened, and a large man, with small, round, gray eyes and a great red nose, got out, his corpulence making his exit a slow proceeding. He was received with great cordiality by a well-known town sport who stood there, no other than Ould's client, John Lewis, of the gambling-room, to whom the reader has been already introduced. "Yon," said the big man, "did you got my room?"

"Yes, it is all arranged," said Lewis.

"Everything?"

"Everything," said Lewis, with emphasis.

"Den let us stant a vile. I vant to stretch mine laigs, unt look to see who comes." And they turned their faces to the street and observed the new arrivals.

As the stages rolled in, the big man said, "Py George! ain't dey coomin' in! Everybody I p'lieve I ever knowt is coomin' in. Vy, vat a dstream of beeples! Unt, Yon, dere ought to be a goot run of suckers fon der looks."

John Lewis winked and nodded assent. Then, as a stage dashed up, the big man pointed to a thin, black-eyed man sitting by the window, dressed in a clerical suit of black, with white cravat, and said eagerly, "Yon, ain't dot 'Illary dere?"

"Yes, that's Hillary."



The big man shook with laughter, and then said, "I never shall forgit 'Illary. I knowt em yust as soon as I spied em. Der fierst time I seed 'Illary vas in Harrisburg, Bennsylvanny. I vas up dere vone vinter, lookin' about, yust to see vat I could see, unt I valks in der tavern vone night, unt I vinds a party by a roundt table playin' loo, unt 'Illary vas dere. It vas mighty cold, but dere vas a goot fire roarin' in der grate, unt I takes a seat to get varm, unt to look on a vile at der game, to see who's who, unt vat's vat. After a vile der loo goes off, unt I says, 'Chentlemen, has you any objection dot I shall take a handt at der game?' Unt everybody says, 'Oh, no, no; coom in,' unt pegin to make room, unt I takes a seat next py 'Illary. Pretty soon I push 'Illary on der laig, unt I say, 'It looks like a fellow could vin a goot deal here, oof he's lukey.' Unt 'Illary push me pack unt say, 'He kin dat.' Unt ve skinst der party." And then his fat sides shook with laughter, and he said, "Yon, coom, led us go in unt git some schnapps." Then they made their way through the crowd, the big man shouldering along behind Lewis, scanning the faces of the throng with eager eyes, bearing heavily on his cane, and touching the ground gingerly with his feet.

John D. now espied Mr. Ould sitting on one of the settees, looking at the incoming crowd, and went up to him, and Ould made room for him by his side.

"Well, John D.," he said, "what are you doing here? Just looking at this multitude of people, I suppose."

"Yes, sir; that's all."

"What a strange pleasure men take in looking at a crowd of their fellow-men! People will flock to any place where they are assured of seeing a multitude, irrespective of any other attraction. It gives me no satisfaction, generally, but I am interested in observing the gambling fraternity attracted here in full force by these races. I once had a pretty extensive acquaintance with them. They were among the first to recognize my ability as a lawyer, and a great number of them have been my clients. Their ups and downs are fearful to contemplate! Since I have been sitting here, I have seen men that I had supposed to be dead

for years. But a great sporting event like this stirs 'Rascaldom' to its depths, and brings to the surface things we thought buried forever. There is a seedy fellow now, with one eye out, two fingers of his right hand off, the half of one eyebrow gone, and a bald place on the back of his head like the mark of a scalping knife. I remember him a spruce, dandified gamester, dressed in the height of the fashion; with a diamond pin on his breast, and no end of rings and bangles, and—look at him now! He is like one of the old rats we see nibbling offal in the gutter, with one eye out, its tail half gone, and the hair off in spots, from scalding by hot water. These races have stirred him up from some lower deep, and he is here to try his fortune once more in the upper air, like the gallant Widdrington, still fighting on his stumps.

"What a gulf there is between this poor devil and the airy dandy that arrived a while ago with his light carriage and span of dapple grays! Yet a freak of fortune may restore that maimed wretch to his former station, and next week his head may be bewigged, his hands gloved, and he so changed that we shall not know him. But this is not likely to happen. There are plenty of instances in the chronicles of the fraternity in which a single small coin, staked and played boldly, has led to fortune; but in these cases the players were young men. Such things are achieved only by the rash, blind courage of youth. Old gamblers, like old sporting dogs, blink and don't go in on the game like young ones. The old age of the gambler is indeed, for the most part, pitiable. Sooner or later he is overslaughed by the more active youngsters, who consider him fair game, and overcome him with 'new things,' which are every day developed in the profession. Meantime, age is sapping his strength, his skill diminishes day by day; the more he plays the worse he plays, and he becomes at last like Lucket's shoemaker, who is said to have made shoes till he couldn't 'wax an end.' Then, without money and without friends, he can only, like a hurt beast, hide himself and die. I have known among them some strictly honorable men. But, as a whole, they are a bad set. Never meddle with

them, John D., but always turn a deaf ear to their invitations to 'go in and win.'

"There is another public character, conspicuous here, whose career is not unlike that of the gambler—the professional politician. As among the gamblers, there is the exceptional cool head that quits when the game is at its best, but as a rule his old age is as miserable as that of the gambler. After a life of plotting and intrigue, and corrupt bargaining, and subornation, all of which he denominates *WORK*, with devilish irony like that with which the gambler calls his desperate ventures *PLAY*; bankrupt in political influence, deserted by what he calls his friends,—his associates in a selfish and sordid pursuit,—his temper soured, run down in mind, body and estate, he 'lags superfluous on the stage.' Yet still he pushes about to public gatherings everywhere, to keep himself before the people. At conventions he hangs on the wings of platforms or crowds into the center, scowling upon the younger aspirants, whom he sees pushing him from the stool; throwing to the audience leers of invitation to call him up for a speech; a single voice bringing him to his feet with 'Thanks, gentle friends, for this spontaneous call,' etc., mumbling, with cracked voice, his ancient platitudes; vamping up his mouldy record, which he considers a part of the national history, but which everybody else has forgotten. How many of these, with a reputation that should content a reasonable ambition, impelled by a resistless and insatiable craving for notoriety, wear out the good name earned in the past, and go down to posterity mere drivelers! They should take the poet's counsel:

" 'Walk sober off before a sprightlier age  
Comes tittering on and shoves you from the stage,'

or they should take a lesson from Quin, the actor, who, when entreated, in his old age, to play Falstaff, said, 'No! I am old, I have lost my teeth, and I'm blanked if I will *whistle* Falstaff for any man!'

## CHAPTER XLVI

### QUARTER RACES

"Sharp 's the word."

IT IS hardly worth while to give any account of the great running races, which in that day differed little, except in their less showy accessories, from the races of the present time; and of these the reader may have more than enough in the daily newspapers. But he may find interest in another class of races, now out of date, known as the "county races," and also called "quarter races," and by the lovers of the thoroughbreds opprobriously called "scrub" races, and the horses engaged in them "scrub" horses. There were no stated distances for these races, this being a matter for agreement between the various parties after they came together on the course; but they were usually short races, at distances less than a mile. They were in all respects upon the most liberal and popular footing. No charge was made for the entry of the horses, nor for admission to the track or the stands, the gates being flung wide open for the free entrance of all. The people in attendance differed widely from those that frequented the running races, being for the most part country people of the middle class, dressed in homespun, butternut, or blue-jeans. Yet among all classes there were some who took delight in these races. Even among the lovers of the thoroughbred there were some that regularly patronized them. The horses were in marked contrast with the thoroughbreds. They seemed to be the common working stock of the farm. Instead of the careful grooming shown by the thoroughbreds, they had often an appearance of studied neglect; with mud on their ankles, and hayseed or even burrs in their manes and tails. Sometimes a horse that had become famous was disguised by having a white ankle or other conspicuous mark con-



cealed by a dye. And often one of these was paraded as a pulling horse (for all sorts of contests were engaged in at these races), all with intent to deceive. Sharp was the word here.

The attendance this season was very large. A great many strangers were on the ground with horses, some clamorously offering matches, while others maintained a quiet reticence, biding their time. Most of these racing people were Kentuckians or Indianians, but there were representatives also from Tennessee and even more remote quarters, for these scrub racers are enterprising men and make wide circuits with their favorite horses.

At noon on the first day only a few races at different short distances had been run, exciting much merriment, but no great interest. Meantime, the knowing ones were industriously threading the crowd inspecting the horses, which were all openly exhibited, looking for points for bets. Russell and Stackpole were there sitting on a lower seat in the large stand, where they could see and hear all that went on, without being jostled by the crowd, enjoying the humorous incidents peculiar to these meetings. On their left hand in the quarter stretch stood two men, one of whom, a short, stout man, held a heavy-set bay horse wearing a blind bridle. At regular intervals this man called out, "I'll pull any horse on the ground for two hundred dollars"; or, "If any man's got a horse he wants to pull, here's his match." He had repeated these cries many times when there rode into the throng a man mounted on a very large, white-faced sorrel horse. Russell was at once attracted by this horse, and, as he came near, also by the rider. Somewhere he had known both horse and rider, but could not at once recall the circumstances of this acquaintance. Hearing the proclamation made for a pulling match, the newcomer rode near the man making it, and after a close scrutiny of the horse said, "How much do you want to pull for?"

"Two hundred dollars," was the reply.

"It's a go," said the man of the big sorrel; "I'll pull him for two hundred dollars."

The man of the bay horse made no rejoinder, but turned

away, seeming not to have heard the acceptance of his wager on a pulling match, and held a whispered talk with his companion. Then the man of the sorrel in a loud voice repeated his offer. This seemed to disconcert the man of the bay horse, who fidgeted about uneasily, and at last, making a cautionary signal, whispered something in the ear of the newcomer. "Oh!" replied the man of the sorrel aloud, "you want to run him, do you?" And then, after another keen look over the bay horse, he said, "How much do you want to run him for and what distance?"

"Any distance from three to six hundred yards, for two hundred dollars."

"Well, then I'll run Bally against him."

"Bally? Who's Bally?"

"This is him right here under me now."

"What weight will you carry?" said the man of the bay, looking all alive.

"My weight against yours."

"You'll run that sorrel horse you're now a-ridin' ag'in this bay, your weight ag'in mine, for two hundred dollars and put up the money right now?"

"I'll run this sorrel horse I'm now a-ridin' ag'in that bay, for two hundred dollars, my weight ag'in yours, six hundred yards, and put up the money right now." And as he put his hand into his pocket he added, "I will in the cool."

Then the man of the bay called out with some eagerness to a handsome man who rode by, "Mr. Shipp," and then in a low tone inquired of his antagonist, "What mought your name be?"

"Well, I don't know that my name is any matter, but the two first letters of my name is Garrett Holmes." Then the man of the bay introduced Mr. Holmes to Mr. Shipp and Mr. Shipp to Mr. Holmes, and stated the terms of the race, and requested Mr. Shipp to hold the stakes, and they were placed in his hands; Mr. Holmes saying, "I don't know Mr. Shipp, but his face is enough for me"; adding, as Mr. Shipp made a memorandum of the match, "Put two *r*'s and two *t*'s in Garrett, if you please, Mr. Shipp, and an *l* in Holmes"; and the match was concluded,

And now all was bustle on the part of the man of the bay horse. News of the match was spread from mouth to mouth, and soon crowds of men were gathered about the horses, examining their points. Much the greater number were about the bay, many of these seeming bent on a private conference with his owner. They were partisans who had come on purpose to back the horse at these races, but who from policy had hitherto kept in the background. Now that the match was made and the news spread abroad, they gathered about the bay horse and his owner, for a hasty conference, and then scattered themselves abroad in the throng, to place b ts on their favorite. This was not very easily done, as somehow the reputation of the bay horse had been spread about, and his owner, Kirby of Indiana, was well known in quarter racing circles as a keen, adroit man.

The man of the sorrel horse was soon recognized by Russell as the person he and Stackpole had met in the "Blue-grass," and of whom Russell had made such free use in his "red-hot Calvinistic sermon." As they saw him unattended—the crowd all gathered about the bay horse—slowly riding away from the throng toward the open field, a strong feeling of sympathy came over them. They had noticed a marked change in his appearance since their former meeting. Instead of the soiled finery in which he was then arrayed, he now wore a plain, new homespun suit, a wide beaver hat, polished boots, substantial leather gloves, and had all the insignia of a prosperous, respectable Kentucky farmer. All marks of dissipation had gone from his countenance, giving place to a healthy, ruddy glow, and there was now a lively sparkle in his dark hazel eyes. "He is in the hands of the Philistines," said Russell; "let's go to him and renew our acquaintance, and find if we can be of any service to him." Stackpole readily assenting, they went over to where he stood dismounted and in the act of giving over the horse to a negro man. As they approached he was heard to say, "Give him a sup of water, and then take him over to that tree," pointing across the field, "and rub him down. I will be along there in a little while."

As the horse was led away, Russell and Stackpole saluted the owner, saying simply, "How do you do, Mr. Holmes?" For a moment, with a puzzled look, he scrutinized the countenances of both, and then a light broke over his face, and he reddened, and said, looking at Russell, not without an air of self-assertion and even superiority, "Oh! you are the great preacher I met up the country last year. Why, it looks like the old times we read about, to see a preacher on a race track. But I know all about you. I was at Frankfort soon after I met you; and I saw you there, and pointed you out to Paddy Burns as a great preacher, and he said, 'Hell is full of such preachers as him.' And I don't doubt that it is." And then turning to Stackpole he said, "And pray, how do you find *yourself*? You didn't have much to say when we met before, but I don't doubt that you were like the Kentuckian's parrot—which was an owl—you kept up a devil of a thinking."

There was now in the manner and speech of Mr. Holmes a strong trace of resentment, as of offended pride, that gave Russell a feeling of uneasiness. Manifestly, the relations of these people had changed since they met last, and the interview seemed about to end in a cold or resentful parting, when Mr. Holmes, seeing the changed expression on the faces of Russell and Stackpole, said, in a modified tone, "It was a pretty cool thing in you gentlemen to make a battering ram of me for that ironsides congregation; but I am not going to let it stick in my craw, and to show you that I have no hard feeling any more, I'll give you a point on this race. Bet your money on Bally."

"Why," said Russell, "we were uneasy about you, thinking you in the hands of the Philistines—that you would suffer by these sharpers here—and we came to renew our acquaintance, and to know if we could be of any service to you."

"Did you, indeed!" he replied, with a look full of kindness, and taking a hand of each of them. "Well, that is mighty good of you. But you needn't be uneasy; they can't beat Bally." And then he added, after a pause, "Come over and look at him—well, I'm more than glad to meet you." And then, as they walked along, he said, "No, they



can't beat him; but this is the last race I'm ever going to run him." And then, arresting his steps, and turning so as to face his two new-found friends, he said, with an air of solemnity, "I've got married since I saw you; married my old sweetheart, that I've been courting for I don't know how many years; but she wouldn't hear of it until I went into bonds, and kept away from drink and cyards for a whole year. I compromised on one more race for Bally. This is the last race I'll ever run. I'm a family man now, and my word's out! I've promised to give half my winnings down here to my wife's church that they are building in Paris. And I'm not to bet but two hundred dollars, unless somebody tigerates me too much, and then only one more hundred. Her church ain't so much down on amusement as the others are—it's the big *Episcopal*! But I'm done with all betting after this race. My word's out! And it won't be hard for me to keep it, either. I've been married now three months, and this is the first time I've passed a night away from home, and I'm homesick now."

Coming to where the horse stood beneath the shade of a tree in the field, he said, "There he is. Look him over. You'll find marks of blood all about him. Feel his coat; and look at his little muzzle, and his big, thin nostrils, and his full eyes—and his forehead! And what do you say to his legs—for a horse over sixteen hands? He's a full half-brother to John Richards!"

"Yes," said Russell, after a close scrutiny of the horse, "he shows blood; but he seems to me too big for a race horse; especially for a short, sharp dash, where the start is so important. I should think he would be slow to start."

"Yes, he is big for a race at short distances, or at any distance. Major Buford saw him at Lexington and wanted to buy him for the saddle, because he would suit his weight; and he offered me a big price, though he didn't know he was a racer. He told me I ought to call him Colossus; but I never liked any heathen names for horses, and I just call him Bally. That was just before he beat 'Lynch-pin' three hundred yards. He has beat 'Stick-in-the-mud,' at Harrodsburg, a thousand yards, and 'Crazy-

Jane' six hundred, and people thought he couldn't run such a short distance as three hundred yards. But he beat 'Lynch-pin,' too."

"Why, then, he must be well known to these racing men here," said Russell; "and that Indiana man must have a good horse in that bay, or he would not have matched him."

"Well, no; Bally has never run here at The Falls, and he hasn't been on any track for a long time, and there are so many new horses coming on every year, there ain't but a few, if any, that know him. A race horse is like a politician—he's soon forgot if he keeps off the track. The few that may know him will keep their own counsel. As to that bay horse, he's a good one, I don't doubt, and his owner, Kirby, is a sharp man; but he can't beat Bally. Bally can beat him every foot in the race. Six hundred yards makes it a certainty. You'll see him laid out at four hundred, if he keeps anywhere near Bally."

"I have noticed," said Russell, "that in these short races they often have a man with a wagon-whip to cut the horse when the word is given, and insure a prompt start. I know two men here, the Mundy brothers, both experts in these races, and if you say so I will get one of them to do this."

"Well, I don't object," said Holmes, laughing, "but if he cuts Bally after the word's given, he'll surprise me."

A man was now seen approaching them over the field, at whom Holmes gazed intently some moments, and then said slowly, while still gazing at the stranger, "If—if—I don't—believe—that's old Major—Davy! And I'll bet a horse to a hen—that—he knows Bally, and is coming to look at him! He saw him run at Harrodsburg, and at Lexington, and now he's coming to see how he's doing, before he backs him in this race."

It was indeed the Major, a well-known veteran of the quarter track, now approaching. He was a tall, thin old man, with a prodigious nose—aquiline and red, and shining in the autumn sun. He wore a long-skirted frock-coat of dark cloth, with a great length of white marseilles waistcoat, a white cravat, and a wide-brimmed white beaver hat.

A dewlap, thin and translucent—showing the blood-vessels—sprang from somewhere beneath his cravat, and terminated just under his chin. He wore spectacles, but did not look through the glasses, but over them, while they rested low down on his nose. He made a courtly salutation to the company, as he advanced, and then shook hands with Holmes, and immediately, excusing himself to Russell and Stackpole for so doing, invited Holmes to a private talk. As they walked aside, the Major's face had an intense business expression. He was chewing excitedly a quill, switching it from side to side of his mouth. Only fragments of their talk could be heard by the other parties. "Been well wintered—exercised every day; long walks, led by the bridle," was about all that Holmes was heard to say. The voice of Major Davy was pitched so low as to be inaudible. He seemed to feel great interest in the subject of the interview; chewing vigorously his toothpick, and at the end throwing it away in fragments. Then he and Holmes returned to the company and to the horse, which the Major, now looking through his glasses pushed up to his eyes, closely surveyed. Then, stooping and passing his hands along the horse's legs, each in turn, he slowly and carefully, with thumb and finger, explored all the tendons. As he rose from this scrutiny, Holmes looked eagerly into his eyes, and said, in a tone of interrogatory, "Nothing there—not a buckshot?"

"No," replied the Major; "nothing to hurt." And then he added, "Don't be in a hurry to bring him to the track; there's plenty of time." And then he sauntered away slowly back to the course.

Holmes and his friends remained for some time in the field. Then the horse was again thoroughly brushed over, and now shone with a fine golden shimmer that showed his claim to blood well founded. Then they made their way to the track, where all was bustle and excitement. The betting was greatly in favor of the Indiana horse, whose friends were vociferously offering large and small sums on their favorite. There were now more takers for these bets; among them Mr. Jim Woods, the silent partner of the gambling house of John Lewis, who betted considerable sums

with his partners, who were backing the favorite. There were also among those who backed Holmes's horse those perverse Kentuckians who, as a rule, back the native horse against the foreigner, and never under any circumstances back the foreigner against the native. Among these was Mr. Joe Sterrett, who was defiantly putting up considerable sums on the sorrel. Major Davy also made several considerable wagers the same way.

Kirby was now seen approaching Holmes. Holmes advanced to meet him, and they exchanged the courtesies usual with gentlemen on the eve of hostilities. In ancient times, in cases of hostilities between strange warriors, each was accustomed to boast of his lineage and his exploits, and often, according to Homer and the Bible, they reviled each other. The age of chivalry had put an end to this rudeness, substituting a lofty courtesy, which was observed even in these peaceful contests on the race course. Lifting his hat and running his fingers through his roach, Kirby said, "I should like, by way of gettin' better acquainted with you, to bet you another hundred dollars."

"I'm much obliged to you, I'm sure," answered Holmes, "but I'm under a partial promise not to bet any more; but I think we'll know each other a good deal better when the race is over."

Then Major Davy, who stood by, said, "It looks foolish, when a gentleman refuses to back his own horse, for a stranger to do it. But it seems hard for gentlemen, when they have come so far from home, not to be able to get their money on their horse, and, just to accommodate, I will take your bet—just to accommodate"; and the money was staked. Then the Major was seen to make other considerable bets, and his voice was heard from wherever bettors were congregated, saying, "Just to accommodate," and showing himself, wherever bets on the Indianian were offered, a most affable and accommodating old gentleman.

Notwithstanding the courtesies between Holmes and his adversary, it was not likely that any legitimate means of securing success would be omitted by either. It was a common practice in these races, as well as in the thoroughbred races, for the riders to endeavor, by sly, boastful speeches,



to intimidate their adversaries, or to excite their anger, and so demoralize them; and in the thoroughbred races violent quarrels between the riders often went on during the race. In these short races there was no time for this, and whatever was done in this way had to be done in the beginning. The betting had now abated, and the race being on all sides called for, Holmes and Kirby mounted and rode to the judges' stand. They were in their shirt-sleeves, with handkerchiefs tied about their heads, the only difference being that Holmes wore his waistcoat.

As they sat on their horses, the judges in the stand above in conference, some one in the crowd called out to Holmes to take off his waistcoat; to which he replied, "Oh! Bally don't mind a little weight; I'd wear my hat, only the breeze he'll make would take it off o' my head."

Kirby chuckled significantly at this little sally and, with a smile and a sly look at Holmes's eyes, said, "Do you know what you're runnin' ag'in?"

"No-o," answered Holmes in his drawling way; "what is he, anyhow?"

"Well," said Kirby, with a look as ominous as if he were about to announce something that would blast the hopes of his adversary and grieve his heart, "this is 'Jerry-gonaked.'" This was a plain case of "tigerating."

Holmes did not show any signs of concern at this announcement, but only looked the bay horse over from crupper to foretop, and then said, "Well, if that's 'Jerry-gonaked,' I'll just bet you another hundred that I beat him."

"Talk!" quickly responded Kirby, and leaning far back on his saddle to get at his pocket, and pushing his hand deep into his breeches, he pulled out his wallet, while Holmes took two folded fifty-dollar banknotes from his waistcoat, and the stakes were put up in the hands of the judges.

Meantime, Russell had engaged for the wagon-whip act his friend Mundy, who now went along, whip in hand, with a full half of the crowd, to the point from which the horses were to start. Russell and Stackpole remained at the place of outcome, where all was intense excitement. A crowd of men were there struggling and pushing, closing the

track in their eagerness to get, down the stretch, a view of the start. Then there was a cry—"They're off!" The crowd scattered backward, the beating of the horses' feet was heard—not in the quadrupedantical rhythm of the poet, but in a roll like the rolling of drums. On they came, the shirt-sleeves of the riders quivering and snapping in the air, and stormed past the score, Bally more than twenty feet in advance.

As Holmes rode back to the stand, and Bally stood with head erect and eyes blazing, only his wide thin nostrils showing that he had made any unusual exertion, Russell and Stackpole hastened to congratulate the victor. "Did you see him start?" asked Holmes.

"No, no; we were here to see him come out."

"Oh, you ought to have seen him start! Any nag can come out, but it takes a HORSE to start. That Jerry-gonaked ain't a bad starter, but Bally!—oh, you ought to have seen him! I felt him under me fixing himself till he was like something set up on triggers; and right on the word he fetched a grunt you might have heard up here, and jumped twenty feet!"

"Mundy was there with the whip," said Russell; "I suppose he cut him?"

"Well, no-o. He was there and cut *at* him, but Bally was gone."

Pretty soon Holmes had made ready to depart for his home in the Bluegrass, and came trotting after Stackpole's carriage as Russell and he were driving away from the course, Bally extending himself in a marvelous way in a trot. "Why, look at him," exclaimed Holmes as he came alongside; "I do believe he would make a 'Northern trotter,' if he would come down to such a business." And then, as Stackpole pulled up the horses, he said, "I wanted to say good-by. I should have been ready to start with you, but I had to get Jim Woods to take off his plates and put on his shoes for the road. Jim shod him for the race. He knows Bally of old, and won a pile! I am off for home. If you ever come to Bourbon I want you to come and see me. I don't ask you as people sometimes do, hopin' to God that you may never come, but because I'll be more than glad to

see you. Anybody in Paris can tell you where I live. I've got a piece of grass there, and my business now is dealing in fine horses. You'll find Bally and me retired from the turf—me a sober farmer, and him drawing my wife about the country and to church, in her little barouche. No more racing for us. My word's out." And then, after a cordial leave-taking, he rode away.

Russell and Stackpole continued to attend the quarter races to the close, enjoying the humors of this large assemblage of professed sharp practitioners; especially Mr. Burk, a keeper of a second-rate tavern in the town, who was always present on such occasions, prepared for a coup, and often caught the crowd, before the racing ended, with something unexpected. He had a very lively chattering manner, much wit, and more oddity, and kept people in good humor wherever he went. On the third and last day he was very active endeavoring to get up a pacing race; inquiring everywhere for pacing horses. Pacing races were not uncommon then, the Canadian pacer having been extensively bred there for the saddle. But there seemed to be no pacers present.

The attention of Russell was also particularly drawn to another man, mounted upon a dark roan horse, and dressed in a new suit of blue-jeans, who was constantly riding from one part of the field to another, closely observing the people and the horses, but holding no communication with any one. The horse Russell thought to be the same he had seen so carefully groomed in the trotting stables of the little man from Rhode Island, and the man he fancied to resemble the one with whom he had talked there, and whose whittling played such an important part in his talk. But his suit of country jeans seemed to negative this. Curious to ascertain the truth, Russell walked near one of the booths in the field, where this man sat upon his horse, and soon after saw him approached by Burk. Standing concealed by the booth, and cocking his ear toward them, he heard Burk say, in answer to some muttered words of the other, "Don't you git out of patience. Just leave it all to me. If it's on the cyards I'll fetch it. And don't you open your mouth to a single soul. If you speak a

single word to any man in this crowd the whole business will be busted up. You don't know these people! If they hear a man call a cow a keaouw, they ain't a-goin' to have anything to do with bettin' him on a trottin' nor a pacin' race—not a thing in the world, especially bettin' on a pacin' race."

"Wall," replied the man, "I dun't calc'late to say nothin' abeaout keaouws; it's hossis that's got to dew with this business."

"There, now! Hossis is just as bad as keaouws. How do you spell hossis in your country?"

"H-o-s-s-i-s," he replied.

"Well, out here we spell it h-a-w-s-e-z. And I tell you ag'in that the fat will all be in the fire if you open your mouth to any of these fellers. You see, there come a feller once to these races, drivin' a little ewe-necked sorrel horse in a wagon, peddlin' clocks. He tried hard to sell his clocks and seemed desperate about it, and at last, when they got up a pacin' race, he said he wanted to git shet of his clocks somehow, and if they would let him put up clocks for his entry he'd put his horse that he had in his wagon in the race. Somebody asked him if his horse was fast, and he said he was 'fast enough to ketch a keaouw.' They let him in, and then everybody wanted clocks, and they bantered him for bets, clocks against money. He 'wanted to git shet of 'em,' he said, 'someaway.' Well, he beat the whole party, and drove away with a pile of money and all his clocks."

The man on the roan smiled, and his eyes lighted up at hearing of this exploit of a compatriot. "Wall," he said, "I guess I'll hev to leave it all to yeaouw; but I dun't see nothin' of no rackin' hossis 'beaout here nowheres."

"There you go again," said Burk. "They call it pacin' out here, not rackin'. You just keep your shirt on, and I'll fix it yet. And don't open your mouth to anybody." With this parting injunction Mr. Burk returned to the track. Soon he was heard at different places crying out in a loud voice, "Ain't nobody got no pacin' horses here? There's a country fellow over here from Indiana says he wants to git a pacin' race on his horse, and I'd like to see



him have a show." And again, in another place, "Where's all the pacin' horses that used to be stavin' and spraddlin' about the track here? There's a country feller over there says he wants to make a race for a mile dash, on a pacin' horse." But there was no response.

Later in the day, when a heavy rain had fallen, muddying the track and putting an end to further quarter racing, and Mr. Burk was still going about in quest of some man having a pacing horse, one of the Mundy brothers, at whose stable Stackpole's horses were kept, came to Stackpole and said, "Burk is trying to get a match against a roan pacing horse here. He's a 'dark horse,' and a good one, I reckon; but I think your off-horse of the gray team can beat him, if you will let us make the match and manage the race."

Russell here quickly interposed, telling them of his having seen both the horse and man in the trotting stables of the Rhode Island man, and of the talk he had overheard between the man and Burk, and advising against the match. Stackpole seemed not disinclined to make the race, and said, "My gray off-horse was originally a pacer, but was afterward broken to trot, and now, when urged beyond his speed at a trot, goes into a rack, and can go at a great rate."

"He can, indeed," said Mundy; "and if you will let me manage it I'll beat that roan. I know all about him. Burk is always looking around for some ketch, and he found out that fellow's horse, and persuaded him to stay behind when the trotting men went away, and has been keeping the man and his horse at the tavern ever since. It would be such a joke on Burk to beat him! I wouldn't miss it for the world! You needn't bet a cent. Brother and I will take all the stake of a hundred dollars."

"How are you going to beat him?" said Russell. "Your horse is not in training; and depend upon it, there is no horse here that can pace with that roan."

"Well, now, listen," said Mundy, lowering his voice. "That roan can beat Mr. Stackpole's horse, I don't doubt. But in the fix the track's now in, with mud half a leg deep, no horse can pace fast. I will ride, and let him take the lead all the way 'round to the quarter stretch. There the

distance stand is placed, and from that on, along the side of the track, is a path trod by the crowd passing over it till it is solid as a rope walk. The distance stand is right in the path, but it is on wheels, and when the horses get off, I'll have four or five men to go down and roll it out of the way, and when I come there I will pull on to the hard path, and beat him out, if he is a hundred yards ahead. He won't know anything of that towpath, and will be plugging along through the mud, not knowing that I can do any better, and I will slip up on him along the hard path. We'll beat him sure!"

Russell was captivated by the element of mischief in the plot, and now became an earnest advocate of the match, and Mundy went away to close it; Stackpole and Russell agreeing to take such interest in the stake as Mundy might assign them. This was fixed at fifteen dollars each, the Mundy brothers and their friends taking the remainder.

Soon after the match was made, Burk was actively engaged offering bets on the roan horse, but found no takers, people being shy on account of his well-known shrewdness and his reputation for sharp practice. He now went about everywhere crying, "Where are the friends of the gray horse?"

"He ain't got no friends," some one replied.

"Well, it's the strangest thing I ever saw," rejoined Burk. "The horse must have some friends. Somebody put him in the race. He didn't enter himself, I reckon. Somebody must be about that wants to bet on him." And then, in a louder voice, looking toward Stackpole and Russell, "Who wants to bet on the gray?" But there was no response. At last, finding no takers, he began to offer odds; first three to two, then two to one, and last three to one, when some of his offers were taken; and at last he found so many to take the odds, that he backed himself against one of the stands, and was busy for almost half an hour with a throng of people making bets.

Then the race came off. The roan at once took the lead, and soon put a considerable gap between himself and the gray, widening this gap as he went, until the last quarter was reached, where Mundy was almost a hundred yards be-

hind. Meantime, the distance stand had been removed, and when the gray turned into the quarter, Mundy pulled him on to the hard path, and striking him with the spur, he sprang off with marvelous speed—swallowing the way—and rushed past the roan (whose rider started in his saddle, amazed at finding him close at hand), crossing the score several lengths ahead.

The races were now at an end. The men and the horses trooped away, leaving the course and the booths and the stands

“All tenantless save to the crannying winds.”

But all were destined to be furbished up in another year, and similar scenes enacted.

## CHAPTER XLVII

### MR. OULD'S ACCIDENT

"The uncommon beauty and marvelous English of the Protestant Bible! It lives on the ear like music that can never be forgotten. The memory of the dead passes into it. The potent traditions of childhood are stereotyped in its verses. The power of all the griefs and trials of a man is hidden beneath its words. It is the representative of his best moments; and all that there has been about him soft, and gentle, and pure, and penitent, and good speaks to him forever out of his English Bible."

IN THE course of the season a very distressing incident occurred in the life of Mr. Ould at The Falls. The old Irish soldier mentioned in connection with the arrival of the first steamboat brought the following message to Russell: "L'yer Taylor tould me to tell you that Mr. Ould has been hurted very bad. He lept out of the windy in a fit of delarium tremenjus and is 'most kilt intirely."

Nothing saved Ould from death but the strong flaxen fabric from the looms at Vaughn's, which covered the veranda upon which he fell. He was grievously hurt, and lay for a long time suffering, seeing only the doctor and necessary attendants.

When fairly on the way to convalescence and restored health, but still confined to his room, and barely able with a crutch to walk across the floor, Ould sent for John D. to visit him. He had passed through a severe ordeal, by which his strong frame had been rudely shaken and his fortitude sorely tried. His sensitive temperament had made his friends apprehend that he would prove a difficult subject for the necessary treatment, and they were surprised to see him refuse the narcotics offered by the surgeon, and exhibit throughout the period of his greatest suffering the utmost fortitude. Only at the last, when



worn down and wasted, he had asked for opium, and cried out in his agony, "How long, O Lord, how long?" Assiduous nursing, and the best surgical skill the town afforded, had now brought him to the verge of convalescence.

On a Sunday afternoon John D. paid him a visit. He found him in a grave humor, but inclined to talk, as he always was with John D.

"I am getting well, John D. But I am not elated by that. I miss the pain I have so long endured, and the palliatives given for it—the alternations of suffering and ease. These have been good for me. I now dread a restoration to assured health and ease. I interpret for myself the constancy of Prometheus bound to the rock, crying "Ai, ai," while the vulture devoured his liver. He coveted the full punishment of his crime. He wanted to pay the full penalty of the law, and dreaded lest he should be prematurely remitted to himself. But I do not think I shall ever again sin in the way that has led to such trouble—I hope not. God help me!"

He had often urged upon John D. the usefulness of recording in a diary the events of the day, then a very common practice, and he now recurred to this, and said, "Besides giving you facility in expressing in writing whatever you may wish to say,—a valuable and rare accomplishment,—it will force a certain quantum of self-examination, and if you have any fixed purpose in life, as every man ought to have, will serve you as the mariner's reckoning serves him, showing how far you may have drifted from your course, and bring you back to it. Moreover, it will be of great interest to you in after years. The days of youth are with most men their happiest days, and are always recalled with pleasure. Even misfortunes and mis-carriages, serious enough at that time, are in after life subjects for mirth, and we laugh at them as at the mis-chances of a journey.

"My youthful days were not without hardship. My father had never been rich, though always independent. He was a soldier of the Revolution, the captain of a troop of horse which he equipped at his own cost, with money raised by mortgage on his land and slaves. In the general finan-

cial crash that followed the war he lost everything. And he met the usual fate of men who fall in worldly position: the greedy citizens swept on, not pausing to look upon the poor and broken bankrupt there. In his old age he became penurious, saving everything, however small, that came to his hands. All the pay he had received in continental money, in large notes, was put away in a long leather pocket-book, which he kept always in the breast of his coat. His hand was always near it, or his arm pressed the pocket where the book lay, thus constantly assuring himself that his treasure was safe. No man could persuade him that this money would not be good in the end.

"My only brother, a few years my senior, had got a place on a packet ship sailing to Liverpool, and my father and I went out from Norfolk in a small boat to see him before he sailed. We were hospitably entertained by Captain Johnston, who had known us in better days. He promised my father to look well after George, and, as he said, 'make a man of him.' After we had left the ship in our boat, and had got a short distance away, the captain hailed us through his trumpet, and, looking back, we saw drawn up along the ship's side the whole crew, who, under the lead of the captain, gave 'Three cheers for Captain Ould, a brave soldier of the Revolution!' Poor old father started to his feet, taking off his hat to make a salutation to this unexpected compliment, when the boat lurched and sent him headlong into the sea. One of the men was out in an instant, and bore his head above the waves, and in a short time we had him in the boat, safe but half strangled by the salt water. Before he could articulate I found him clutching at the breast pocket of his coat, where his treasure lay, tearing away the threads with which, out of abundant caution, he had stitched the mouth of the pocket. 'Bob,' he whispered in my ear, 'I am afraid we are ruined. Hurry the men ashore, and let's get where we may dry it. Oh, dear! oh, dear! The service and hardship of years may be destroyed in a moment.'

"He did not even look back to the ship, where a boat had been lowered, but, at a signal, drawn back again, thinking only of his treasure and hurrying the men ashore. Of

course, his whole store of continental money was not worth a penny, but nothing could shake his belief that it would all be good some day; and this delusion he literally hugged to his bosom until he died.

"Before my brother got a place on the ship, we had supported ourselves and our father by trafficking in oranges and other West Indian fruits; buying them in Norfolk, and peddling them about the towns and country. We became adepts at this business, learning to select such fruits as would keep, and to put first into market such as were ripe, and we drove a pretty thrifty trade. But the calamities incident to trade sometimes fell upon us, when large quantities of our commodities rotted on our hands. No merchant with argosies squandered abroad in hazardous speculation ever felt greater anxiety and distress than we did then; I recall, even now, the dismay with which, in solemn consultation one night, we contemplated bankruptcy!

"After George went to sea, I continued the business for a year, when my father died. Then a bachelor brother of my mother, a lawyer in Richmond, sent for me, and, after two years at school, I entered his office, where I studied for three years, having the benefit of a large law and miscellaneous library. Then I met your grandfather Digby, who had been the friend and comrade of my father in the war, and at his suggestion I came with him to The Falls.

"The reminiscences of my youth are all that I care to recall. All the rest I would willingly dismiss from my mind forever. But who can at will dismiss the past? The strange, the mysterious past! To-day is obvious, commonplace. We grapple with it, toy with it, possess it as a thing that is ours to use or to doff aside, as we will. But yesterday is already under the glamour of the past, and its contemplation 'sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought.' It has gone to that weird, dim region—dim as if lighted by a sun shorn of its beams—a region not of shadows but of realities—where lie all our griefs, and all our joys, now changed to griefs, where they rest immutable, indestructible, immortal—

" 'Not Heaven itself upon the past hath power,'

And all have left behind them here, in common, trivial things, in sights or sounds or odors, spells by which they may be called, like spirits, from the vasty deep, and made to come and possess us with their primal force: the very fountains of grief may be opened, and made to flow afresh, by a lowering winter sky, or a strain of music, or by the wafted fragrance of a flower.

"What I now most love to recall are the religious lessons learned at my mother's knee. She was a devout Churchwoman. Prayers morning and night, read from the Book of Common Prayer, were never omitted at our house. Attendance at church, on Sunday and the holy days of the Church, was imperative. We went also, at stated times, to be examined in the creed and catechism. That was the church in which your maternal great-grandfather preached, and where he took tithes. Should you go there, look in the parish record, and you will see your name and mine among the vestrymen, in more than one generation. You will see the handwriting of other John Digbys and other Robert Oulds, Christ's faithful soldiers in the dim past.

"The knights are dust,  
Their swords are rust,  
Their souls are with the saints, we trust."

I was baptized in that church, and confirmed there, and made a member of Christ's Holy Catholic Church. Higher than all worldly honors, all knighting and ennobling by earthly monarchs, do I hold the rank I got at that altar, when I was signed with the sign of the Cross, in token that I should not be 'ashamed to confess the faith of Christ crucified, and manfully to fight under His banner, against sin, the world and the devil, and to continue Christ's faithful soldier and servant unto my life's end.' God help me! I may have lost discipline, forgetting that we are always in the face of the enemy. I may even have slept upon my post, but I have never deserted that banner, and 'there is no discharge in that war.' And I defy any human power to cashier me or in any manner to dismiss me from that service."

Here Ould rose and went on his crutch across the room



and back, and while John D. was puzzling over his excited manner, he said: "You must know that my old friend Bond, who has a strong leaven of Puritanism in him, was here to see me a while ago, and undertook to lecture me upon what he calls my gross irregularities, and covertly to threaten me with ecclesiastical vengeance. Bah! he doesn't know what he is talking about. I offend, as he has doubtless heard, some of the constituted authorities, by criticism of part of the prescribed services and one of the rubrics. These are indisputably open to criticism and amendment. Why, for instance, should we pray with such fulsomeness for the President of the United States and all others in authority? Are not all men equal before the altar of God? This prayer was taken from a bad precedent in a monarchy, where men in authority are exalted above their fellow-men, even in the temple of God.

"But there is a worse thing than that." Here he took the prayer-book from the table, saying, "Here is an epitome of the Bible. It would not be irreverent to say, that if the Bible were lost this book might take its place." Then, opening it at the office for the burial of the dead, he continued, "Here is a mosaic made up of jewels from Scripture. Listen to these words." Then he read aloud, with a strong mellifluous voice: "'I am the resurrection and the life,' saith the Lord; 'he that believeth in me, though he were dead yet shall he live; and he that liveth and believeth in me shall never die.'

"What marvelous words are these! They stir us like some divine triumphal march. They hush the sobs of mourning friends; they still the throbbing of bereft hearts, lifting the soul above all earthly interests, and giving it a thrill of exaltation even at the portals of the tomb; a foretaste, perhaps, of what may be its state beyond the grave. And these other last words, so full of heavenly beauty and divine tenderness: 'I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, "Write, from henceforth blessed are the dead that die in the Lord; even so saith the Spirit, for they rest from their labors!"' These seem to me always as if blown from a silver trumpet in the sky.

"Consider this whole office, how free it is from all human

emotion; purified as in some divine alembic, leaving nothing but the solemn lesson and the divine truth it was intended to teach; suited to all sorts and conditions of men; fit for sinner as for saint, for Dives as for Lazarus, for the beggar as for the king—broad as humanity itself. Now, at the head of this stands the following rubric: 'The office ensuing is not to be used for any unbaptized adults; nor any who die excommunicate or who have laid violent hands on themselves.'

"Where is there authority for such a rubric as this? It was an audacious hand that placed it at the head of this divine ritual. What! shall man dare to judge the dead? Think of it! When the soul has gone to its Maker, shall man anticipate the Divine judgment, and execute it in his low, weak way, by treating with opprobrium the empty shell left behind? No, no, no; a thousand times no! The Church should leave that to the sects. I once heard a sectarian preacher tell the sorrowing sisters of a dead youth, whose body lay in a coffin before them, 'He is DAMNED!' closing his book with a snap, and his discourse with this citation, 'In the place where the tree falls, there it shall lie.' I wondered that some of them did not answer, in the spirit of the frantic brother in the play,

" 'I tell thee, churlish priest,  
A ministering angel shall my brother be,  
When thou liest howling.'

"If I had died when I threw myself from the window, they would have adjudged me a suicide, and, according to this rubric, I should have been buried with maimed rites, or with no rites at all, when self-destruction was never in my mind. Never! Never!" he added with emphasis, seeing a look of surprise on John D.'s face. "Some day I will tell you the whole story; not now, because I am not in the mood, and because there is something grotesque in it, unsuited to our present theme. Some day, when I am stronger, you shall hear it all.

"Talk about putting me out of the pale of Christ's Holy Church! It is my Father's house, from which no man can expel me. Why, look you, it is one of the greatest beauties

of the Church that whomsoever she has gathered within her fold is there always. She does not abandon her straying sheep; no, not one of them. If they wander and fall into the mire, she takes them tenderly out; wiping away the filthy ooze, and restoring them to the fold. And this she does again and again, never wearying, and thinking more of one poor estray than of all the rest of the flock. I will fight with them on this theme—”

Here the talk was interrupted by the arrival of visitors. John D. took his leave, Mr. Ould bidding him come again soon.

## CHAPTER XLVIII

### A STUDY IN PSYCHOLOGY

"Mere puppets they, who come and go  
At bidding of vast formless things  
That shift the scenery to and fro,  
Flapping from out their condor wings  
Invisible woe."

ONE fine morning John D. again visited Mr. Ould at his room. He found him sitting in an arm-chair by the side of his bed, his crutch near at hand. He was clean-shaven, his hair carefully dressed, and his linen fresh from the laundry. His eyes were bright, his look cheerful, and his face broke into a broad smile as John D. entered. He gave him a cordial grasp of the hand, and John D. perceived that the hand was cool, and the fingers long and slender, a thing he had not observed before.

"Sit down, John D., sit down," he said cheerfully. "I am now going to give you some of my experience as a drunkard, and tell you how I came to jump out of the window. When I have done, you will have material for psychological study that has puzzled my poor brain for many an hour. I must go into it as I do into a cold bath—with a plunge; and now for it:

"I was lying, that fatal afternoon, in my bedroom at the tavern, in the upper story, where you used to visit me. I was in that nervous state in which a man is apt to find himself after a long debauch; but I was not conscious of my real condition, until I saw a rat running over the floor. Then I began to suspect that I was on the eve of an attack of mania. Presently I saw a group of rats, standing apart on their hind legs, staring with their black-bead eyes, and sniffing, and putting their heads together, as if in consultation. Soon a multitude of rats, that seemed to rise out of the floor, began to pass over the bed where I lay; going



in a broad, gray band across my legs, and down to the floor; and then straight up the face of the door to the open transom, and thence out into the hall beyond. The stream seemed endless. Sights like this were not new to me. I was conscious that it was an illusion, and turned my face away, and closed my eyes for a time, and when I looked again they were gone.

"Soon after I heard a noise on the floor, beyond the foot of my bed, like the tread of some four-footed animal; and presently I saw climbing upon my washstand a hairless, red monkey—not a hair even on its long tail, which it carried in a dainty way, high in the air, and curled into a small circle at the end. Looking carefully I saw that it seemed raw all over, and had the appearance of having just been flayed alive, and its eyes were as red as berries. It climbed slowly to the top of the washstand, and thence on to the top of the pitcher and coiled its tail about this, and sat down. Then I saw that it held in its hand pieces of money, which it proceeded to count from one hand to the other, and back again. I observed that it had just nine pieces. Then I closed my eyes and turned away. Pretty soon I heard the same noise upon the floor as before, and looking toward the washstand I saw the creature again climb upon it, and thence on to the pitcher, and sit down, and count the pieces of money back and forth, as before. Again I shut my eyes and turned away, conscious of the illusion and rallying all my mental force to dispel it. After some time, opening my eyes and finding it gone, I got up and walked out and down into the street. But meeting there some persons who stared at me in a way that excited in me a strange, vague apprehension, I hurried back to my room, where I opened all the windows for the free admission of light and air, and lay down again upon the bed.

"It was not long before I was roused by a whisper right above me, uttering these words, 'I am the Lime cure! I am the Lime cure!' and saw, suspended horizontally over me, a large object in human form, robed in fleecy garments, snow-white and as light as thistledown, which it made to quiver as a fowl does its feathers, shaking down upon me a cloud of powdered quicklime. I could see, indistinctly, a

shadowy face, the features of which were white, even the eyes being of a glassy whiteness. At regular intervals it uttered the same words, 'I am the Lime cure! I am the Lime cure!' and, inflating its cheeks, and blowing from its mouth, and quivering its fleecy vestments, showered upon me volumes of quicklime, by which I was almost suffocated. I was fast losing all power to treat this as an illusion, the sense of suffocation was so distinct and painful. But I summoned all my strength of will, and turned over upon my face, and forced my mind away into other channels of thought, and, after I know not how long a time, I looked up and it was gone.

"I lay for some time after this thinking of these illusions, all efforts to exclude them from my mind proving unavailing. I felt myself sinking into a state of helplessness, and kept my eyes resolutely closed for a long time.

"Suddenly there came from away in the street below a shrill whisper, shrill as the hissing of steam through lips of steel, 'I am coming, I am coming!' and, on the instant, there stood before me—God of heaven, have mercy!"

He rose, holding by the bedpost, his face as pale as a stone, and beads of sweat standing on his forehead. John D., moved by this extraordinary exhibition of feeling, went near him, saying, "Never mind, Mr. Ould, say no more; it is too painful to you." But Ould gently waved him off, and turning away covered his face with his hands. After an interval of silence, speaking in a low tone and slowly, he said, "I find myself incapable of telling you all of this business. When I have heard that hiss below in the street, I have sprung from my bed across the room; but never quickly enough."

"Well, Mr. Ould," said John D., seeing how pale and agitated he was, and how changed from the bright, cheerful man he was before, "do not talk of these things any more. Let us talk of something else."

"No, no; I have one thing more to tell you, and then the subject may rest forever. I want to tell you how I came to throw myself out of the window." He paused for a few moments, apparently struggling for composure, and then resumed:

"I found myself after that—that—THING—I could not describe, lying on the sofa in my sitting-room, unconscious how I got there, prostrated, all spirit of resistance gone out of me, humbly praying for relief, even by death, from my sufferings, when I heard a light rapping at my door. I said 'Come in,' when it opened slowly, and there walked into the room, the door closing noiselessly behind him, a little, old gentleman hardly more than a foot high! He had high, clear-cut features, like the Duke of Wellington's. His face was seamed and grained with wrinkles, and had that leathery, russet complexion which belongs only to extreme old age. His eyes were very light-colored, and shone with metallic lustre. He was clad in a dark crimson velvet coat trimmed with gold lace, short breeches of velvet, and gold-colored silk stockings! On his knees and on his shoes were broad buckles studded with garnets. His wristbands were of white lace, and on his bosom was a frill of the same material. He wore a cocked hat, and beneath this a tie-wig of glistening white hair. A small sword with jeweled hilt hung by his side, and in his hand he carried a little cinnamon-colored cane ornamented with ivory and gold. It was with this I thought he had made that light rapping at my door. I felt no surprise, but looked upon this visitor as natural and a matter of course, as we do upon strange objects in dreams.

"He did not speak, but, fixing his eyes on mine, advanced slowly with little, stately steps, smiling and bowing; smiling with an expression indescribably sweet, and, to me, in such helpless plight, simply enchanting! Slowly, step by step, he approached me, keeping his bright eyes fastened upon mine; bowing and smiling, until I found myself bowing and smiling in return, and trying to copy his charming manner. When he came near I rose to receive him. He quickly stretched up his hand, and taking me by one finger, led me to the open window, and smiling on me in a still more benignant manner, whispered, 'Jump!' and I sprang out of the window.

"Good-by, John D. I must be alone now; but come again soon. Keep this revelation to yourself: and let us never recur to it." And John D. went away.

## CHAPTER XLIX

### DICK THORNTON'S LOVE AFFAIR

"Loving goes by haps,  
Some Cupid kills with arrows, some with traps."

BEFORE John D. went away to college, Ould and he had many confidential talks, in the course of which the lawyer related something of the history of Dick Thornton, of whom, until his recent return, except that he was reputed to be rich and was a confirmed old bachelor, the lad knew little. "Dick had two love affairs here," said Ould. "In the first the love was all on one side, and the lady did all the wooing. The youngest Miss Spring, then the only remaining spinster of six sisters, took it into her head to marry him. Five sisters before had each selected her man and married him, and they seemed to have among them the fixed opinion that they could marry any man they chose, if only they set about it in the right way. They did not seek ambitious matches. Though themselves in the very froth and foam of fashion, submitting to any privation and discomfort at home to keep this place, they did not look there for mates. Experience with a shiftless husband and father had taught mother and daughters a lesson, and imparted to their ideas of marriage a savor of the buttermilk hatch and the 'creature comforts.' With wonderful practicality they sought such men as were noted for industry and devotion to business—likely to prosper and prove, what the mother especially valued, 'good providers.' Men of this steady quality are apt to be shy, and not knowing in the ways of women of fashion, and easily captivated by their arts. The one remaining spinster, thinking Dick to be in this class, set out to capture him. But Dick never fancied her. She had all the vivacity, and tact, and gift



of speech common to the women of that family, with fine eyes and teeth, and a graceful figure; but she had a short, upturned nose with conspicuous nostrils, a general concavity of face and feature, and a heavy protruding jaw; a conformation that in old age always assumes the expression of a death's head. The French have a name for this kind of face, which I forget. She was very demonstrative, and even aggressive, in her pursuit of Dick; so much so that everybody else, and at last Dick himself, saw it. This, of course, increased his disinclination toward her, and when she persevered, bantering herself openly everywhere about him, and contriving to make him seem her regular, customary beau, he was filled with disgust, and sedulously avoided her. This brought on a crisis, when she went down to his office at Digby's warehouse, accompanied by her brother, and, leaving him on the outside, invaded Dick's business sanctum for a private interview. Of course, he never revealed the particulars of that interview, but it was known that she went away in wrath, and in tears, and had well-nigh brought about a scandal. This put an end to the affair between them.

"A short time after this occurrence, Dick and McIntyre discovered that small sums of money were, in some mysterious way, abstracted from the drawer of the desk in their counting-room; and it was observed that these peculations occurred always on Saturday nights, when there remained money left after paying off the teamstery employed during the week. As the aggregate of these petty thefts, if not checked, would soon amount to a considerable sum, the partners resolved to keep watch and endeavor to catch the rogue. Accordingly, on a Saturday night, having shut up a lighted lantern in a closet of the counting-room, they lay in wait there for his coming. Dick was armed with a stout hickory stick, and McIntyre with his grandfather's broadsword. They had watched for some time in the dark, when a noise was heard in the cellar beneath them and soon after the tread of some one mounting the stairway. McIntyre quickly took post by the side of the door, broadsword in hand, while Dick placed himself by the closet, ready to throw open the door and admit the light,

when the rogue should appear. In the next moment a man advanced, walking confidently to the door of the counting-room, when the closet door was thrown open, revealing him. Instantly he started backward, avoiding the swing of McIntyre's broadsword, and ran away in the dark. But Dick promptly pursued him with the lantern, and, McIntyre following, they captured him in the cellar; and holding the lantern to his face revealed young Spring, the brother of Dick's persevering lady-love. He begged like a craven, looking with alarm at the great shining blade in the hand of McIntyre. After much parleying, McIntyre being strongly inclined to bring him to justice, Dick interceded for him, and under solemn promises of amendment he was dismissed. He had entered by removing a loose grating in the cellar window, and opened the drawer by a skeleton key, which he surrendered.

"In the course of this year, late in the fall, there came on a visit to The Falls a belle from Virginia—a near relative of our little Barbara, a half sister of her mother, and remotely connected with several of the leading Virginia families here. Her fame had preceded her. Among other things reported of her career as a belle, it was said that more than one duel had been fought on her account—a thing that always argues either savagery on the part of the men concerned, or dishonesty or treachery on the part of the woman. Perhaps this set me against her from the beginning, for I never liked her. She had many elements of beauty: a slender, lithe figure, supple and graceful, and beautiful hair and teeth, but with small, black, pagan eyes—misty and inscrutable—which I always distrusted. Yet she seemed to captivate everybody that came near her. Dick had never been anything of a lady's man, and was now more shy than ever, from his recent experience; but as she was a connection of the family, he went to see her as a matter of duty. She had a sweet, retiring manner, and withal a certain frankness, just suited to his taste. She called him cousin and upon the whole greatly pleased him. He repeated his visits at shorter and shorter intervals, and was soon on more intimate terms with her than he had ever been with any marriageable young woman. It was not long

till he found himself dead in love with her. Then he gave her a great deal of attention, not, however, neglecting his business. Nothing, not even love, could bring Dick to that. But he worked himself half to death in the busy season, that he might find time to be with her. Then they were engaged to be married, with a strict injunction upon Dick to keep the engagement secret.

"Meantime, she led a large band of similar captives in her train. Dick had only fallen into a snare that was spread for everybody. Even McIntyre, cautious, circumspect, suspicious as he is, did not escape her toils. For months these two men, friends and constantly associated, and partners in trade, each considered himself the affianced of this accomplished coquette; and neither had a suspicion of the other. Both were bound in honor to implicit silence and both kept their honor inviolate.

"In this state things continued the whole winter. The spring was near at hand, and Dick's lady-love was talking of going back to Virginia, whither in due time he was to follow her, when finding it necessary, in the pursuit of business, to go away from the town for a while, he was anxious to have with her a private interview. She had been hospitably entertained, after the fashion of The Falls, by many families, and was now the guest of Mr. Dennis Fitzhugh. This circumstance was in all respects agreeable to Dick, he being on intimate terms with that family, and the extensive ornamental grounds, with fruit and flower gardens, and lawn and shrubberies, affording ample scope for the delightful loiterings which he promised himself there with his sweetheart. He was now anxious for a private interview, not only from the lover's ordinary motive, but because a sudden intimacy had sprung up between Miss Spring and his sweetheart, and she had accepted an invitation to pass some time as Miss Spring's guest before going back to Virginia. This arrangement was very distasteful to him, and he had been revolving in his mind a scheme for breaking it off without revealing either his former connection with the lady or the disgraceful conduct of her brother. Still revolving this scheme, he walked along the gravel road to the Fitzhugh mansion. Having

sounded the brazen knocker, he walked back a few steps on the veranda, and chancing to look toward the parlor window, he saw hastily retreating from it a lady in her bonnet, whom he recognized as Miss Spring. Desiring to avoid her, and availing himself of his intimacy with the household, when the servant announced his sweetheart as not at home, he went into a small reception-room adjoining the parlor, to await there the departure of Miss Spring and the return of his lady-love.

"While sitting in this room, still revolving the unpleasant prospect of having her in the house of the enemy, she came home, and he heard Miss Spring, who seemed to have been on the watch, meet her at the door, where they at once engaged in lively chatter. Then they entered the parlor, when Dick could easily hear all they said, and the first word he heard was his own name. It is not in human nature—at least it was not in Dick's human nature—to make any outcry at this, and he quickly heard enough to put him to the torture. The heartless coquette was entertaining her new intimate with an enumeration and a classification of the victims of her wiles. He opened his eyes wide when she put in the list McIntyre. 'I had too many on my hands for convenience,' she said; 'it was a veritable "*embarrasse de richesse*," and I resolved to get rid of one. Besides, there were conflicting elements in the case. Think of my having two men, partners in business—a whole firm—dangling at the same time! So last night I dismissed the Irishman.'

"Miss Spring made a great exclamation, and then said, 'He has such a good opinion of himself, he must have been greatly surprised.'

"'Surprised? Bless you, he was astounded!' Then she laughed vehemently, and as she recovered herself said, 'You ought to have seen his face.' And then she renewed her laughter.

"'People say he is rich,' said Miss Spring meditatively, 'and he has many accomplishments. Do you object to him as an Irishman?'

"'No; I have no national prejudices; and yet—I would he were less Irish and more nice.'



"Miss Spring laughed delightful applause at this false wit, and then asked, in an affected tender tone, 'Well, what are you going to do with Mr. Thornton—"Cousin Richard"?"

"At intervals during this interesting colloquy, Dick had meditated a cough, but the revelation about McIntyre had taken away his breath; and now what man will blame him for wanting to know in what predicament he himself stood? Exactly what he did hear I never knew, but enough to set him wild! The young women soon went out to walk over the grounds, and Dick quietly slipped away out of the house.

"Long after he told me that he had observed McIntyre, on the morning after he had been dismissed as the lady described, looking woful in such a degree that he thought he must be ill, and asked him what was the matter, when he answered, 'I am cutting a wisdom tooth.' A grim joke which Dick did not then understand. McIntyre soon recovered, but Dick never has. He will never put faith in woman again.

"But he resolved to have a last word with the lady, and to this end went on the night of the same day to see her. He went late that he might have her alone. Indeed, I believe he played sentry before the gateway until assured that all other visitors had gone away. It was late in the night when he left the house. On his way home he met a startling adventure. Just at the corner of Fitzhugh's enclosure, near which an oil lamp was burning, he was fired upon by a person who had stood concealed behind the fence. He felt a shock as from a blow on his left side, but instinctively turned about, and with a stout cane he carried knocked down the assailant, and beat him until he lay apparently insensible. Nothing saved Dick but a rouleau of five-franc pieces that lay in his waistcoat pocket, lapping one over another, from which the ball glanced, tearing out the pocket and scattering the money upon the pavement. It was characteristic of Dick that he deliberately picked up all these pieces and put them into another pocket. Then he looked after his assailant, whom he found to be Spring; not dangerously hurt, but with a broken

finger and some contusions on the head, half stunned, and thoroughly cowed.

"Shaking him up roughly, Dick took him home with him to his room, where he made a close examination of his person, and afterward subjected him to a rigid cross-examination, and wrote a statement from his own lips, which he required him to sign; and then telling him that he would hold over him that paper till such time as he should give proof of a reformed character, when it should be surrendered into Spring's own hands, he was sent away.

"Spring was base enough to implicate his sister in his crime. Dick scouted this as incredible, but there were circumstances that made him by no means clear as to this. In his examination of Spring's person he had found upon him the sheath of a highly ornamented Spanish dagger which Dick had brought from Mexico; a gaudy toy, all gold and silver and tortoise-shell and steel, kept always in his office among other curios. And going back to the scene of the attempted assassination, he found the blade, which had been let fall by Spring, or was stricken from his hand by the shower of blows from Dick's cane. Then he remembered that on that occasion when the sister came to his office, she had taken up the dagger, and, placing it at her belt, said it would make a pretty ornament worn '*en chatelaine*.' He did not know but she might have carried it away. He had not seen it since then, and had not missed it.

"On the day following, with an indefinite leave of absence from his partner, Dick went away to New Orleans; not with any dream of 'throwing away his life upon the Turk,' or other romantic scheme, such as is common after the dissipation of a first enchantment, but to plunge into the current of traffic. Never did he feel himself so strong in his vocation as now. Freed from the only disturbing sentiment that had ever checked or diverted him from the eager pursuit of business, he was now like a runner stripped for the race and possessed of a grim, confident spirit that defied fortune.

"He had great success at New Orleans. Making his headquarters at the counting-room of Jilly, an old friend

and correspondent of John Digby, he busied himself with speculation in commodities, chiefly at the custom-house, where sales were made daily. The financial pressure was beginning to be severely felt in the market there, and Dick was prompt to perceive that any unusual commodity, the value of which was not familiar to the general market, was sure, in cases of forced sales, to go at a low figure. Such sales were then very frequent at the custom-house, and this became his favorite place for speculation. He was soon well known to the officials there, and one day a clerk called his attention to a sale to be made of an article in his chosen category, a very large quantity of vanilla beans. Dick knew nothing of vanilla beans, but he soon acquainted himself with their market value, and attended this sale. There was no bid but his, which was a very low one, and he bought them all. He was somewhat taken aback when the bill was made out, amounting to ten thousand dollars. But he had seen that the beans were sound, and was soon more than satisfied with the purchase. He went at once to Jilly's for the money to pay for them, and while there his old correspondent, Mr. Vincent Nolté, came in, looking for him. 'I learn,' said this gentleman, 'that you made a great purchase of vanilla beans this morning at the custom-house; may I ask what you propose to do with them?'

"'I have not made up my mind, nor had time to think about it,' Dick replied.

"'I venture to say,' said Mr. Nolté, 'that there is but one market in the world for such a quantity of vanillas, and that is London. If you will consign them to my correspondents there I will make you a liberal advance upon them.'

"To shorten my story, Nolté advanced ten thousand dollars upon Dick's purchase, and the beans were consigned to the great house of Baring Brothers of London. How much money Dick made by this marvelous windfall I never knew, for he would never talk of his business. It has been stated at from fifty to a hundred thousand dollars; but that was mere conjecture. That he made a great sum is certain.

"In the latter part of the year 1825, when there was

a great financial trouble here and through the whole country, Dick made arrangements with McIntyre to look after his brother Bob's interests. He pretty soon concluded that it would be best to let the tavern and all his houses and lots,—in which kind of property Dick took no interest,—everything except his interest in Lastlands and in a foundry, go to pay his debts; engaging himself to discharge any indebtedness that should remain after, and empowering McIntyre to buy Bob's interests in Lastlands, and all the slaves, in case these should be brought to the hammer. He made other arrangements with McIntyre, of which I know nothing except that they were designed to protect Bob and his little household against all contingencies. Then he went back to New Orleans and thence to England.

"The partnership was continued only for liquidation for several years longer, but is now at an end. They managed their business with great prudence and sagacity; letting go at high prices all their cotton, of which they had a great holding in 1825, before the decline which swamped so many great houses at New Orleans, among them that of Thornton's old friend, Vincent Nolté.

"Dick has visited America only once since he went abroad, but did not come nearer Kentucky than New York. His faithless sweetheart soon after his departure went back home, where she was married to a man old enough to be her father. He died soon after, leaving her by no means so rich as she might have expected, but independent and childless. I know from Stackpole that she and Dick were once at the same time in Boston. Stackpole met her in the art gallery there, and when this was reported to Dick he fled to Newport. She went afterward to Newport, when Dick fled to the woods of Maine, where he passed the season fishing; and then he went back to London. Stackpole was greatly amused at Dick's dread of meeting her. He thinks that she is in pursuit of Dick. She contrived to see Stackpole often in Boston, and in Newport, and artfully tried to make him believe that she was attached to Dick, and that her marriage was '*un mariage au desespoir*.' But he did not tell this to Dick, as she doubtless intended he should.



"Dick and Stackpole are peripatetic speculators about the markets of the world. Stackpole is here often, and being fond of travel does most of that necessary branch of their business. He has appeared here often when not expected, and may 'come home,' as he expresses it, at any time. When you are in Boston, should the widow appear there, you must fight shy of her."

## CHAPTER L

### JOHN D. GOES TO BOSTON

“O, the joy  
Of young Ideas painted on the mind  
In the warm, glowing colors Fancy spreads  
On subjects not yet known, when all is new,  
And all is lovely.”

AFTER many talks with Mr. Ould and the old master, John D. resolved to set out in the following March for Boston; a time seemingly inopportune, making necessary a long interval—until the following July—when the regular examinations would occur. His motive in this case cannot be stated with certainty. It was most likely to acquaint himself with the new environment, and carefully to survey the ground before binding himself by any engagement there. This plan would give time to ascertain precisely the requirements of the college and afford opportunity to make a deliberate estimate of his own qualifications and to make good any deficiency, thus giving some assurance against failure, which would have been to him a grievous mortification. Buttons thought he would stick here, having the sea at hand for fishing. After a lapse of a fortnight a letter to his father announced his safe arrival at Cambridge, and a long letter to Mr. Ould described at much length his journey and its incidents. How for three days and nights he steamed up the Ohio to Wheeling on the little, puffing, high-pressure boat crowded with passengers. How, arrived at Wheeling, there was a race of all this crowd up the hill from the river to the office to secure seats in the stages that were to bear them over the mountains. How they found, behind a strong wooden grating, the agent of the stage line, quietly sitting like a spider in

his web, secure of his prey, indifferent to the impatience and clamor of the crowd, slowly and deliberately taking their money and setting down their names and destination. How stage after stage, each a four-in-hand, was driven to the door and names called out, and stages loaded and sent away, until the whole crowd, nine to a stage, had been despatched with their trunks and other baggage; the lighter articles on top secured by a canvas covering, and the heavier stowed away in the "boots"; each stage with a swaying motion moving slowly away on its three days' journey on the national road across the mountains. The following extracts describe his approach to the capital:

"As we approached Washington the number of passengers increased until we had again nine inside, and as we neared the city some outside passengers. The talk was now altogether about Congress and its proceedings, and the great men there. I had great curiosity to hear of these, and I was gratified to a very considerable extent by a red-haired gentleman, an incessant talker and full of information about the capital and its affairs, having lived there through three or more administrations in some public employment and was very knowing about the city and Congress. He gave us lively sketches of the great men in the Senate and House of Representatives and illustrated their style of oratory, reciting some of their past speeches, imitating their manner, all which was very interesting. It was plain that he was a Democrat, and that Democratic orators were his favorites. While conceding to Mr. Clay the palm of eloquence he held that he was not the equal of Mr. Calhoun or Silas Wright or Daniel Webster, in all respects, and that their speeches would live long after Mr. Clay's were forgotten. Among the company in the stage was an old Irishman who was manifestly a warm friend of Mr. Clay. Whenever that name was mentioned he would say, 'He it is that tells thim-oll about it.'

"A compatriot of Mr. Clay, I could not help taking part for him, even against such odds as this knowing man with such uncommon gifts of speech. I said that it was a new thing to me to hear Mr. Clay put second in estimat-

ing the public men of the day; that I should like to hear the great men he classed above Mr. Clay, and I should especially like to hear them in conflict with him; that I should not be afraid of finding Mr. Clay an unequal match for the best of them, or even for all of them together. At this the eyes of the old Irishman glistened, his mouth spread, his head bobbed assent, and he said emphatically, 'It's he that tells thim oll about it.'

"'Well,' said the red-haired man, 'perhaps you are right. Mr. Clay does possess the power of eloquent speech beyond any man I have ever heard. But his great power lies in action, in which you will remember the Greek master said eloquence consists. But when you read Mr. Clay's speeches you have not got that element of oratory before you. It cannot be put in print. Why, the other day in the Senate he made a speech in which by four words he electrified the house, and set the galleries in such a roar that the Vice-President threatened to have them cleared if that were repeated. No man, I believe—not the greatest actor living—could take the speech and make a point with those four words. Yet in his mouth they were like a thunderbolt! I will not offer to imitate him in this. No man can do it. And so, you see, it is impossible that any proper representation or "counterfeit presentment" of Mr. Clay's oratory can ever go to posterity. Some history of the effects of his eloquence, like this I have given, may go down, but it will be said that people of our day were unduly susceptible to this kind of thing, and that if he were alive now he could not move men in this way; that he is great mainly by our allowance, etc.'

"'Anny way,' said my Irish friend again, bobbing his head with emphasis, "it's he that tells thim oll about it.'

"As we neared the city the talk abated and people began to look out on the roadside, impatient of the slow coach, and to busy themselves noting well-known landmarks, and estimating the distance yet to be gone over. When we reached the town the red-haired gentleman kindly pointed out to me places of interest, and when we got into the city showed me the house in which Mr. Clay lives. He also gave me the address of the members of Congress from Ken-



tucky, and said he would be glad to be of any assistance to me while in the city, handing me his own card. Truly, a man endowed with uncommonly agreeable manners, and a model of politeness. He was a Virginian.

"I went into the 'House,' where I saw the assembled wisdom. I met Mr. Hardin, who talked a good deal to me. I believe he likes a young auditor, as Mr. Ould does. He growled all the time about the way things were going on in Congress, finding fault with everybody and everything, and wishing himself out of Congress and at home in Bardstown.

"I saw Mr. Clay in the Senate, and heard him in a short speech 'tell thim oll about it.' He is easily the great man here. In the Senate Chamber, on the Avenue, everywhere, he is the observed of all observers. I did not go to see him. I know that his time is all occupied with better things than a youth like me. And, besides, I have the family modesty and fight shy of great men.

#### "FROM PROVIDENCE TO BOSTON

"It was a rainy morning when we set out in the stage from Providence for Boston. At a point along the street the stage was stopped and some one called out, 'Passengers can take a look at the Arcade.' But as the stage was closed on all sides, only those sitting by the window on the middle seat could avail themselves of the invitation. I was one of these and I looked out, but in the gloom of the rainy morning I saw little of the Arcade, and cannot describe it. Afterward a man opposite to me, on the front seat, muttered in rather coarse terms that 'this thing of stopping the stage to look at the Arcade was a — bore.'

"We were nine passengers inside, all males except one, a stout old lady on the back seat. All seemed to be strangers to each other, and there was for a long time no talk among them. At last an Irishman with short, red hair and blue eyes, sitting on the middle of the front seat, asked me to exchange seats with him, which I gladly did, when he opened a box, which he carried on his lap, revealing his vocation as a traveling peddler of jewelry, and began to ply his trade. The passengers showed no inclination to buy, but only rigged and quizzed him for a long time with-

out mercy. This he bore with great meekness. At last, seeing that he could not make any sales, he quietly collected his wares, distributed for inspection, and locked them in his box, and then began to turn the tables on the company. I was glad that I had taken no part against him, for a greater wit I never heard. The old lady on the back seat shook with laughter while he quizzed his assailants in turn, and I enjoyed it very much. It had the effect of putting the company on a social footing, and general talk soon began among them. After a time attention was directed to me, and I was questioned about myself; indeed, I was pumped to the bottom. They were greatly surprised to learn that I was from away back in Kentucky, going to Harvard College. 'Did I know Mr. Clay?'

"'Yes; I have a bundle of letters of introduction from him to his friends in Boston.' The old lady on the back seat was now listening with great interest. We had already stood in a sort of comradeship while neutrals in the witty imbroglio with the Irish peddler, and had exchanged glances of merry sympathy, and she now seemed in quite a flutter of interest in me and made many inquiries and kind speeches. Mr. Clay's name had invested me with new interest. A young gentleman sitting on my left, whom I had already set down as the only real gentleman in the company, asked if I had any acquaintances in Boston; to which I answered no. Then he said he should be glad to be of service to me, and delicately asked the names of some of the persons to whom I had letters. I mentioned such names as I remembered, and at last the name of Dr. Bowditch. At this I observed that he showed very great interest, quite as much as others had shown in Mr. Clay's name, and said, 'My dear sir, you have splendid credentials,' and was evidently inspired with decided respect for me. 'Do you know Dr. Bowditch?' I asked.

"'Oh, no. But I am studying navigation, and I am, of course, familiar with his name. I am just now home from a cruise of six months, using his books all the time.'

"My splendid credentials had made me an object of paramount interest to the whole company. The man who had expressed so emphatically his sentiments about the

stopping of the stage before the Arcade now addressed to me some commonplaces, with manifest diffidence, and began to adjust his cravat, and to preen himself generally. There was a raffish look about him, reminding me of people described by Mr. Irving as wearing 'belcher handkerchiefs' and having been sworn at 'High Gate,' whatever these facts may signify. On my asking aloud about the taverns in the town, he immediately spoke out, recommending the Marlborough; at which the young navigator shook his head and soon after recommended to me the Exchange, whither I resolved to go.

"The Irish peddler was an attentive listener, and now asked me, 'Do you happen to have ricommendations to anny of the beg jewelers?' To this I only gave a negative shake of my head.

"It was almost pitch dark, and still raining (*storming*, they called it), when we got into the streets of the town, and the driver, having inquired of each passenger's residence, took them in turn to their homes. When the old lady was about to get out she gave me her hand, saying, 'You see where I live. I shall be glad to see you at any and all times.' But I could see only a brick house in a long row all alike, and I do not expect to see her again. Of course, I am not insensible of my indebtedness to Mr. Clay and Dr. Bowditch for the kind interest here manifested on my first entrance into Boston. Still I felt a sense of satisfaction, and regard it as a forecast of a pleasant future, and I think I shall always have a warm place in my heart for a Boston man or woman."

John D. had elected to go to Harvard College, after having heard from the old master this deliberate estimate of that institution: "It is not well adapted to make practical business men; but it makes *good* men." Which Mr. Ould assured John D. was very high commendation.

## CHAPTER LI

### A CHARLESTON CHAPERON

"But yet a woman: and for secrecy,  
No lady closer; for I well believe  
Thou wilt not utter what thou dost not know;  
And so far will I trust thee."

DURING the spring letters had been received from Dick Thornton, then away looking after some interests he and Stackpole had in New England. Late in the summer his presence at Newport, Rhode Island, was made known by letters from himself, as well as letters from John D., who accompanied him there. In the letters of this young gentleman, now for the first time at Newport, the companion of an admiring, indulgent, rich uncle, there did crop out a thin stratum of the vanity natural to youth, not heretofore shown by him. To read his letters now was to read a record of his triumphal progress through the many phases of fashionable life, at the then most delightful of all the places of summer resort along the Atlantic seaboard; where delegations from the best of Northern and Southern society came together; where that experienced maiden lady, Miss W., of Charleston, chaperoned the Southern young women, and Mrs. S. those of Boston, and where, hand in hand, Massachusetts and South Carolina stood around their social administrations. Accounts of beautiful maidens were now the staple material of John D.'s letters. Even the fishing, there so fine and so full of variety, was forgotten in a seeming craze about these beauties. Sometimes a Northern beauty, sometimes a Southern beauty, made a topic for a long letter, and at last, in the same letter one of each; he posing as a prince at a loss which to



choose, and quoting from a clever little poem written by one of the Harvard lads, circulated in manuscript and afterward printed in a magazine, these lines:

“O, I would I were a great Bashaw,  
And followed Mahomet the glorious!  
Or held the good old Jewish law,  
With Solomon, that sage uxorious!

“I’d fill my hall with beauties bright,  
And queenly Julia make Sultana,  
But who should be my “Hearts delight.”  
My “Harem’s Joy,” but lovely Anna.”

Barbara had heretofore eagerly read all John D.’s letters, taking them, after they had been seen by all, to her own chamber for reperusal until she knew them by heart, and then putting them away in her secret drawer with other dear memorials. But with the coming of these Newport letters her interest in them abated more and more with each letter, and after this last, so infected, as she thought, with the poisonous Circean draught that Fashion administers to her votaries, she was filled with astonishment, and grief, and disgust, and resolving that she would read no more of them, read them more eagerly than before.

In the spring of the following year three letters were received at Lastlands from Barabara’s aunt in Virginia: one to Barabara inviting her to visit her, promising much pleasure in meeting many relatives hitherto unknown to her, and in visiting some of the many Springs and other places of public resort; and one each to Thornton and his wife, urging them to second this invitation, presenting in a forcible way her own claim as next of kin, and suggesting the pleasure and benefit to Barbara herself likely to come of the visit—altogether putting the project in such a light as seemed to make it out of the question to decline. After much discussion over the matter, it was determined that Barbara should go over the mountains in charge of Mr. Robert Ormsby, then about going to Philadelphia, and meet her aunt in Washington. Meantime, with his usual considerateness, Mr. Ormsby had sent to Philadelphia Barabara’s measure, and ordered for her, to be sent to Rich-

mond, whither she went in May, an ample outfit of fashionable garments for the season.

Soon letters were coming from Barbara in Virginia to Lastlands, letters full of interest to Thornton and his wife, describing scenes familiar to them in bygone days, and among these "the old garden where you used to walk together." But these letters would hardly interest the reader.

From John D. a letter was received about the middle of July, announcing that he would in a few days go again to Newport, having received "orders" to that effect from his Uncle Dick. He believed it was his intention to pass the hot season there, and then go home to Kentucky and Lastlands. But he was by no means sure of this, as "Uncle Dick seldom talks of any design until he is about to put it into execution." Of Barbara he had this to say: "I have heard only once of Barb. since she went to Virginia, and then through our kinsman, Mr. Slaughter, who has come here to enter the law school. He has been lately visiting Barbara's kinfolks, the Peytons in Virginia, where Barb. and a whole houseful of young people were enjoying themselves, and related the following incident, in which she played a characteristic part: It seems that they have an old housekeeper, a white woman, a spinster long in their service, very competent and faithful, but addicted to drink on occasions, and then likely to play odd pranks. One night, long after all the household had gone to bed, Slaughter, not being able to sleep, on account of a certain restlessness to which he is subject, *as he says*, but *really*, as I have discovered, because he has fallen in love with our little Barb. (who must be quite a little woman now). Well, being awake in the middle of the night, he heard a strange sound as of people moving and whispering in the corridor that runs along the L in which the housekeeper has her room. Looking out of a window that commands a view of this corridor, he saw a strange sight! All the young ladies of the household, and the young lady guests, were there in a body, in their nightgowns and slippers, marching in silence, like a procession of virgins to a midnight mass or other devotional exercise. From the windows of the house-

keeper's room shone a bright light illuminating the opposite corridor, along which lie the chambers of these young maidens. So great was this light that Slaughter feared a conflagration, and would have hastened out to ascertain the truth, but for the dread of surprising in their night-clothes this band of lovely, modest maidens, 'among whom Barbara was preëminent.' This, except under direst necessity, he could not bring himself to do. Holding his breath with anxiety and apprehension, he watched the procession and awaited the issue.

"The young people had seen the unusual illumination, and aware of the housekeeper's infirmity, and knowing that she had been drinking that day, and possessed of apprehension of fire in her room, were now going in a body to investigate the matter. Advancing to the door, they knocked, and, receiving no answer, entered her room, where they found no conflagration, but a very strange sight. Along the mantelpiece, and on the toilet, and on the wash-stand, and everywhere about the room where one could be fixed, was a lighted candle, a dozen in all, in the midst of which, dressed in all the finery she possessed, as an open, empty trunk attested, sat the housekeeper viewing herself in the glass turned down to reflect her whole figure. She was full of indignation at this irruption of the young maidens, and flew at them in such a rage that they fled from the room. Then they gathered outside by the door, some of them giggling at the ridiculous scene (for she was a little, old, withered thing and wore a wig), while others were alarmed lest, if permitted to carry out her whimsy, she might set the house on fire. At this suggestion Barbara walked quickly back into the room and began to gather up the candles, putting them out, when the old body interposed, taking hold of her. Then quickly, as with steel wires, Barbara's slender fingers grasped her wrists, and she was forced into a chair, and commanded to sit there in a manner that enforced obedience. Then, putting out all the candles, and taking them out of the room, Barbara locked the door on the outside, leaving her to disrobe herself as she best could and go to bed in the dark. After

this, with exultant giggles, the maidens went back to their chambers.

"I asked Slaughter how, in the obscure light of the corridor, and among so many maidens all clad alike, he recognized Barbara. He said he 'knew her by the graceful poise of her head, and by the wealth of her hair, which was loosed from its snood and fell in a dark cloud to her feet.' The jackanapes!"

After this, letters of Barbara from several different places in the East informed Lastlands that she was with her aunt on her travels. One from New York informed them that she had visited Baltimore and Philadelphia, where the large acquaintance of her aunt had secured them much polite attention, and that they had accepted an invitation to visit some of the Livingstons, on the Hudson, near Tarrytown, and after that would probably go to Boston.

From John D., Mr. Ould was informed that he was again at Newport with "Uncle Dick"; that Mr. Tom Perkins of Boston, he of the short arm, whom his uncle had known abroad, had come to Newport with his beautiful yacht, *The Dream*, which then lay in the harbor; that he had come, as he had politely said, "on purpose to pick up some good company for a cruise, there being no men of leisure about Boston," and that he had "Dick Thornton in his mind when he set sail for Newport"; that after a grand ball at their hotel, preparations for which were already afoot, he thought that his uncle, and Mr. Stackpole, who was then in Boston but would return for the ball, would go on a short cruise in *The Dream*.

On the day before the night of the ball, Stackpole returned to Newport, bringing very unpleasant news to Dick Thornton. In Boston he had seen Dick's former sweetheart, the widow, and believed that if she was not already at Newport, she would soon be there, and be present at the ball. Learning that Dick was with Mr. Perkins on the yacht, and knowing how serious a thing to him was the news he had to impart, Stackpole went at once aboard to communicate the intelligence: intelligence as startling to Dick as that warning from France to Prince John about Cœur de Lion: "Take care of yourself; the Devil has been



turned loose." On board the yacht Stackpole had availed himself of a moment when their host had left the cabin, to break the news to Dick, and when the host returned Dick immediately said, "Perkins, if you will sail to-night, I will cruise with you as far and as long as you like." Mr. Perkins, who was already impatient of lying at anchor, and indifferent to the ball, at once gave the necessary order, and Stackpole having gone to the hotel and sent their baggage on board, they sailed away that night out of Newport harbor.

Meantime, in his room at the hotel, John D. was very unhappy. He had been assigned a prominent part in the conduct of the ball, and was now likely to be unable even to appear there. A boil had risen between his eyebrows, just at the upper end of his nose. Under the advice of the doctor, he had applied a diachylon plaster, expecting the boil to be thereby suppressed, and this had seemed to be promised at first. But afterward it flamed out with increased virulence, and now so disfigured his countenance as to make it hardly recognizable. Moreover, the pain was very great, putting him as to the ball *hors de combat*. Instead of a plaster to suppress it, the doctor now prescribed emulsive applications to alleviate the pain while the boil should run its usual course.

At night, while the ball went on, he lay in great pain. At last, thinking that he could not be made worse, and might find some diversion by moving about, and curious to get a view of the festivity, he muffled his face and made his way to a point where he could see the dancing-floor. There he was at once attracted to a figure in the dance, a tall young woman upon whom he could not but gaze continually, inspired by a strange, inscrutable interest. Something in her *tout ensemble*, but especially in her eyes, which were very beautiful, strangely attracted him. But soon she was shut out from his view by the crowd, and the pain, which had seemed for a time alleviated, returning with still greater violence, he went back to his room. There he passed a miserable night; the music and the boil throbbing in distressful unison; his unrestful sleep haunted by distorted visions, and dreams of Lastlands, and Barbara, and

The Falls, through all of which the light of the strange eyes he had seen in the ballroom shone continually.

Next morning the doctor lanced the boil, when the pain subsided and he fell asleep. After some hours under this best of all nature's medicaments, he arose refreshed and invigorated, and filled with the positive happiness that follows alleviation of pain. And in strange harmony with this happiness came thoughts of the bright eyes he had seen the night before, and that had haunted his dreams through all his pain. Almost unconsciously he repeated some sentimental lines he had read and liked in an Annual of the season:

“ ‘Strangers’ eyes wear oft a look  
Of eyes that we have known  
In some forgotten time or place,  
And light with sudden spell—  
Some darkened thought—some shadowy trace—  
Whose silent and mysterious grace  
The heart remembers well.’ ”

In the course of the day he received many messages of condolence, and after dinner there was a knock at the door and the voice of Miss W., the Southern chaperon, called out, “Come to the door and let me see if you are excusable for staying away from the ball last night, and know how long it may be before you are presentable.”

He went to the door, but did not open it, saying with a smirk on his face, “You will excuse me, please, Miss W.; I am terribly disfigured, and you are the last person in the world upon whom I would be willing to make a bad impression.”

“Well, you can’t be in pain now, or you wouldn’t talk nonsense. Come! open the door, and let me see you. You missed seeing the beauty of the season last night.” Then, after some further parley, he opened the door, when she made a sudden exclamation on seeing his face still swollen and red, and said, “You are entirely excusable! Pray, don’t think of showing yourself to anybody with that face! When you are well enough to come down to the parlor—this very evening, at dusk, before the room is lighted, will do—I have something to say to you.” Then she went away.

Sitting that afternoon at his window, which looked out upon the front of the hotel, John D. saw two ladies come out of the house, one tall and slender, the other short and stout, attended by a crowd of beaux. The ladies were clad in traveling costumes and were manifestly going away on the steamer, the hotel stage having their trunks already upon it. The attending beaux all bore flowers, which they presented to both ladies, to the tall one in such profusion that she could not receive them all, and at last with much merriment they were bundled into the stage. Then, as the stage was about to start, two of the gentlemen got in with the ladies and three others mounted to the top with the driver. Then the stage started away, but was soon stopped to send back for some forgotten thing, when the tall young woman, putting aside her veil, looked out of the window at the hotel, and up to John D.'s window, and, as he thought, right into his eyes. Then, as the stage went swiftly away, he sprang to his feet with a loud outcry, "It is Barbara!" Then he hastily dressed himself and hurried away to the wharf, only to see the steamer going off, two of the attending beaux waving adieus from the deck.

The reader will bear in mind that all that is here related is but an abstract from the letters of John D., as will be all that remains to be said of these young people until they returned to The Falls. The chronicler distrusts his power to give by the same method any just notion of the unhappiness that possessed John D. on seeing Barbara go away from Newport without having been recognized by him. Yet the attempt must be made, by an abstract of one frantic letter to Mr. Ould:

Learning, now, that his uncle and Stackpole had sailed away on a cruise of uncertain length, he was possessed of a feeling of absolute desolation. What could he ever do to explain his seeming neglect—nay, cruel avoidance—of Barbara?—"dear, dear Barb!" He was now no longer fit company for the gay people of Newport, and avoided them all. After the manner of unhappy people in Homer, he walked disconsolate "by the margin of the many-billowed sea." He envied the sullen fishermen toiling along the rocks, and envied still more their children playing in the boats. He

envied every careless living thing he saw. He was incapable of putting his misery into any definite shape, or of giving it utterance save by a monotonous cry, "Oh, Barbara, Barbara!" A storm might have given him some relief, but the elements were all quiet, the water in the bay shining in the sun and gently undulating. Gay parties sailed, and disported, and fished along the rocks, while he could only go out of hearing and cry, "Barbara, Barbara!" Though innocent of intentional slight to Barbara, circumstances had made him seem cruelly to have avoided her, and his heart was filled with remorse. How he despised now, forgetful of his pain, the wretched vanity that had kept him away from the ball because of his swollen nose! It was still swollen and red, but he did not care who should see it. He could confront all Newport with it now. "Oh, Barbara, Barbara, Barbara!" This was all he could say to tell his sorrow, and he said it again and again, invoking also such inanimate things as seem in touch with human feeling: the fitful, sighing, sweet southwind, the repining trees, the surf complaining to the shore—

"He told it to the village bells,  
They tolled it back again."

At last, having blown off the intemperate heat of his passion, he bethought him of what he ought to *do*, and soon made up his mind. He would go at once in pursuit of Barbara. But this would require more money than was in his purse. He had known men in college who thought nothing of pledging their watches and other valuables, in cases of emergency. He had never done this, and had thought himself incapable of such a transaction. But now he would pledge his watch and every trinket he possessed. But first he would consult the cashier of the hotel, who had always shown a friendly interest in him. And lo! he found this gentleman ready to give him all the money he should require, on a simple receipt or an order on his Uncle Dick. "Be sure to take enough to answer your purpose," said this amiable gentleman. "You may take a notion to go over to Paris. Whatever you want, you can have"—



posing with a pen behind his ear, and regarding the young man with a benevolent smile.

John D. stood astonished and irresolute. His uncle had always kept him amply provided with money. But he had never said anything to justify him in taking up goods or money on his account. He was unwilling now to do this, and said, "Have you any authority from Uncle for this?"

"Of course we have! He sent us written instruction, before he sailed, to give you whatever you should require." Then the cashier, informed of the extent of his proposed travels, made a detailed estimate of the cost, making liberal allowance for all sorts of contingencies, and John D. left him to prepare for setting out next day on the steamer for New York.

Going away from the office, he thought of the invitation of the lady chaperon to meet her in the parlor, and entered there, and found the two chaperons in private tête-à-tête. The Boston matron rose, and having congratulated him on his recovery, went away, leaving the other free to hold a private conference with him. "Let me tell you at once," said Miss W., "that I know all about the young beauty you missed seeing at the ball, and I know all about you, and Lastlands, and the people there. Your uncle is one of my favorites, and his friend Mr. Stackpole is another. Between them, but chiefly from Mr. Stackpole, I have heard all about these. Barbara's mother, Mrs. Peyton, I knew well; for she was of a distinguished Carolina family. And I know well her half-sister, the aunt who brought this young beauty here; and, I am sorry to say, I know little good of her. Though never a beauty, she was very pretty in youth, but always an arrant coquette. Not such a coquette as we sometimes see (if these be indeed coquettes), so delicate and refined in their art (if theirs be art) that their wounds leave no sting—of whom men say, 'It is better to have loved and lost than not to have loved them'—but gross, omnivorous, ambitious of universal conquest, making eyes at men indiscriminately. I know of all her course in Kentucky; how, for a rich old man in Virginia, she jilted your uncle, and how she has since followed him about, driving him away from here one summer, and then to

Europe, where I expected her to follow. And now she has driven him away to cruise with Mr. Tom Perkins in his yacht. She went away because she heard that he had sailed, and because she saw here so many people that know her character and past history. Besides, she has grown stout, and this has soured her. In youth, while her beauty was in the bud, her main charm was a refined, delicate figure. Now this has developed into a full-blown flower, but it is a 'chouffleur,' and promises soon to become a prize cabbage. I am sorry to see her sweet niece with such a chaperon. A selfish thing! She took her away while she was delighted with this place. I offered to take charge of her if the aunt was obliged to go to New York, as she said. But no, nothing would do but that her niece should go with her. The truth is, her visit here has been in all respects a failure. She was mad with envy of the attention the girl received. I took care, for her mother's sake, as well as for her own merit, to make her claims known, and all the best young men and young women were zealous to make her entrée a success. She is just like her mother, gentle and innocent as a dove, and wise as a serpent, and knows people by intuition. What are you going to do? She didn't even know you were here till I told her."

"Didn't you tell her also that I was sick?" said John D., who had sat mute and astonished at this flood of information from the veteran woman of society.

"No; I told her that you had a boil on your nose."

"But I was very sick; I wish you had told her that!"

"You should have sent her a note explaining your situation and your absence from the ball; not leaving that to other people."

"But I didn't even know that she was here—not till I saw her look out of the stage as it was going away to the steamboat. Then I hastened to dress and ran to the wharf, but too late."

"Well, I don't know what she may think of it all. It is a great pity! But young people seem always to be playing at cross-purposes!—and 'life is thorny and youth is vain'—you know the rest! What are you going to do about it?"

"I am going right after her, of course."

"Of course! Have you enough money? I can--"

"Oh, yes. Uncle left an order at the office of the hotel giving me a credit for whatever I should require."

"Just like him. A dear, thoughtful fellow! Well, I wish you *bon voyage*. Give my love to her. Here is the man come to light the room. You had better be gone."

John D. laughed defiance of the light, and went away somewhat happier for this interview. Next day he set out in pursuit of Barbara.

## CHAPTER LII

### ANCESTRAL HALLS

"And the foot of the pilgrim shall find till the last  
Some fragrance of Home at this shrine of the past."

HE HAD no difficulty in following her as far as Baltimore, where he lost all trace of her, and presuming that she had gone to Virginia, he went there. After a long and tedious search he found, not Barbara but her aunt, the widow, who told him that she had left Barbara behind in Baltimore with a grand-aunt living there in retirement, old Mrs. Gordon; that she expected to remain there only a few days, and then, with Mr. Robert Ormsby, who was to come for her from Philadelphia, go home; and that in all likelihood she had already gone to Kentucky. Counting carefully the days that had passed since Barbara's arrival in Baltimore, and comparing notes with the aunt, and convinced that her conjecture was well grounded, and that to return to Baltimore would be only to waste time, he resolved to set out at once on the road home, by way of Wyandotte. But finding himself now near the home of his Virginia forefathers, and with time to spare while waiting for the stage, he was glad to use this for a visit to this old home, now in the possession of strangers.

He was cordially received and hospitably entertained by the new possessors, and would have been fêted had he consented to this. He saw in the old burying-ground the tombs of his forefathers, whose history was well preserved in the traditions of the neighborhood and in the parish register. He was informed that Barbara had also visited the place, and he was shown roots of wild roses from the grave of his great-grandfather, and, from the wall of the burying-ground, ivy, carefully potted, which she had intended to take home for transplantation at Lastlands.



These, after an explanation of Barbara's return to Kentucky from Baltimore, were entrusted to John D., who gladly bore them away, secured in a strong basket.

Some disappointment was felt by John D. in this ancestral home, which by no means came up to his expectations. But there is nothing new in this. Remoteness of time, as of distance, "lends enchantment to the view," and through the mists of the past all things loom up larger than life. This illusion must be dear to the human heart, and cherished by it, for it is as old as humanity. In all ages it has been the theme of homily or of satire. In Ecclesiastes we are solemnly warned against it, and in one of the dialogues of Lucian, that between Charon and Mercury, where, under Mercury's guidance, the old ferryman, with a furlough for a day, first visits the upper world, it is thus happily satirized:

*Charon:*

"Show me those famous cities  
So spoken of below—as Nineveh,  
Mycenæ, and Cleone—Troy itself.  
Well I remember ferrying them across,  
For ten whole years, so great a multitude,  
That I could find no time either to land  
Or dry my boat."

*Mercury:*

"For Nineveh 'tis gone,  
And not a single trace remains of it—  
Mycenæ—  
I should be ashamed to show thee, or Cleone,  
And still more Ilion; for I know full well  
That on returning thou wouldst strangle Homer  
For his high-sounding verses. But they once  
Were famous, though they now are dead; for cities  
Die, ferryman, as men."

*Charon:*

"Wo upon  
The epithets of Homer, and his praises!  
Wide-streeted, consecrated Ilion, and  
Cleone, nobly built!"

In the case of the descendants of Virginia magnates visiting for the first time the "Halls" of which all their

lives they have heard so much, this disappointment is not to be lightly considered. As Father Prout says of potatoes, there are some things in life too serious for joking, and this is one of them. But there is never any disappointment in the hospitality still subsisting there; hospitality that was never expressed in fancy, but always in the solid comforts and *agrémens* of life. And while quoting the Fathers, it may be well to say, with Father Tom McGuire, "There is never any fast on the drink."

For the rest, though the mansions of our fathers, the best of them, are not thought to be fine houses at this day, and are far inferior to the average mansion of the retired haberdasher, and though the "Old Dominion" furnishes a full quota to the army of men that, scorning all forms of labor, live by their wits; and may be fairly chargeable with being a laggard behind modern "progress," she still holds fast what is above all its boasted achievements, and above all price. As through the long night of the dark ages, under the reign of violence, amidst the din of arms and the decay of civilization, were preserved in the cells of hermits the priceless treasures of ancient learning; so under the reign of the worst fiend that roams the earth and snares men's souls,—the MONEY DEVIL,—amidst the din of progress and the decay of political and commercial honor, have been preserved in the sequestered homes of Virginia antique virtues and "forgotten noblenesses." If, in the course of our national life, an hour shall come, when not some mere sectional interest but the very vital spark of American freedom shall be in peril of extinction—one of those emergencies for which Providence seems to hold always in reserve some uncommon endowment of human virtue, of which men say, "There comes the hour and the man"—then, it is this chronicler's belief—fire cannot melt it out of him—that the MAN will come from Virginia.

But to return to John D., whom we shall not require the reader to accompany in his tedious journey across the mountains. Arrived at The Falls he remained there only long enough to know that none of the Lastlands people were in town, when he went privily to his father's stables, where a servant saddled a horse for him and he rode away to Last-

lands. A fast gallop brought him speedily within easy reach of the plantation, when in a great wood that lay along the road he pulled up his horse, and slackening the rein allowed him to breathe himself in a walk. Slowly, now, with his mind full of delightful memories and anticipation, he rode through the primitive wood; the great trees, walnuts and hickories and elms and hackberries and locusts, stretching up their round boles without a limb, almost a hundred feet, and thence on leafy arches spreading their tops toward the sky; the grapevines, like huge boas, stretching to the ground; the air filled with "invisible perfume"; birds, woodpeckers and jays and little nuthatches and wrens and summer yellowbirds, flitting through the pale-green light, enlivening the scene; while out of sight, on the tops of the tallest trees, great hickories or poplars—the monarchs of the wood—in the broad sunshine—were heard the crows teaching their young the mysteries of flight, and in drawling nasal tones, expressive of caution and cunning, warning them of the dangers that beset the lives of crows; at intervals hailing aloud or answering their brethren far away on other heights.

At a sharp turn in the path, from behind a broken snag, almost beneath his horse's feet, with a loud whirr, startling both horse and rider, sprang a blue-tailed hawk, leaving on the ground a dead bird not yet torn by the beak but neatly plucked, the feathers lying around it like the fleece of a well-shorn lamb. It was a white pigeon, and the sight of the murdered bird sent a thrill through John D.'s breast, as he remembered Barbara's snowy pets. Before this he had purposely ridden slowly, delighting in this lingering approach, reveling in anticipation, and associating with Barbara all the delights about him, especially the fragrance of the wildgrape, now faint in its second bloom, but still exquisite. But the sight of the dead bird now spurred him into a more active mood, and gathering up the reins, he put his horse again into a gallop, impatient all at once of further delay.

As his horse drinks at the ford he surveys the scene, and not without a vague sense of uneasiness observes the change made by the Church of St. John's in the Wilderness and

the parsonage. He would have liked better to see the familiar grove as it was of old, without this church building, beautiful as it was with its tall spire among the tree-tops; and he would have liked better to see the grassy hillside than the quaint, foreign-looking parsonage now nestling by its side. Almost any change in Lastlands would have offended him, and these seemed like intruders. He would have liked to find everything just as he had left it. When he reached the "*great-house*" now completed, and saw the wide, smooth gravel road, and the white columns along the front of the mansion wreathed with climbing plants, its stateliness fairly oppressed him. Seeing no person about the front of the house, he rode to the shed, where, to take his horse, came old Tom, no longer dressed in his master's cast-off clothes, but wearing what seemed a smart livery. To his inquiry about the family, he answered that the household was away dining with a large company at Major Tinsley's, and, to his dismay, that Barbara had not come home, but was still in Baltimore with Mrs. Gordon! All the delights of Lastlands grew vapid with this intelligence. The reader will doubtless recall the fine old pastoral in which his predicament is well described:

"My time, O ye Muses, was happily spent,  
When Phoebe was with me wherever I went.  
Ten thousand sweet pleasures I felt in my breast,  
Sure never fond shepherd like Colin was blest,  
But now she has gone and has left me behind,  
What a marvelous change on a sudden I find!  
When things were as fine as could possibly be  
I thought 'twas the spring, but, alas! it was she.'"

He at once remounted his horse, and soon the latch of the big gate sounded behind him as of old, and his horse splashed across the ford on his way back to The Falls.



## CHAPTER LIII

### MISUNDERSTANDING

"Hope is a lover's staff: walk hence with that,  
And manage it against despairing thought."

THE chronicler finds his work grown far beyond what in the beginning he contemplated, and distrustful of the reader's patience he feels inclined to hurry to a conclusion. He is distrustful, too, of the reception of his pictures of Kentucky life and character, which must seem pale when compared with the preconceived notions of the average reader. Yet they are all truthful, and represent fairly the halcyon time to which they belong. Nothing would induce the writer to present them otherwise than as they were, or to inject into them incidents that belong only to the barbarity that attended and followed the Civil War. His present concern is with John D., to whose trials he trusts the reader is not indifferent.

Before finally going away from Newport he had a second interview with the Charleston chaperon. With rare tact she had saved him from any avowal of his love for Barbara, by tacitly assuming this, and grounded all her sage advice upon this assumption. "Let me tell you," she said, "that I know all about the breeding of this young beauty, and her hereditary traits of character. None of her house—men or women—have ever made a marriage of convenience. None can win them that do not love them. As you are a Kentucky man, you will know what I mean when I say that being thoroughbreds they are not skittish, yet they are impatient of constraint, and can be subjugated only by love and gentleness. I know that Barbara feels that she has been slighted. When she came first and I spoke of you, her face lighted up at once. But afterward, when you did not appear at the ball, her pride was touched and her bearing then greatly enhanced her beauty. My Boston confrère, an

excellent judge, said to me, 'What style your young friend has! I have never seen anything finer.'

"I thought you much in fault. I knew then only that you had a pimple on your face, though I believe I told her it was a boil. Let her know all the circumstances when you see her, and then give her time to think for herself. Meantime, wait patiently where she now thinks you stand—in the wrong. She will find out the truth after a while, and then will come your opportunity.

"Do not write to her then. Written communications are often entangling. Very few people have the art to say in writing just what they intend. Where the parties are dear to each other, but estranged, they are apt to be biased by jealousy or suspicion, and then writing is dangerous. Have you never observed how easily the meaning of written words may be perverted by considering them too curiously, or by long contemplation so stared out of countenance as to have no more meaning than 'Abracadabra'? Go to her and make your explanation in person. Then any misunderstanding may be cleared up on the spot. At all events, in such cases it is better to appear 'in the flesh.'

"Above all, do not suffer yourself to be put at a disadvantage by jealousy. Plenty of rivals will come into the field, but you must not regard them, except to be civil to them. Whatever she may think of your conduct she will not change:

" 'Love is *not* love

Which alters when it alteration finds,

Or bends with the remover to remove:

O, no! it is an ever fixed mark

That looks on tempests and is never shaken'—

You know the lines. Wait and win."

Very soothing to John D.'s wounded heart had been the touch of the soft hand of this wise and sentimental spinster, who could quote poetry so readily and so aptly. He had felt like kissing her when he bade her good-by.

That John D. was now deeply in love with Barbara the reader needs not to be told. That for years—ever since he was old enough to feel that passion—he had loved her, after such fashion as belonged to his years, is highly probable.

But not until he saw her look with wistful eyes to his window in Newport,—nay, perhaps not until he saw the steamer bearing her away, the attendant smiling beaux waving adieu,—had he felt the passion in full force. Then was verified that prediction of Paul Scudamore, that when a rival should come into the field John D. would know “what ailed him.” Now, spite of all the sage advice of the wise spinster at Newport, he was at a loss what step to take toward Barbara. What would she think, being left so long without any explanation of his seeming neglect? After much cogitation, he resolved to write to her at Baltimore, explaining the circumstances, and expressing regret and disappointment on this account and a desire that she should soon come home to Lastlands, and offering to fetch her. But when this letter had been written, and deliberately read, it failed to satisfy him. The first words—the address—were a stumbling block. Had he not seen Barbara at Newport, remembering her only as his sweet, thoughtful, unconventional companion at Lastlands and The Falls, associated with the happiest hours of his life, he would, unhesitatingly, have addressed her as “Dear Barb.,” and this he had done. But now, recalling the radiant and somewhat stately beauty he had seen in the ballroom at Newport, and afterward, attended by the élite of the beaux there, bearing votive offerings of flowers, two of them going off with her to New York, such a familiar address seemed altogether unsuitable, and this letter was at once destroyed. Troubled again as at Newport, and no sea being at hand, he walked instead along the margin of the river, under the shade of great sycamores, revolving the initial step in his letter.

Spite of the Newport letters that had so offended Barbara, John D. was by nature modest. He now, every day, put a lower estimate upon himself, and a higher one on Barbara, and was further than ever from a just conception of the sort of letter he ought to write. Gradually a proper conception of such a letter seemed to form itself in his mind, and after a day passed on the falls, and more cogitation, he wrote a second letter, addressing her as “Dear Barbara,” making a clear statement of his predicament at

Newport, his search for her in Virginia, and his disappointment at not finding her at Lastlands, whither he hoped she would soon return, but making no offer to fetch her. A model letter, studied, clear in statement, complete in explanation and in justification, unimpassioned, proper. Yet, as a touch of cold steel, it sent a chill to Barbara's heart.

Alack! the spinster was right. There is in human speech, whether spoken or written, a subtle element, indefinable, attainable only in that half unconscious state when the mind seems to sleep and the heart alone keeps vigil, potent beyond all art of the rhetorician; and in this element John D.'s letter was wanting. There was, perhaps, plenty of it in that first letter beginning "Dear Barb.," but this he had torn up. Barbara answered him in the same fashion, revealing to him the true complexion of his own letter, of which he had been unconscious.

What a subtle power lies in words! Two short letters without any rhetorical force, unimpassioned, polite, commonplace—*proper*, seemed now to have blotted out from the memory and the hearts of these young people most of their past history, as completely as if they had never dwelt together at The Falls; as if no such event as the packing up for the removal to Lastlands had ever occurred; as if Mr. Wall's school and the Anser, with its shady loitering places, and the branch, and the bridge, and old Kirby and his museum, and the Duke—and all the many pleasures in which they had been associated—were myths or visions of the night. In this posture they stood when, on coming home from the falls, whither he had gone to find in the rushing, whirling, tumbling waters something congenial to his troubled spirit, John D. learned that Barbara had come home, and had gone in his father's carriage to Lastlands. He was appalled on contemplating the state of his case. And he now remembered with what emphasis the wise spinster at Newport had cautioned him against written explanations. Would she were here now, to console him afresh with some hope-inspiring speeches and quotations from the poets, which had always carried conviction as if she "nail't wi' Scripture"!



## CHAPTER LIV

PAUL AND PHOEBE

"They do not love that do not show their love."

MANY changes had occurred also in the households about Lastlands. Vaughn's oldest son married his sweetheart "over the Ridge"; and soon two other sons were beguiled into the same predicament; for there were sirens in that land—and the old farmer found himself so crippled in the vital matter of farm labor, that he was forced to turn grazier, and lay down in grass the greater part of his land. He had looked forward to continue to his life's end the old method, but as he had never made any offer to advance his sons in life, and now refused to do this, keeping them as farm hands on small wages, they resolved to set up for themselves. Hugh had long ago been withdrawn from Mr. Wall's school, and was now away in Missouri, whither, furnished with a horse and a hundred dollars, he had gone ostensibly to visit an uncle living there, but really to "seek his fortune," a form of escapade not uncommon in that day. Only through Phoebe was any intercourse now maintained with Lastlands, and this only by Thornton, who, in the course of his rides, sometimes found her walking in the road that led to the bridge across the branch and to the cattle barn, and in Paul's interest kept himself informed of the family. Finding her now walking there the day before Barbara's return and looking disconsolate, Thornton saluted her, and drawing near was so impressed with her sad face that he could not forbear to express regret on account of the changed relations of the two households. To this she answered warmly in sympathy with him, and inquired with great interest about Barbara. When he answered as to this, informing her that she would be home very soon, he added, "We shall soon be all to-

gether once more. Paul is coming, too. I should not be surprised to see him any day." She was manifestly agitated by this, and turned away her face from Thornton, and trembled a little, but soon rallied, and said, "Do you hear from Mr. Paul ever?"

"Oh, yes; he often writes to me, and always inquires after all his old friends. I have now a Nashville newspaper in which there is an account of his appearance before the Governor of Tennessee and his council, to report the work done on the survey in which he has been engaged; Mr. Bliss being sick and not able to appear in person. If you would like to read it you may have the paper." And then taking it from his pocket, Phoebe eagerly advanced to the side of his horse and took it into possession. But she looked now more disconsolate than before, and as Thornton drew up his rein and seemed about to ride away she said, with much emotion:

"Oh, Colonel Thornton, I wish you would come to see father! He is very unhappy on account of these changes here."

"But I did go to see him once, and he received me very ungraciously. I do not think I was to blame for what has happened. How do I know that he may not receive me in the same way now?"

"Oh, no; mother says he would not; he would only be too glad to get back into the old way, but he does not know how to go about it. She said that if she should meet you she would tell you this. Oh, I should like to see something like those old Lastlands days again! Sometimes I walk down to the stepping-stones at the branch, but I never go across them; and sometimes I go down the road here as far as the bridge, and see Mr. Kirby. But now, instead of the laugh and the pleasant face he used to have for me, he looks solemn, and only puts up his hand and makes that old soldier's salute, which sends a chill to my heart!"

"Well, I will think over what you have said, and if you are walking here at this time to-morrow I will see you again. Your mother's assurance that I will be welcome will suffice. Tell her this." Then they shook hands and parted.

Thornton had once said in relation to Phœbe and Paul, "I will not be a matchmaker." It is to be feared that he was now in a fair way to break his promise; for on the next day at the same hour he rode down to the same place, prepared to make almost any required concession, when, to his surprise, he saw at a distance Phœbe there in company with a strange young gentleman, who walked slowly by her side, leading his horse by the bridle. This was Paul come home, having taken in the last stage of his journey the somewhat circuitous route by old Vaughn's house, and thence down the road toward the bridge and the cattle barn. He had met Phœbe in the road and at once dismounted, and without much prelude did then and there unbosom himself, in his frank way avowing his love, and receiving a like avowal from the tender-hearted maiden. Then, as they walked toward Vaughn's house, seeing Phœbe's mother approaching them, Paul fastened his horse, took Phœbe's hand and led her to her mother, and, emboldened by his love, made the same avowal to her, imploring her to intercede with the obdurate father, in such terms as melted the mother's heart. Then Paul embraced the mother, and then all three embraced, and all shed some foolish tears. The reader may be assured that no insuperable obstacle now remained between this simple young couple and happiness.

Thornton then paid a visit to old Vaughn, who received him with more emotion than Thornton had thought him capable of feeling, and the old cordial relations were resumed. Then Thornton resolved to give a dinner, to which all the near neighbors should be invited, ostensibly to celebrate Paul's return, but mainly to show him in an advantageous light to old Vaughn, for Paul now presented a manly and very attractive figure.

Phœbe had shown to her mother the newspaper account of Paul's appearance before the Governor of Tennessee and his council, but had withheld it from old Vaughn at Thornton's diplomatic suggestion, that it would be better to keep it in reserve as a coup de grâce, in case the old father should prove obstinate in his personal objection to Paul.

## CHAPTER LV

### BARBARA'S RETURN

"She's home again."

MEANTIME, all Lastlands had been on tiptoe in expectation of Barbara's return. On the morning of the day that brought her to The Falls, Thornton had been at the cattle barn, where, seeing Elijah moping and looking dispirited, he asked Kirby, "What is the matter with Elijah? He begged me to let him come here to work. Doesn't he like the place?"

"Oh, yes; he likes it very well. I don't think he wants to change. I know he wouldn't like to leave the Duke. But he has never been the same nigger since Miss Barbara went away. And I believe everybody else has been put out in the same way. For a long time I felt as if I had lost something, but couldn't tell what it was, till I saw 'Lijah giving all his idle time to rubbing her mare, and keeping her under cover, to get off the sunburn, and looking after her little ponies. He went to old Tom to get her saddle and the ponies' harness, to clean them against her coming; but the old fellow sent him off in a huff, and told him that he'd tend to that business himself. You are looking for her home any day now, ain't you?"

"Yes, any hour."

"Well, the Lord send her safe home soon! Lastlands ain't Lastlands with Miss Barbara away."

Phœbe had now once more crossed the stepping-stones to Lastlands to know if there were yet any tidings of Barbara. She was on the front corridor, in her bonnet, about to go home, when Mr. John Digby's carriage drove up with Barbara's eager face peering out at the window. The congratulations that followed, the reader may easily imagine.



Lastlands was stirred as no event had ever stirred it, save the coming of the first baby! A full holiday was proclaimed by the master, and the plantation was put in holiday attire. Troops of slaves, old and young,—all but the old crones, Hannah and Milly,—were soon at hand to welcome the “angel” of the house. Ejaculations and blessings and clapping of hands were on all sides heard from these emotional children of the sun. Elijah’s eyes danced with joy as he laughed, and cried, and pirouetted on his crutch.

In this tumult of congratulation Phœbe felt isolated and overslaughed, and spite of herself a jealous pang smote her heart. After another kiss from her friend she went home, attended by Paul.

Next day John D. came to Lastlands. He was now a despairing lover. He had come under a sense of duty to give Barbara a hearty greeting, and to throw his heart at her feet, without hope that she would take it up. The marriage of these young people had long been the secret desire and expectation of all Lastlands. A disappointment in this would be a painful blow, almost a household calamity. More anxious than all was Mrs. Thornton. Soon after John D.’s coming was known, she had said impatiently to her husband, “Please go away to visit somewhere, or ride around the plantation. Barbara knows that you are waiting to see her meeting with John D., and you have driven her to her room. Don’t take it into your head that because you have helped Phœbe and Paul you can do any good here. The cases are very different. They must be left to themselves. Interference will only do harm.”

Thornton meekly complied, and making an obeisance in token of submission, ordered his horse; and then, telling John D. that the old crones were anxious to see him, and that he had promised to send him to their cabin; that Barbara had a headache, and that his wife was ministering to her in her chamber, but that they would probably both be astir and down when he should come back from the cabin, he rode away, while John D. went to visit the old slaves. These were two superannuated cooks, Hannah and Milly, who had each in her day ruled the roost in his grandfather’s kitchen. Hannah was the oldest slave at Last-

lands, and the chief of the patricians of the quarter—the slaves of long descent from slaves born in the master's house, not bought with his money. She was long-haired, black as ebony, tall and straight, with regular, small features, clean-cut and medallion-like in a degree seldom seen in Africans. In fine weather, except in "wintertime," she was to be seen at the door of her cabin, sitting upright in a cushioned, splint-bottomed chair, her head covered by a clean cap with cheap lace border, a cane pipestem between her short, yellow teeth, in grave contentment, with lack-lustre eyes, "taking the sun."

Milly was not of those born in the master's house, but bought with his money—bought by Reginald Thornton's guardian while he was himself a minor away at school. She loved to tell how, when a slip of a girl, she was bought from the Tollivers, and how she first saw her master when he came home from school to take possession of his plantation, and how he beat the overseer, "a bad man," and drove him away. She was very unlike Hannah, being not so black and being short and stout, and, though much younger, walked half bent, using a staff—contrasting strongly with Hannah in appearance and in manner, being of a sprightly temperament and full of lively chatter, while Hannah was grave and not without a certain native dignity.

They were both at the door expectant of him when John D. came to the cabin—Hannah in her chair and Milly outside capering about in a lively way with her staff. "Is dat Mars John D.?" Hannah said, hearing his voice, as he spoke to some tenants of the cabins.

"Yes, Aunt Hannah," he replied.

"Come close, please, and let me see who you look like." And then, as he drew near and took her hand, she tried to make a curtsy, but failed, not being able to rise. Then, scrutinizing his form and features, she found points of resemblance to grand-uncles and others long dead. Then she said, "Where is that country you been in so long—away yonder at the seashore, ain't it?"

"Yes, Aunt Hannah, right by the seashore."

"To be sure! To be sure!" and Milly echoed, "To be sho'! To be sho'!"

Then, while Aunt Hannah seemed wrapt in meditation, a strange light—the light of other days—illuminating her face, Milly said, “I be bound you felt mighty strange when you fust got in dat country.”

“Yes, I felt lonesome, at first.”

“Hi, hi, hi! but I be bound when you got used to it you never let dat country rest for runnin’ after de gals!” This speech roused Hannah, who at once, with a sibilant utterance, “Chit-chit-chit! Milly-Milly-Milly!” utterly suppressed her, and then said, with a grave smile, “Of course Mars John D. went to see the *young ladies*.”

The Africans of which Hannah was a type possessed singular vitality as well as peculiar traits of character, and were valued more highly than all others. The Spaniards and other early slavers had much knowledge of the characteristic traits of the different African tribes, and valued them accordingly. It would be interesting to know something definitive of this, but this chronicler has no knowledge of the subject. Hannah, though much older than Milly and unable to seat herself, or when seated to rise without help, and waited on by Milly, whom she dominated, still retained her mental faculties and, as we have seen, a just sense of propriety, while Milly, though able to go about everywhere in the quarter, was in a state of lively dotage.

When John D. had left the cabin and was on his way to the house, he was intercepted by Milly, who had availed herself of the opportunity, while Hannah was fixed in her chair, to have a further talk with him. “Did you know, Mars John D.,” she said, “dat I been in a trance while you was gone away?”

“No, indeed; I did not know that.”

“Yes, I been in a trance; and I went up to heaven and down to hell.”

“Indeed! And what did you see there?”

“In heaven I saw all de little angels flyin’ about suckin’ de flowers, an’ de big angels blowin’ de trumpets. I learned a song up dere—would you like me to sing it for you? Nobody can’t sing it so mournful as I can.”

And then, John D. expressing a desire to hear it, she gave him on treble pipes a hearse-like air, mournful enough

and pitiful. After this, thinking any change desirable, he asked, "What did you see in hell?"

"In hell I saw all de kittles on de fire, wid de melted lead, an' brimstone, an' de little devils an' de big devils wid pitchforks tormentin' de sinners. An' I saw de Toller women hangin' up by de hyar."

Having supped full with horrors, John D. closed the interview and went to the house.



## CHAPTER LVI

### THE COURSE OF TRUE LOVE

"O, how the spring of Love resembleth  
The uncertain glory of an April day;  
Which now shows all the beauty of the sun,  
And by and by a cloud takes all away."

IT HAD not required much effort on the part of Dick Thornton to talk his brother out of all his notions of personal independence, so far as Dick himself was concerned. In youth Robert had been, as we have seen, a willing dependent on the older brother, and now, merging all his morbid feeling in love and gratitude, he returned to his early allegiance. Dick had not only refused to accept any share of the great profit derived from the traffic in Spanish jackasses, ordering the large sum placed to his credit on that account in the bank to be transferred to the credit of his brother, but had added to this such a sum as made Robert Thornton's balance largely in excess of that of any depositor of the bank.

Before this McCrae had been the largest depositor there, and had long enjoyed from this distinction great satisfaction as well as the grateful civility always accorded on that account in the circle of trade and notably in the temples of Mammon. The exclusiveness that now belongs to bank offices did not then exist. They had their privileged loungers, moneyed men depositors, some of whom picked up there information valuable to them as money lenders at usurious rates, or shavers of paper, chief among whom was McCrae. Looking now over the books, as from long familiarity with the office of the bank, and a habit of often reviewing his own account, he was accustomed to do, and curious about everything that concerned the financial con-

dition of the Thorntons, he covertly turned to the page that contained their name, and seemed thunderstruck at sight of it. The veteran cashier was shocked and amazed to see him suddenly turn away, pale and trembling, and grope his way to a seat, and soon after send for a carriage and go home. But he well comprehended the cause of this when, returning to his place at his desk, he saw the book open at the page on which stood penciled in imposing array the long row of figures that indicated Robert Thornton's balance. These old bank officials, though habitually silent, were by no means unobservant, and he knew that McCrae had been overcome by surprise and chagrin on seeing himself now superseded as chief depositor of the bank by Thornton. Next day it was known that he was stricken with paralysis.

Not long afterward Ould was sent for to write his will; and when this had been done he put into Ould's hand a memorandum of facts of great importance to Mrs. Scudamore and Paul, such information as Ould thought would enable them to make good their title to the land of which they were in possession, and also the share of all of which they had been defrauded. A living witness cognizant of the whole fraudulent transaction had been found by McCrae, and Ould, having by a proceeding at law perpetuated this testimony, was now getting ready to go to Virginia with a copy of this and obtain the restitution of their interest, without a lawsuit. It was a favorite method with Ould to proceed first by private interviews, laying great stress on this, the method by which he had succeeded in the case against McCrae. He had a fixed belief that few men could hold out in the wrong against a plain showing, properly made in private. After the matter has been made public by a lawsuit the situation is altered, and the party put upon his mettle, and constrained to fight with all his strength in defense of character.

Though McCrae, before the catastrophe at the bank, had resolved, under his superstitious fear, not to commit against Thornton any further act of offense, he had not then given up the idea of possessing Lastlands, but cheated himself with the belief that in the natural course of events it

would fall into his hands. Meantime, he had been possessed with an idea of some act of beneficence toward Thornton, or his household, that should compound for past offenses. Now prostrated by a sudden and perhaps fatal stroke, apprehensions more serious than any that relate to merely worldly fortune haunted him. Abandoning all hope and even desire for Lastlands, he had now hastened to make a first act of atonement by what he had done in behalf of Paul and his mother—a thing not likely to be defeated by any repugnance on the part of the beneficiaries to be beholden to him. He felt a peculiar satisfaction in doing this through Ould, by whom he knew it would be promptly made known to them, and thence advertised to the public. Ould's compassion was moved by McCrae's humiliation, and by the piteous aspect he now wore. Above all sublunary things he seemed now to desire to make his peace with Thornton.

At Lastlands the miscarriage of John D.'s suit was a serious disappointment, especially to Mrs. Thornton. But she was not without hope for the future. She believed that his wooing had been too precipitate, urging a suit that could be favorably received only after a long, quiet communion should have restored the old relation of the parties. With very many young couples she well knew that only a certain quantum of propinquity is necessary, when they mate like pigeons shut up together in a box. But not so this couple. She thought that John D.'s faint heart had much to do with his failure; that Barbara mistook his shy advance for indifference; that she believed that his offer had been now made only from a sense of duty and a desire to comply with the wishes of his friends and meet the expectations of "all Lastlands." And behind these considerations, and fortifying them, was that well-considered, studied, proper, fatal letter written to her at Baltimore. The seeming neglect at Newport had been condoned, as well as the Newport letters.

Dick Thornton, who had also returned to The Falls, was now called away to New Orleans by dispatches from Stackpole, and was about to set out, taking with him John D., now in a very unhappy state of mind. Mrs. Thornton was

glad that he was going away. She was still hopeful for him, though nothing could be done just now.

After the departure of John D. and Dick Thornton, Mr. Ould being often at Lastlands in conference with Mrs. Scudamore, and learning from Mrs. Thornton the failure of John D.'s suit, and of Barbara's distrust of John D.'s love for her, he told the good lady of his own correspondence with John D. at Newport, and soon afterward put into her hand that frantic letter from which it has been attempted to picture his distressful state there, to be used at her discretion in disabusing Barbara's mind. Distressful as the letter was, after reading she folded it with a delighted face. Then she said, "I think this will do; but, pray, don't say anything of this to my husband. He has a great opinion of his skill in affairs like this, and is busy forwarding that of Phoebe and Paul. But this case is not at all like theirs. It requires a more delicate hand. I have not ventured to say a word to Barbara. But I believe this letter will set all right—when the time comes for her to see it. It will not do to show it now. But the opportunity will come, and I must wait for it." And Mr. Ould nodded assent, and said, with a smile, "The case will lie in abeyance until the spring and then be revived or be begun *de novo*."

Meantime, Mr. Bob Thornton was not idle in the matter he had taken in hand for Paul. This he felt to be his own especial undertaking, to the consummation of which he considered himself committed. As on a former occasion, when first informed by Paul that there was a love affair between John D. and Barbara, he thought their case would keep, while that of Paul and Phoebe was more pressing. With his usual persistence he now busied himself with forwarding this by a dinner that should bring together the Lastlands neighbors, and show Paul in a favorable light to old Vaughn. Something of this dinner and the table-talk of that day will be seen in a subsequent chapter.



## CHAPTER LVII

### TABLE TALK

**"The first ingredient in Conversation is Truth, the next Good Sense, the third Good Humor, and the fourth Wit."**

IT WAS a bright day at Lastlands when McIntyre and Russell, and Mr. Joe Sterrett and wife, and Major Tinsley and old Hugh Vaughn, and Phoebe and Paul Scudamore, and a large company of neighbors, were there at dinner. A dinner-party in that day was always in the beginning a formal affair, even when most of the guests were familiar friends. Mrs. Thornton and Barbara received the guests as they arrived, the ladies making old-fashioned curtsies and the gentlemen bowing very low.

When all were assembled and dinner announced, Mrs. Thornton assigned each lady an escort, reserving Major Tinsley for herself. Russell, for mischief, had taken possession of Barbara, forestalling the young prince of "Locust Grove," who was there in attendance upon her. But the kind hostess interfered, calling to Mr. Croghan to escort Miss Peyton. Paul went right up to Phoebe, who took his arm as a matter of course, and they filed in to the table.

Nothing in the formality of the proceeding could for a moment prevent Paul from feeling and looking extremely happy. He was attired in the height of the fashion, with the regulation swallowtail coat, white necktie, ruffled lace, low shoes and silk stockings, and presented a stylish, handsome figure. His mother's eyes lighted up with pride as she looked at him. Old Vaughn was manifestly puzzled and astonished at his appearance, and impressed by the interest manifested by everybody in his behalf. As for Phoebe, she fairly tiptoed with pride and supreme satisfaction. "Father is bound to give in now," she thought; "I'm

sure Paul is only too good for me." Barbara was not without a little of the spirit of mischief, and seeing Paul's happy face, said to him, as they walked to the table, "Mr. Scudamore, I think you must have heard some news of your fine horse that went astray, you look so supremely happy. Phœbe, do you know of any good fortune he has had lately?"

Paul answered only with a wide grin, and increased the pressure on Phœbe's arm. Phœbe, returning this pressure, answered, "I think you are right; he must have heard news of his horse."

"What a treasure a horse is!" said Barbara. "I would be willing to lose both Moth and Cobweb for a time, to be made as happy as Mr. Scudamore."

It does not take much to make happy young people merry, and this simple banter of Barbara's, made with a half-sad face, set the young people all a-grin. They brought up the rear of the procession, lighting up the room with their bright faces.

The usual stiffness which seems inseparable from dinner-parties infected the company for a time, no one venturing to talk farther away than to his next neighbor; but the tact of Thornton's wife and his unconventional manner soon dissipated all restraint, and the talk went around and across the table very freely. The lower end was especially lively, where Russell had been purposely placed with the young people. He was giving them an account of the troubles and jealousies and anxieties and disappointments of his love affairs, which convulsed Paul and Phœbe, and made Barbara show her glistening teeth and put a bright spark in her eye.

At the other end of the table there was also abundant good humor. Major Tinsley had been relating some of his trading experiences, which were full of interest. Nodding his head toward Russell at the other end, he said, "There's as sharp a trader as I have ever known."

"Why," said Thornton, "where did you ever know him in that character?"

"Oh, I used to deal with Chambers, when he had an interest and was a salesman in the house, and I have had

many a bout with him. But as I was not a storekeeper, and bought for family and plantation use only, he didn't lay himself out for me. But just see him get hold of a country storekeeper, if you want to see acting and hear eloquence! I was in the store once when he had in tow a man from my part of the country. It was Saunders, who then kept a crossroads store in the county where I then lived. He had made a good deal of money by close dealing and saving, and had excellent credit, as men that don't want credit always have, but he bought for cash only. He had a sharp practice of often changing his place of dealing, in order to avail himself of the liberal treatment a new customer for cash always receives. He prided himself not only on knowing what to buy, but especially when to buy everything. That day he had already bought a pretty large bill of goods, and was about to go away, when Russell, as if he had a sudden thought of something important, called him back. He took him off in silence a short distance, out of my hearing; but I walked nearer to them, pretending to look at some door-fastenings that lay on the counter, and I heard the whole talk:

"'Mr. Saunders,' said Russell, looking mighty solemn, and speaking very slowly, as if he was going to tell some awful mystery; 'Mr. Saunders, have you bought enough gimlets?'"

"'Well, I don't know,' said Saunders, looking mighty serious; 'I think I have.'"

"'You *think* you have! Well, perhaps you know best; but let me tell you one thing,' and then he looked over his shoulders as if afraid of being overheard; and then he fastened his eyes on Saunders and looked so solemn and mysterious that Saunders turned pale, and then he said, 'Let—me—tell—you—that—gimlets—are going to be—*gimlets!* You had better take a barrel!' And he did take a barrel. I shall never forget."

Here the Major was overcome by a sudden fit of laughter, which continued for some time, suspending his story. Recovering himself and wiping his eyes, he said, "Oh, I am not fit to tell a story, because I can't help laughing myself at the recollection of it, and that spoils everything." But

the good Major was in error there; for he was one of those rare story-tellers whose laughter was not the affected sniffing of some story-tellers, but genuine and hearty, revealing only his simplicity of character, and instead of marring gave increased zest to his story, and was apt to infect his whole audience, as it had now done. Wiping his eyes he continued:

"I shall never forget that barrel of gimlets—a great hardware barrel. It was enough to supply the county for five years. I could not help telling the story when I went home, and the mischievous fellows in the neighborhood be-deviled Saunders in a thousand ways—until you couldn't say anything that would suggest a gimlet, without setting his teeth on edge. Of course, he never could sell half of them in regular trade; so he took to giving in a gimlet whenever a certain amount was laid out in goods—a device he had once practiced with an overstock of Bibles—and so I believe he got rid of them. At all events he professed that he had, for I went there once to buy a gimlet, really wanting one, and could not help laughing a little when I asked for it, and his face turned as red as a turkey-cock's, and he protested that he had not a gimlet in the house. I was sorry I had told the story, because Saunders never went back to buy of that house any more. But they got nearly every other storekeeper in our region, because they all wanted to see the man that made Saunders buy a barrel of gimlets; and when they went to The Falls they were sure to go to that store at once; and all Russell needed was just to lay hands on them."

"Is that the rich Saunders lately come to The Falls?" some one asked.

"The same man," replied the Major. "He enlarged his business very much, as his means increased. He bought altogether for cash, but to those whom he knew to be good he sold on credit, putting on a great profit. Almost all the substantial farmers in the neighborhood got in debt to him. At the end of the year all his accounts were settled. Where the parties were good beyond question, he took their bonds, bearing interest, requiring these to be renewed at the end of each year, compounding the interest. When-



ever he felt the least doubt of the sufficiency of a debtor he got a mortgage, or, if this was refused, brought suit. Thus by easy stages he wound a coil about men, in which they were powerless to resist any demand he might make. Many of the worthiest farmers in the neighborhood were half ruined by their dealing with him, and very few escaped unhurt. It is such an easy thing to get in debt when you keep a running account! And especially when nothing is to be demanded until the end of the year; and then only a bond. A man buys a thousand unnecessary things, weakening every day his power of self-denial, and at last, acquiring a *habit* of buying, can hardly quit the store without having something charged.

"There was young Ball, who inherited the best farm in the county, without a dollar of incumbrance. Saunders got that farm, and owns it now, for debt incurred in that store; and, by the war! I wouldn't give that farm for all the goods Saunders ever had in his house. The confounded fellow knew the temper of every man, and it was his constant study to devise schemes to get them into debt. Young Ball was an easy victim. Like most young men that come into an estate, he thought there could be no end to it. Saunders persuaded him to build a new house; and he furnished all the lumber and other materials. You see, he had every carpenter and mason and millowner in his debt, and every whisky-drinking unfortunate, and he worked into that house nearly every bad or doubtful debt he had in the county. When it was finished he supplied all the furniture, looking-glasses, etc. Then he constantly brought on showy trifles, pictures in gilt frames, brackets and what-nots, especially to catch Ball's fancy. I went over one day to see the young fellow, at his invitation, and he took me over the house to show me all his fine things; and such a collection of nothings! I declare, I think he had a thousand dollars' worth of gimeracks in one room, a parlor that was kept shut up nearly all the time, and was then as cold as a well.

"When the hard times came on, and the money was all drawn from this region to sustain the mother bank in Philadelphia, Saunders foreclosed his mortgage and bought

in the farm—bought everything—lock, stock and barrel—and owns it now. He served many others in the same way. Any farmer who got into his books, except he was exceptionally cautious and firm, was sure to suffer grievously. To those that had daughters he was especially dangerous. All kinds of showy finery were brought on from Philadelphia—finery that had gone out of fashion there, and was only available for country consumption. Now, who can deny anything to a daughter—especially when there is nothing to do but tell Mr. Saunders to charge it? I could never deny my daughter anything. I never waited to be asked for anything. But then I did not deal in this line with Saunders. My business took me often to the cities, especially to New Orleans, and I got there as many pretty things as she desired. I always carried her measure with me, and it was easy to get some of my friends' wives to choose the stuffs for me, and have the things made in the latest fashion. In this way I discovered the imposture he was practicing.

“Upstairs he had a room where the idle young fellows played cards and learned to drink. This branch of the business was superintended by a one-armed fellow, who could shuffle the cards in a wonderful way, with his one hand and the stump of an arm, and it was said that, at ‘all-fours,’ he could turn up Jack whenever he pleased. This department was kept going day and night. Often, passing there late at night, I have seen standing at the racks a long row of horses, many of which I recognized in the moonlight as belonging to young men of the neighborhood, and some to men by no means young; for there are always a few old bell-wethers that consort with the young bucks.

“How many families there were brought down from comfortable independence to absolute want, by the various devices of this fellow, I can't pretend to state, but I know that the whole neighborhood was corrupted, and idleness and drunkenness and gambling became the rule. There was in consequence a sensible falling off in the average products of the county, both in quality and quantity. I used then to buy nearly all the fine tobacco made there, and

I noticed this falling off. Some of the best tobacco growers neglected their crops when they got to going down to Saunders's. I told one of these, when I was looking at his tobacco, that it had too much crossroads store in it, and he knew at once what I meant; and the phrase is current there to this day.

"I hope we shall never have a crossroads store in this Lastlands settlement. Better a race track and a cockpit, a faro bank, a roulette table—any or all the vile devices of the gambler—than a crossroads store with a whisky attachment!"

There was a pause in the talk after the Major had concluded this onslaught upon the crossroads stores. Thornton was the first to break the silence. "I think," said he, "that a trader, as they say of the poet, is born not made. There is a peculiar faculty, a rare natural endowment, which some men possess, by which they not only get the better of all other men, in trading, but prevail over such as are averse to trade, overcoming this aversion and bargaining with them against their will. Gabriel Honoré, the little Frenchman at The Falls, is one of these men.

"When I was a real estate owner in town, and had lots scattered everywhere, from the eastern end of town to the foot of the falls, and in Portland, I was one day approached by Honoré, who proposed to me a trade. 'How would you like,' said he, 'to trade your lots on Chestnut street for a dwelling-house and lot on Jefferson—the house lately built by —?'

"I answered carelessly—I know not what. Then he asked me if I would look at his property and give him an answer, when we should next meet, and I thoughtlessly promised to do this. Soon afterward I saw him again, when he hurried across the street to know if I had looked at his house, as I had promised to do, and speaking as if a trade was already afoot between us. For a week I saw him every day, and each time he would rush up to know if I had yet examined his property. This became a bore. I had not the least notion of trading with him. I was conscious of being in fault, in not going, according to promise, to look at his house. It became so disagreeable to me to meet him that

I found myself one day dodging him—going into a place where I had no business—and afterward turning out of my course, when I saw him coming, in order to avoid him. A feeling of indignation came over me at finding myself in this condition, and, with no notion of trading with him, but only to make good my promise, I walked out to look at his property, barely glanced at it and came away. Soon afterward I met him again. This time, I hardly know why, his persistence and something peculiar in his manner roused my indignation. I found myself taking refuge from him in anger. I told him that I would not trade property with him on any terms whatsoever. There was something in the air of that little Frenchman that filled me with a vague apprehension, some inscrutable influence, or he never could have made me dodge him as I had done or forced me to be impolite and to take refuge in ill-temper to get rid of him—never in the world!”

“Ye may well say,” exclaimed McIntyre, “that there is a mysterious influence about that little Frenchman! I had a passage at arms with him myself. He tuck a fancy to a piece of property of mine—the only property that I had ever bought as an investment, and that yielded me fifteen per cent. per annum—and he came to me to know if I would sell this property. I said no, I had bought it as an investment, and that I desired to hold it as such. Everywhere that I met him, afterward, he renewed the subject. He might talk of other matters as well, but he was sure to come back to that, and to end with it, as Cato was with *‘Delenda est Carthago.’* At last I began to feel what Mr. Thornton has spoken of as something uncommon in the man—an influence under which I felt myself succumbing day by day, and which I feared would one day be the means of transferring my fine property to the hands of Monsieur Gabriel Honoré. In fact, I began to feel that he dominated me; that under him, in the field of trade at least, my janius was rebuked by his, as it was said Mairk Antony’s was by Caysar’s.

“Well, at last we came together one day, around at the stoneyaird. The men were just going away to dinner, and he had me quite private. He began upon me at once; and



he talked and talked; and he importuned me, and importuned me, until I felt my fine property slipping from my hands! At last I said, 'Well, Mr. Honoré, supposing I was to consent to part with the property, what do you propose to give me for it—how much, and on what terms?'

"He took out his pencil and a bit of paper, which he put on the top of his hat, and began to write and to figure. Then, after a little study of the paper, he said: 'I will give you for the property as follows:

" 'In hardware (including grindstones).....	\$1,500
Acceptance of Griffith for lumber (I knew Griffith to be in a failing condition).....	1,500
Acceptance of Philips for brick (Philips was like Griffith) .....	1,500'

"There he paused, and as there remained yet a large sum to be provided for, granting that the above were acceptable to me, I said, 'And the remainder, I presume, will be cash?'

" 'Well, not exactly,' he replied.

"For the remainder he offered me—what do you suppose, for property, mairk ye, yielding fifteen per cent. per annum? Ye'll never guess. Nyther you nor anny man that ever lived would guess! Ye needn't try. Well, he offered me, in addition to the above, *forty barrels of Scotch snuff!* And he tuck out his watch, and he said, 'Mr. McIntyre, I give you just four minutes to consider it.' And before I had recovered from my astonishment he had gone!"

## CHAPTER LVIII

### THE RECTOR

"I venerate the man whose heart is warm,  
Whose hands are pure, whose doctrine and whose life,  
Coincident, exhibit proof  
That he is honest in the Sacred Cause."

IN THE course of the years of John D.'s absence notable changes had occurred within the Lastlands domain. The mansion had been never without its skilful carpenter and joiner working under Thornton's supervision, and was now completed. The church building of "St. John's in the Wilderness" had been built and consecrated, the parish organized, and at last a lay reader installed. Mr. Wall's school had increased in the number of scholars and in wider usefulness, and had been removed into the parsonage, where the schoolmaster and the reader, with old Rachel as cook and housekeeper, and old Adam as major-domo, fisherman and sexton, dwelt together in congenial association.

The undue bulk of this chronicle forbids more than a sketch of the Rector and his work in the parish. Had the photographic art been known then a picture of him mounted on his little, grizzled, slate-colored pony, his fine martial face, his figure, slight but manly and graceful, posed like Napoleon's, and instinct with meditative thought, as if he, too, were planning campaigns, would give a clearer idea of the man than any words. His time was given to bringing people into the church. Out among the hill people was the chief field of his labor, visiting them in sickness, bearing restoratives as well for the body as for the soul; inviting them to the church and their children to the Sunday-school, not thrusting either upon them, but showing both to be in the line of duty. He

seldom visited the wealthier people in the parish. For this he said he had not time. The greater need in the hills required it all.

One day when Thornton and Major Tinsley went to visit one of the people in the hills, where the only daughter of a very intelligent but obstinate unbeliever lay sick and like to die, they found there the Rector with the doctor. When the doctor had prepared and administered his medicine and had gone away, evidently regarding the case as well-nigh hopeless, the Rector said, with a confident and inspiring air, "There is but one sure place to seek help in such a case as this. Let us kneel down and pray to the good God of heaven." Then, at once falling upon his knees, in which he was joined by the mother and Thornton,—by all except the obstinate father, who only bowed his head,—he prayed in simple earnest words for the merciful interposition of Heaven.

Leaving the Rector behind, Thornton and the Major went away homeward and were soon after engaged in talk about him. "Do you know," said the Major, "that little parson puzzles me more than any man I ever knew. Somehow, I can't get on easy terms with him. There is something about him that fends me off. I invite him to come to see me, to come to dinner at any or all times, and he promises in a general way, but always declines a special invitation, pleading other engagements. He looks more like a soldier than a parson, and I'll lay a wager that if pushed he would throw off the canonicals and fight."

"No," said Thornton; "I think not. He is only of the Church militant, to fight against sin, the world, and the devil. He has puzzled me, too. Though I have been closely associated with him in the organization of the parish, when he was my guest, yet, as you say, he fends me off by an inscrutable, impalpable barrier. My wife has observed the same thing. Women have more penetration than men, and perhaps her explanation is true. She says that he is so absorbed in his clerical duties that he makes light of merely social obligations—that he seems always as if saying with the Divine Master, 'Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?' "

On the way, Thornton and the Major were overtaken by the Rector, who, on Thornton's invitation, accompanied them to Lastlands, where he drank a glass of wine and begged for a bottle, and got two, for some sick parishioners, and was going away, when Major Tinsley said, "Mr. Ridley, I want you to know that I have a full supply of wine and other restoratives for the sick, including some very old whisky, and that it is all at your service." The Rector rewarded the Major with a bright smile, and assured him that he should not be forgotten; and then, putting the wine into his saddle-bags, rode away. The Major watched him from the veranda until he disappeared in the valley of the Anser, and then said, with a merry chuckle, "He is far from being a gloomy parson. If he pulled a long face maybe I should understand him, but he relishes a good joke as much as any man, and often in his addresses on the business of the parish, and sometimes in a sermon, makes a smile go round the house. I wish he would take a liking to me! I have a kind of yearning for him, but somehow he fends me off. Perhaps it is as your wife says: he is too busy with his clerical duties to look after a worldling like me. He is the veriest priest I ever knew. Moreover, I like his short sermons, each enforcing some religious duty, plain and sensible, and manifestly preached altogether for the good of his flock and not at all for his own glory."



## CHAPTER LIX

### PHŒBE'S WEDDING

"The night of sorrow now is turned to day,  
Her two blue windows faintly she upheaveth,  
Like the fair Sun, when in his fresh array  
He cheers the morn, and all the world relieveth."

A VERY large company was assembled at the wedding of Paul and Phœbe, most of the leading planters being represented. From over the Ridge came Phœbe's brothers, with their wives, and a large delegation of the belles and beaux of that happy, unconventional region. But for the expedient suggested by Thornton and carried out under his supervision,—cutting down some windows to the floor, and enclosing with canvas the veranda upon which these opened,—there would hardly have been standing room for the great throng. The Rector arrived in good time, arrayed in his surplice, and, with his usual directness and practicality and economy of time, startled the parties most interested by an immediate summons to the performance of the ceremony. Phœbe came in on Paul's arm, looking pale but self-possessed, while Paul's accustomed self-possession was seriously impaired. Having taken their places, surrounded by a circle of parents and friends, the Rector opened his book and was about to begin the ceremonial, when a loud shout and an angry exclamation was heard from the door that opened into the garden, and young Hugh Vaughn rushed before the bridal party, giving utterance to threats and violent, incoherent talk, and drawing a pistol pointed it at the breast of Paul; the little Rector promptly seized the arm of Hugh, and, Thornton coming to his aid, the weapon was wrenched from his hand. The bridal party scattered away, all but Barbara, who stood her ground and had come to the aid of the Rector, even before Thornton's strong arm had interposed.

And now all was confusion. Old Vaughn seemed helpless, and did nothing toward the control of Hugh, who, manifestly under the influence of drink, continued to struggle, and to threaten, and protest that the wedding should not go on. The Rector firmly advised that Hugh should be put under control at once; by force, if necessary. But nothing could be done without the concurrence of the father, and he remained impassive and silent, except some mournful sighing and groaning; seeming incapable of exercising his authority over his spoiled Benjamin, who, being now released from restraint, quickly made his way out of the house. Meantime, Phœbe had fled to her chamber, where she remained, attended by her mother and Barbara, overcome by apprehension of danger to Paul, and afraid to return to the rooms below, lest she might bring disaster upon him. The Rector, having advised the proper course to be pursued with the rebellious Hugh, and failing to get the concurrence of the father, now sat rigidly in his seat, with a countenance more soldierly than clerical, awaiting the course of events.

For an hour or longer this mortifying state of things continued unchanged; Phœbe in her chamber, and Paul below, receiving sympathy from all. Then Major Tinsley and Mr. Davis and Mr. Sterrett came together, and with one accord made a demand upon old Vaughn that something decisive should be done, and, backed by the mother of Phœbe, they brought him to declare that the wedding should at once go on. The bridal party was accordingly assembled once more, when a second attempt was made by Hugh, backed by some one whom Thornton thought he recognized as young Spring, but who hastily retreated. In this instance Hugh was promptly seized by his oldest brother and again disarmed, and being now found still more under the influence of drink and helpless, he was delivered into the hands of his mother, who led him away, and soon after returning and reporting him asleep, and under lock and key, the wedding was consummated. Then the Rector, saluting the bride, and heartily shaking Paul's hand, bade good-night and went away.

And now a cadaverous-looking man, a sectarian preacher

who had been conspicuous during the evening by his constant proximity to old Hugh Vaughn, and by frequent efforts to get the attention of the mother, cried out in a loud voice, "My Christian friends," arresting at once the attention of all. And then, after representing himself as a former friend and spiritual mentor of the family, he proceeded to make, in a drawling, sing-song manner, a long, rambling address, and followed this with a prayer, which lasted still longer, and which at the end left the company in a state of mind better suited to a funeral than a wedding.

Paul and Phoebe were heartily congratulated by their friends on all sides; but no inclination was shown to follow with the usual dancing and gaiety. The solemn, long address and prayer of the sectarian preacher seemed to have taken all the good spirits out of the company. The young women were seated along the walls, and the young men gathered in groups, silent or speaking only in whispers. Thornton and Major Tinsley set about removing this unseemly gravity, and now went among the young people, using their best efforts to that end. But more active than all in this good work was old Mr. Davis, who bustled about everywhere, chatting and laughing in his merry way, and lighting up the room with his bright, rosy face and wide expanse of shirt-collar and white waistcoat. But no effort seemed to avail to remove the solemnity which weighed like a funeral pall upon the company. At last, thinking this all due to the gloomy discourse and the presence of the preacher, who sat conspicuous near the sideboard, with his mouth screwed down like an undertaker's, Mr. Davis walked over and took a seat close by him. "Well, mein froind," he said, slapping him on the knee and making him start and stare with an air of offended dignity, "how does you find you'self dis ebening? Doan' you feel yo' heart e'spand itself in such happy time like dis weddin', und in der midcht of so many young beebles?"

The preacher continued to stare, but with a perplexed look as he met the fearless, honest eyes of the old Switzer. He made no answer, but only heaved a deep sigh. "W'at ish der matter mit you, mein froind—is you seek?"

"No, I am not sick."

"What make you geef such big sigh, den?"

"Because I am thinking what a great sinner I am."

"Ah! is dot so? What has you been doing? You haf kill somebody, hey?"

"Oh, no!"

"What haf you been doing so bad?"

"Oh, nothing in particular, nothing in particular. I am thinking of my shortcomings, of my unworthiness, and how fleshly I am."

"But you ain't fleshly; you are poor and weak. Dot's what's der matter mit you."

"Oh, I don't mean that; I mean I am thinking what great sinners we all are, lusting after the flesh and the things of this world. We must watch and pray, watch and pray!"

"Yes, mein froind, we *muz* watch and pray; watch dot we do not forget our neighbor, und pray dot der good Lord will mercifully forgeef our sins und der sins of our enemy und dose dot despitefully use us, und geef us strenk for all duty. But, mein froind, der good Lord haf spread before us beautiful things for our pleasure, und good things for our use—der kindly fruits of der earth; und sure He means dot we shall enjoy dose. Und I think dot He will not feel well dispose to a man dot refuse to take what He haf so kindly offer. Now, mein froind, you haf low spirits, because you are not strong and hearty like me. Come! let us take a little wine for our stomachs' sake; it will do you goot."

"Ah, well—I am sure—if you think I need it—"

"Ah, dot is right."

Then Mr. Davis quickly filled a glass of wine, and handed it to the preacher, who sipped it gingerly at first, and then emptied it at a draught. Then Mr. Davis went to the sideboard, where were arrayed bottles of wine and glasses, and, turning about so as to face the company and draw all eyes upon himself, delivered in a clear, emphatic tone the following short address:

"Mein froinds, der goot Book tells us dere is a time to



mourn, und dere is a time to dance. At funeral be sad; but at weddin' be merry. Und der first miracle which our Saviour haf perform was to make wine for der weddin'. Now, here is some wine, und I brobose dot we shall all take a leetle wine, und wish healt' and brosberty to der bride und groom."

Then addressing the preacher he said: "Come, mein froind, let us set a goot example to der young beebles."

Then Mr. Davis and the preacher again took something for their stomachs' sake, the preacher finding some whisky on the sideboard and taking this instead of wine. Mr. Davis then invited all that wished to pledge the bride and groom to come forward, especially those who hoped hereafter to follow their good example. Those who would be old maids and old bachelors would be excused. Then there was a general movement toward the sideboard, where Mr. Davis officiated, helping them all to wine, and keeping the strong drink in the background.

While this good work went on, Major Tinsley addressed himself to the musicians. Seeing them wandering on the skirts of the throng, disconsolate, like men whose occupation was gone, he cheered each of them with a glass of whisky. Then, instructing them to take their places on the stand, he went back to the dancing-room.

Stirred by the draught administered by the Major, Bob Walker, followed by the second violin and the old violoncello player, made his way through the throng of young people to the music stand. Taking up his "brisk awakening viol," he touched it very lightly with his bow, and, accompanied by the other instruments, sent through the room, in a low, musical whisper, the lively notes of "Moni-musk." Instantly there was commotion on every hand; and as the strain grew louder the commotion grew; and when the leader called out, "Gentlemen will please take partners for a reel," and put his whole force into the strain, there was a rushing of young men hither and thither, and a scene of utter confusion. But as their elders fell back to the wall, and the young people with beaming faces tripped to the ring, now forming, all confusion was at an end. Then the leader waved his magical bow;

"While as his flying fingers kissed the strings,  
Love framed with mirth a gay fantastic round."

The fame of the leader, Bob Walker, "Old Bob Walker" of a later day, has come down even to the present time. He was a master of his art, and had a genius for reels. He loved to play for expert dancers. He had been heard to say that he would get out of bed at any time of night, and walk a mile through the snow, to play reels for a set of good dancers. He watched with interest the movements of those now on the floor, and there was a gleam of pleasure in his eyes when he saw that they were all experts; that there was no lagging or jostling; that all the movements were made in time; each of the changing figures of the "quick revolving dance" fitted to its appropriate strain; in short, that they were all, as he expressed it, "dancers in their hearts." To the delighted Major Tinsley, as he went out with him at the end of the reel to take another glass, he said, "I've got a fine set of dancers to-night. Those young people from over the Ridge are old hands. They are regulars. They've been dancing reels pretty much all their lives. They begin over there as soon as they can stand alone. But I didn't think these Lastlands gentry could dance as well. I was afraid they had been spoiled by French dances, like the people about The Falls. Those old French have ruined all the dancers about there, with cotillions; and, what's worse, the thing is spreading over the land, and it ain't everywhere now that you can find a set that can go through a reel all smooth and regular. But this set can do it. I am going to give them some lively music for the next dance. Just wait until I play 'The Gust Upon the Tasseling Corn'; then you *will* see dancing!"

When he returned to the dancing-room the Major met Joe Sterrett eagerly looking for a partner for the next reel. "Why, Joe," said the Major, "you can't keep step with these young people. They will take the breath out of you in no time."

"We'll see about that," said Sterrett, "if I can only find a partner. I'd take my wife, but she is out of training,

and couldn't stand the pace." And then he hurried away in quest of a partner.

Walker had given notice that he had only been breathing them with a light dance, and that they should now have something to try their mettle. There was mischief in his eyes as he mounted the stand for the second reel. He flourished about with a varied prelude until the ring was formed. Then bending over his fiddle, and hugging it to his breast, and scowling at it, and tearing at its strings with his bow, as if to wrench from its very heart the most potent sounds it owned, and playing only upon the third and fourth strings, he drew from these a strange, wild strain, which, while it put grave, set faces upon the dancers, yet set them going as if possessed. Again and again with this he whirled them round and round. Then the air passed by gradual transition into a new strain; and when the partners went down the middle, he had released his fiddle from the close embrace, and holding it high in air, his head thrown back, his eyes half closed, evoked a strain so light and sparkling, and so full of the essence of mirth, that it put a smile on every face, and extorted from some of the excited dancers shouts of merriment. The even fall of so many light feet made the stout timbers of old Vaughn's house creak, and moved the glasses on the side-board into responsive dancing and tinkling.

Major Tinsley's face glowed with pleasure. "Thornton," he cried, "look at Joe Sterrett. He has Miss Barbara for a partner; bless my soul, how they dance!"

And sure enough, there were Joe and Barbara in the reel; and when their time came to go down the middle, he might well say, "How they dance!" Joe had been famous in his younger days, and now his good spirits and his agility had come back to him, and the nimbleness and grace with which he cut the pigeon's wing, and made the various steps in the lively dance, was delightful to behold. And Barbara! What can be said of Barbara? No fairy in Titania's train,

"In grove or green,

By fountain clear or spangled starlight's sheen"—

But, alack! this chronicler is like old Richelieu trying to

wield the sword of his youth. Let the reader fill a wide hiatus here with his own ideal of a dancing nymph.

The old violoncello player, who had always spoken contemptuously of reels, seemed greatly pleased with this. His eyes glowed, and his face responded to the various emotions excited by the music; his elbows worked like mad; and at the end, with many nods of approbation, he put out his hand and gave the leader a hearty shake.

Major Tinsley sought Barbara and Sterrett, and complimented them over and over; and laughed from sheer good spirits until he was obliged to wipe his eyes. And then, as Barbara, releasing Sterrett, took her place by the Major's side, and clasped his arm, he sighed in the old, sad way, as the remembrance of his early loss came over him, and he thought, for the thousandth time, what "might have been."

"The Gust Upon the Tasseling Corn" has come down to our day under various names, but so marred by transmission through unskilful hands that its author, if alive, would hardly know it. It was thought to depict the scene its name suggests; but it belongs to a class higher than any imitative or descriptive music. It might as well suggest the tumult made by the gust upon the tasseling corn, or a charge at double-quick upon a field of battle, or

"The riot of the tipsy Bacchanals  
Tearing the Thracian singer in their rage,"

or any other fierce, swift thing. Description seems beyond the scope of musical expression. Certainly, no descriptive music, "in the large list that he has coped withal," speaks to this chronicler's condition, but seems all sorry stuff; from "The Battle of Prague" down to that inscrutable lament—that slow tune always played when the horse lies down in the circus.

Of music, and of poetry, the subtlest charm lies in a quality the very opposite of descriptive—in a certain indefiniteness through which, as through a mystical veil, we see earthly beauty transfigured, or hear sounds celestial, but vague as echoes of

"The horns of elfland faintly blowing."



But to our chronicle: While what has been related was transpiring within the house, something was going on out of doors which it now imports the reader to know. Soon after the assembling of the company a violent rain had come on, with thunder and lightning; one of those sudden storms that at this season keep up the semblance of summer, and help to justify its name of Indian summer. Quickly, after the manner of summer storms, it gave way to bright moonlight, passing away to the northeast, where, among the hills from which the branch derives its waters, it made a stand, and there for some hours volleyed and thundered. In the area where the carriages of the guests were collected were then three men seeking shelter from the storm. They were young Hugh Vaughn, Williams, and our old acquaintance, Spring. Hugh had found Williams a near neighbor of the friends he visited in Missouri, and their old acquaintance had soon warmed into liveliest friendship. The association with Hugh soon revived, in all its pristine vigor, the love of Williams for Phoebe, and with a vague hope suggested by Hugh's boyish zeal in championing his cause, when Hugh was summoned home to the wedding Williams resolved to accompany him. On the way (just how or where this chronicler is unable to state) they met Spring, who joined them and came with them to the Lastlands neighborhood. It was natural for a vigilant rogue like Spring to make mischief out of this opportunity, and by suggestions to Williams, that his ill-success in his wooing was due to the influence of Thornton and his household, to seek to avenge himself through Williams. And young Hugh, weak and spoiled by indulgence, was as wax in his hands. The association with Hugh, and now the return to the scene of his early love-making, kindled in the passionate heart of Williams the very frenzy of love. And the remembrance of his mortification and disgrace (as he considered his defeat by Thornton) and of being compromised by the suspicious circumstances under which he had been found hurt under the stile at Lastlands—all these memories pressed upon his mind and embittered it; and now demoralized by a habit of drink, *he*, also, seemed a practicable instrument in the hands of a mischief-maker so adroit as Spring.

Together they had inspired the interference of Hugh with the wedding, and had provided the pistol with which he had entered the room. And now, in the shelter of one of the carriages, they were conspiring further mischief in the same direction.

Elijah was one of the outside attendants of the wedding, one of the throng of negro coachmen, and lackeys, and ladies' maids, which constituted the high-life below-stairs of that time. It chanced before the storm they had organized a dance on the green, where, closely attended by Elijah, Jane had displayed her fine-lady airs. It chanced that when the storm came up, he had taken shelter under the carriage in which the three conspirators were concealed. He heard enough, above the noise of the storm and the beating rain, to make known some purpose of mischief. And as the storm abated and they continued to speak in the loud tone made necessary in its height, he heard enough to show that, after the failure to stop the wedding, some hostile proceeding was meditated against his master. This was after the bridal party had been a second time assembled for the ceremony, when they had again armed young Hugh, and put him forward in that second attempt, the failure of which has been related. Spring had accompanied Hugh within the door, pushing him on, but retreating when he had seen him fairly in the room. Then, from the edge of the throng having witnessed Hugh's fiasco, and the wedding ceremony, he went back to Williams, to whom he announced the failure and the fact that the wedding was over. Then Williams, maddened by rage and drink, fell into the wildest raving; threatening vengeance against Paul and abusing all whom he believed to have been adverse to his love. Then Spring artfully suggested that he might lie in wait on the road home, and have it out with Thornton there. But it was not easy to divert him, and his hostility and all thoughts of vengeance were now concentrated upon Paul. Fearing that his ravings would reach the ears of others, Spring drew Williams away into the garden, and thence down into a pasture where their horses were tied. There they remained some time, Spring continuing his efforts to turn the wrath of Williams against Thornton.

He succeeded only so far as to have Thornton included in his blacklist. Then Williams insisting upon going back once more to the house, more drink was taken, and they went thither. There Williams insisted on going where he could see the wedding party, and, accompanied by Spring, he looked through an open window, and seeing Phœbe in her bridal array, in a group with Paul, and Barbara, and Thornton, he fell into such a violent rage that Spring drew him away with much difficulty into the garden, and thence down again where their horses were fastened.

It was known to them that Barbara and Thornton had walked from Lastlands, going by a short route, on which stepping-stones were placed for crossing the branch, the usual way pursued by all that went afoot between Lastlands and Vaughn's; and they knew now that the stepping-stones were flooded by the rising of the branch, which could be heard in the stillness roaring aloud, and that the only practicable route homeward was by the bridge over the branch, at Thornton's cattle-barn. Spring now again suggested the opportunity for Williams to get even with his old enemy. "He will be alone," he said, "or as good as alone; nobody with him but that little vixen, Miss Peyton, and if you just smack her over, she will get no more than she deserves, and there will be no danger of interference."

Williams started at this as from some poisonous sting, and seizing Spring by the wrists, wrenched his arms apart, stretching them as if about to sunder them from his body; and, while Spring writhed with pain, he cursed him: "You damned weasel, if you talk to me of striking a woman I'll pull you to pieces like a boy does a grasshopper! You miserable devil!" Then, suddenly loosing his gripe, he let him drop all relaxed to the ground, where he lay whining.

After a while Spring rose, and slowly made his way toward his horse, hitched a little apart from that of Williams. He was now thoroughly alarmed on his own account, by the violence of Williams, and meditated flight; desiring only to escape from him, and to leave him and the wedding party to whatever catastrophe circumstances and his drunken frenzy might lead. But Williams, with that cunning which often possesses alike the lunatic and the

drunken man, instantly divined his purpose; and when Spring had loosed his horse, and was about to put his foot in the stirrup, hastily ran behind him, and Spring once more felt himself in that iron gripe. "You want to run away, do you?" he said, pulling him from the horse, which Williams now took in hand and fastened near his own. Spring lied, of course. He was only "going to give the horse water at the branch"; and then, with a flood of professions of friendship, and complaints of being misunderstood and maltreated, he drew from his pocket a bottle, saying, "I am obliged to take something; you hurt me, I am ready to faint. It is French brandy; will you have some?" Williams, having exhausted his own supply, eagerly put the bottle to his lips and drank, and was soon after in a condition of almost idiotic helplessness. Though still firm on his feet, he now yielded stolidly to every suggestion of Spring; agreeing to lie in wait in the barnyard for Thornton, and when he should come to make on him a deadly assault; implicitly consenting to everything, as men are often known to do in the half-stupor that follows a sudden awakening from sleep.

Meantime, Elijah had kept watch on all their movements. He had gone more than once into the house, endeavoring to communicate with his master, but was as often repulsed by the throng. Once only he came near Thornton, and pressed toward him, and frantically called aloud to him, but the sudden striking up of the music, and the loud laughter of Thornton and Major Tinsley, at some drollery between Mr. Joe Sterrett and Mr. Davis, prevented him from being heard. Then, losing sight of Thornton, and not being able again to discover him, and fearful that he was already on his way home, and would fall into the ambuscade set for him, he flew speedily back toward the barnyard, with the purpose of putting himself between his master and his enemies. Spring and Williams had now mounted their horses, and were riding to the gate which opened near the branch, in the path that led to the stepping-stones and into the Lastlands domain. Except a detour which the horsemen were obliged to make to reach the cattle-yard through this gate, the routes of both (and of Thornton and



Barbara, as will be seen) lay in parallel lines. Except Elijah, each was unconscious of the proximity of the others, and he knew only of that of the conspirators, whom he could see, at intervals, riding slowly in the light of the gibbous moon. He now strained every nerve to get in advance of them to the cattle-yard.

## CHAPTER LX

### THE DUKE ON GUARD

"Under thy mantle black ther hidden lye  
Light-shonning Theft, and traitorous Intent,  
Abhorred Bloodshed."

SIMULTANEOUSLY with these movements, Barbara and Thornton had got free from the hospitable solicitation of Phoebe and Paul, and set out on their way home, taking the road that led to the bridge across the branch and to the cattle-yard. Barbara had been depressed by the untoward interruption of Phoebe's wedding, but now that all was happily ended, and she clasped the arm of "dear Uncle Rob," and inhaled the fresh air purified by the rain, and snuffed the perfumed breeze gently blowing from the woods that flanked their path, her spirits rose, and she prattled away, greatly to Uncle Rob's delight, extolling Lastlands, and filled with the delicious sense of being "home again."

"Uncle," she said, "if I had been blindfolded, while I was away, and transported to this road where we are now walking, as people in fairy tales are transported, I would have known the place at once, by the sweet odors coming from these woods."

"Ah! Barbara, you are now in a mood to magnify everything about Lastlands, because it is home. There is no fragrance in the woods in autumn. What odor does it resemble?"

"I can't say what it resembles. It is '*sui generis*,' Uncle, as we say in Latin; like that strange, sweet smell in town in summer, when, after a long drouth, a sudden dash of rain lays the dust and wets the roofs of the houses. Ah, there comes an odor that you surely know—the old familiar perfume of the autumn woods."

"Yes, I know that, and it is very sweet. I did not think of the pawpaws when I said the autumn woods had no perfume. They are on the ground, in a hollow, a little way off there in the woods."

"I know the place well. I used to get them there long years ago—how long it seems!—four years ago, when you first brought 'Lijah home. He explored the woods everywhere, and showed us all his discoveries: the wildgrapes, and the hickory nuts in the great woods, and the pecan trees in the valley, and the wildflowers along the ridge, and the red-bud, and the dogwood there, and brought us here to gather pawpaws. Could we get some now for the children?"

"No, Barbara," Thornton replied, glancing at the moon, which now seemed tumbling into the horizon, "the moon is sinking rapidly, and will hardly light us home. We must make a little haste; you can come for them with the children."

Then they pushed on, hearing now the loud barking of the dogs at the herdsman's cottage, beyond the valley of the branch, and behind, in the silence of the night, the sounds of merriment in old Vaughn's house, which still throbbed with the revelry of the dancers. Soon they stood upon the edge of the valley, and saw below them the bridge over the branch, and, on the high ground beyond, the herdsman's cottage and the cattle-barn. Spite of Thornton's desire to hasten his footsteps, he could not forbear to pause a moment to admire the herdsman's cottage, built after a sketch he had made in Westmoreland. It was a low, steep-roofed building, of rough stone, with projecting eaves and dormer windows, a well-sheltered porch, and a heavy chimney-stack rising out of the center. Sleeping there in the moonlight, one gable and the chimney stack in the light, and all else in shadow, it was a picturesque object. But Barbara's thoughts were not upon the picturesque cottage. She was listening to the voice of the branch, now flooded and inarticulate in its rage, and her thoughts went back to those days—oh, how far away they seemed!—when she and John D. and Phoebe and Paul used to sit for hours on the bridge, and never weary of listening to its lisping murmur, and

watching its curling waters; days of happiness gone forever—gone to that sad, weird region called in sentimental parlance “Nevermore.” She moved away in a somber mood, when Thornton resumed his walk, and they went in silence down the declivity, and upon the bridge, whose features she scanned as those of an old friend. She trailed her hand along the rail, and paused as she touched the imprint of her name made there by John D.’s knife.

As they were about to ascend to the gate that opened into the cattle-yard, Thornton, with a sudden grasp, arrested Barbara’s steps. “Stop, Barb.!” he hurriedly whispered, “the Duke is loose in the cattle-yard.”

And looking there she saw the dreadful bull. He stood, fixed as a statue, broadside to them, his huge form distinct against the western sky, his head held high in air, his nostrils expanded like cups, his ears pricked forward—all his senses seeming strained upon some object within view. The crease behind his horns was sharply defined, and behind this swelled his mighty neck, round and massive as the trunk of a great tree. The moonlight glimmered on the broad, white disk across his loins, along which lights and shadows glanced and shifted with the nervous play of the muscles. The well-worn metal ring, freed from its restraining staff, glittered in his nose like a barbaric jewel. Thornton and Barbara stood for a moment fixed in admiration of the majestic brute. Then Thornton whispered, “He has heard us coming. Come away, Barbara—we must pass behind the cottage. Come! he may see us, and that gate would be no barrier, strong as it is, if he should charge it.”

They moved away slowly, with their eyes turned toward the Duke.

“Uncle,” whispered Barbara, “he is not looking toward us, but away into the shadow of the barn.”

“No matter,” answered Thornton, keeping his eyes upon the point of danger; “he has not yet made out where we are.”

And now the muzzle of the bull was slowly drawn toward his breast, his neck began to arch, the lights and shadows on his white loins danced and quivered—then suddenly his head sank to the ground, his tail was flung aloft, and, with



a loud suspiration, he charged into the shadow of the barn. A scuffling sound was heard, then a human cry, instantly stifled, then a scuffling sound again, and now a deep below,—a frightful tremolo,—which makes Barbara clutch at Thornton's arm, and sends the blood to both their hearts.

"Merciful Father!" exclaimed Thornton, "what can this mean? Come, Barbara; we must awaken Kirby."

But their footsteps are stayed by another sight. Their eyes are still fixed upon the cattle-yard, where a dark object is indistinctly seen to rise in the air, and fall with a muffled sound; again it rises and falls as before; a third time it rises still higher, now out of the shadow of the barn, and, distinctly against the sky, they see the figure of a man, the limbs flying abroad, limp and helpless, and the head hanging down. The bull rushes forward, as if to catch it on his horns, but it falls heavily upon the wall, and, dragging across it, drops into the herdsman's garden.

And now the dogs are fairly shrieking. Thornton and Barbara hasten to the wicket opening into the herdsman's yard, where the dogs meet them, and, recognizing them, fawn and whimper for a moment, and then fly away to the garden gate, where they shriek again, and paw at the paling, and try to tear it with their teeth. A light is now shining from the window of the cottage, and soon Kirby comes out, in his shirt-sleeves, with a lantern in his hand, and seeing Barbara and Thornton, says, "Why, Colonel, what can be the matter? The dogs have been rampin' the livelong night. I've been up twice, but I couldn't see anything wrong."

"Well," said Thornton, "there is something wrong now. The Duke is loose in the cattle-yard, and has killed some one there, and tossed him into your garden."

Thornton had his hand on the garden gate, vainly trying to open it.

"Bless my soul!" ejaculated Kirby, "somebody comin' through from the weddin'—however did he get loose? Let me open the gate for you—it is a curious latch," and he touched the fastening and the gate flew open.

"Give me the lantern," said Thornton, and he hurried along the wall. The dogs rushed in advance and soon came

upon a dark object, before which they stopped, and cowering, and snuffing at it timorously, lowered their tails and stole away. Thornton advanced, followed by Kirby, and turning the light upon it discovered the body of a man—a large man clad in dark clothes torn and covered with dirt and blood.

“Bless my soul!” said Kirby, quickly stooping over the face, “it’s a nigger—a strange nigger.”

“No,” said Thornton; “look here,” and he drew aside the torn and bloody shirt from the breast, and revealed a white skin, with a purple stab wide as if made with a crowbar, the blood welling out over the body. Thornton turned to the face, and, wiping it with his handkerchief, found that it had been smutted. He found also on the head a black, woolen cap, elastic and fitting closely to the scalp, and taking this off, showed the head covered with short, curling red hair. After a moment’s scrutiny he rose quickly, and said, “It is Williams!”

“It is,” said Kirby, “and no mistake; the all-fired scoundrel! I thought he had left the country for good. Well, if I had ’a’ known it was him out thar, I’d ’a’ had his scalp, if I never cocked another musket! I might ’a’ known there was a rogue about by the rampin’ of the dogs; they know ’em by the smell. I thought it was just the people passin’ backward and forward from the weddin’. I heard the Duke, too, bellerin’ in his stall, but he always does that when strangers are around. But when he gave that awful beller, like beatin’ the long roll, I knew somethin’ out of the way was up, and I jumped right out of bed—I tell you I did! It ’minded me of the noise the drunken Indians made at Raisin, after murderin’ our men that were wounded and prisoners, when they come together and licked the blood off o’ their knives. However did the Duke get loose?”

“Kirby,” said Thornton, who had been looking intently at the body of Williams during this talk, “this body must be left lying just as it is. There must be an inquest—drive away those dogs.”

The dogs had now come back into the garden, and, standing off a short distance, and snuffing toward the body, uttered a half-fierce, half-plaintive howl.

Thornton now told Kirby that he would send over two men to assist him, and would himself return early in the morning, and that in the meantime he must put lights on the gates, and place the men where they might warn away any persons who might offer to pass through the cattle-yard. Then he went into the house, and he and Barbara walked away homeward.

The moon was now on the very edge of the horizon, and the waning light, and the long shadows stretching far away across the fields, put a ghostly face upon the landscape. For some distance they walked in silence, their thoughts absorbed by the horror of the scene they had just witnessed. At last Barbara said, "To think of his having come so far, Uncle, and after so long a time, to make a new attempt upon your life! What terrible vindictiveness!"

"But I don't think he came for that purpose. I don't believe that any man would make such a journey for vengeance. That was an afterthought. It was not like him. It was thought when he waylaid me before that he meant to assassinate me, but that was a mistake. He had no weapon when he was found hurt under the stile. Seeing the doctor with me, he had concealed himself there. He wanted, according to his notion, to vindicate his manhood, and intended to offer a fair fight. He said this at the time, and I believe he spoke the truth. His love for Phœbe brought him here. He came to be present on the wedding night. He had not given up all hope, or, even if he had, he could not keep away."

"Oh, Uncle, do you think that? How he must have loved her!"

"Yes; he was a man of strong feeling, violent in every way. He was no doubt at the bottom of young Hugh Vaughn's interference with the wedding—he and another man whom I saw there, and who was capable of suggesting murder after the attempt to interrupt the wedding had failed."

"Uncle," said Barbara, "I think there was some one with him! I saw a slender figure pass over the far stile of the cattle-yard, just as the Duke rushed into the dark

there. I was so shocked by what occurred afterward, that I did not think of it again, but it comes back to me clearly. I am sure that I saw it."

"Likely enough, Barbara. That villain of whom I spoke might have thought to find his interest in my death, but he was too cowardly for such an attempt. I shall not be surprised to find that he was present, but I warrant far in the rear. We shall know more to-morrow."

At a high point in their path they paused and looked back. They saw the glimmer of Kirby's lantern, and heard in the cattle-yard the low muttering of the Duke, as if slowly subsiding, like a volcano after an eruption. As they walked on they heard once more, faintly, the howl of the dogs. In another moment, while Thornton went to summon men to go to Kirby, Barbara entered the house, and, springing up the stairway to the chamber of her aunt, kissed her and the sleeping children, and leaving to Thornton the relation of the events of the night, went to her own chamber.



## CHAPTER LXI

### THE DEATH OF ELIJAH

"His palms are folded on his breast;  
There is no other thing expressed  
But long disquiet merged in rest."

THORNTON rose early next morning. The circumstances of Williams's death in the cattle-yard he was desirous of having accurately investigated. McCrae, after he had found it impossible to get recognition from Thornton, had made misrepresentations of the passage that had occurred between himself and Thornton, as well as of those between Williams and Thornton; and while the public verdict had been in Thornton's favor, there were yet some people, as there are now and always will be, with a natural bias toward the wrong side, who interpreted all these to Thornton's disadvantage. In this case he was anxious that there should not be "a loop to hang a doubt upon." Knowing little of the forms of proceeding necessary in cases like this, he had sent a messenger with a note to the sheriff, and also one to the county deputy, requesting them to take such official action as might be proper, and to notify the coroner and be present with him at his herdsman's cottage by twelve o'clock.

Charles Fetter now came to him and reported Elijah lying very ill in the cabin, and "outen his head."

"What does he say or do that makes you think he is out of his head?"

"Well, sir, dis mornin' when I fust seen him he was plumb crazy! He talks well enough now, but he is still outen his head. He say he got pain in his legs—both his legs; an' you know he ain't got but one leg. An' when I tell him dat, he still p'int to where dat udder leg ought to

be, an' say he got pain in dat, too. He want to see you, Mars Robert, mighty bad. He's all de time callin' for you."

Then Thornton went to see Elijah at the cabin. He found him tossing, muttering of his master, and Miss Barbara, and the Duke. In the course of a long, rambling talk, often wandering, but returning always to the point, he told Thornton the particulars of the conspiracy, which have been already related—anticipated for the purpose of presenting a clear and connected narrative. The remainder, kept back from the same motive, and not for the purpose of piquing the reader's curiosity, as is the way with writers of romance, may be told now.

When Elijah saw Williams and Spring about to mount their horses to ride to the cattle-yard, he quickly lifted himself over the fence into the field next the yard, and sped across it into the cattle-yard. Going in a straight line, he had hardly a fourth of the distance to go that was necessary to be traversed by the horsemen. Leaping the branch with the aid of his crutch, he reached the barn almost breathless, but climbed at once into the loft, where from a window in the shadowed side of the barn he could view the road by which Barbara and Thornton must come, if they should walk home, and also of the way by which Williams and Spring were advancing. He saw nothing of Barbara and Thornton, but he saw Williams and Spring riding toward a clump of trees some distance away, where he felt assured they would dismount and fasten their horses. Then he went down quickly into the yard, and, driving out of it a lame ox, confined there for treatment, he returned to the barn, and going to the stall of the Duke, spoke to him, and put his hand upon him, and fixed the staff to the ring in his nose, and then quickly mounted again to the window. He now saw distinctly in the moonlight Barbara and Thornton at the top of the acclivity beyond the valley, where, as we have seen, they paused while Thornton admired the herdsman's cottage by moonlight. Then he hastened back to the Duke, loosed his chain and led him out into the yard, and freeing him from the staff, turned him loose. Instead of bellowing, as Elijah supposed he would do, he made no sound, but, wheeling instantly about,

facing the quarter from which Williams and Spring were coming, and lifting his head high, stood gazing toward the stile. Looking there, Elijah saw them approaching. Then, lifting himself upon his crutch, he crossed the wall into Kirby's garden, and passing along it, got over the outer wall and seated himself in its shadow by the gate, whence he saw Barbara and Thornton going slowly away on the path to Kirby's cottage. He had just started to intercept them, when the catastrophe occurred in the cattle-yard. After this he heard Spring gallop away, and saw the light of the lantern at the cottage, and heard the colloquy between Thornton and Kirby. Terrified at having been instrumental in bringing about such a horror, he fled home. He had not thought of any such result, but, knowing the dread in which the Duke was held by everybody, supposed that at sight of him in the yard they would instantly turn away, when he might easily warn his master and Barbara of their danger, and awaken Kirby, whom he regarded as equal to a regiment of soldiers. But the conspirators having made a previous reconnaissance of the cattle-yard, and having then seen there the lame ox, almost as large as the Duke and not unlike him, perhaps mistook the Duke for him; or probably Spring alone recognized the bull, and purposely left Williams to his fate. This last conjecture derives strength from the fact that Spring carried away the horse and trappings belonging to Williams, and, as was said by the latter's friends, also a considerable sum of money.

When Elijah had ended his story, he said, "Master, you ain't goin' to let 'em kill de Duke, is you? 'Twarn't his fault." And Thornton answered decisively, "No! The Duke was not to blame, nor you either. You did right; and you must not take any blame to yourself for what has happened."

Soon after, Major Tinsley rode into Lastlands, accompanied by the doctor, who, at Thornton's request, went at once to see Elijah, and coming back prescribed for him, telling Thornton that his case was a very serious one, and, leaving minute directions for his treatment, promised to visit him again in the course of the day.

Then they rode over to the herdsman's cottage, where they found a large assemblage of neighbors; not only those whom Thornton had invited, but many others attracted by curiosity to view the scene of so unusual an occurrence. Having waited long after the time appointed for the coming of the sheriff or his deputy, or the coroner, none of whom came, at the suggestion of Major Tinsley a number of the most substantial persons present organized themselves into a court of inquiry, and proceeded to investigate the circumstances of Williams's death. They took down in writing the statements of Barbara and Thornton and Kirby. Young Hugh Vaughn was sent for, but was reported too ill to come. Then it was proposed to examine the scene of the killing. But for this it was necessary to secure the Duke, who was still loose in the cattle-yard. In his normal condition this would have been a difficult task, but he was now apathetic, exhausted by the exploit of the night, and by incessant raving and lowing and bellowing about the yard, in which he had continued until near daylight. His horns were covered with mud, and across a white mark on his forehead was a stain of a hue that could not be mistaken. After cautious maneuvering the staff was fixed to the ring in his nose, and he was led into his stall, where he fell to eating as if nothing unusual had occurred.

An examination was then made of the yard and the adjacent ground for traces of the night's transactions. In the cattle-yard was found an old, battered, woolen hat, such as is worn by negroes, and a short, thick dirk, which exactly fitted a scabbard found on the body of Williams. Along the pathway leading to the stile were found the tracks of two men, differing widely, one large and broad and showing a deep imprint of the heel, the other unusually small, showing no trace of a heel, and pronounced by Kirby to be a moccasin track. The large tracks corresponded precisely with the boot of Williams, and were distinctly traced to the spot on which he must have stood when struck first by the bull. The small tracks extended, within the yard, but a few paces from the stile. Outside the yard the same tracks were traced to a clump of trees, where there were



plain marks of two horses having been fastened. The small track could be traced to and from this clump of trees to the cattle-yard, while the large track was found only going toward and within the yard.

A plain statement of the testimony adduced, and of the circumstances here related, was then drawn up by Major Tinsley, and signed by the members of the improvised court, a duplicate of which was sent to McCrae by Thornton, with a note inviting him to send for the body of Williams, and to take such other steps as he might deem proper in the premises. The neighbors then dispersed to their homes.

Thornton now told Kirby to take one of the Lastlands servants who was in attendance, to assist him, and have the body of Williams washed and made as little likely to shock his kinsmen as might be, when they should come for it. The old soldier made a grim face at having this task assigned to him. "He's pretty bad tore up about the breast and belly," he said, "but I might put in a few skewers and close up the holes."

"Skewers!" exclaimed Thornton, "you talk as if you were going to dress a beef."

"Well, if I had my way, and the branch hadn't run down so quick, and the Anser was up, I'd just put him a-straddle of a log, and let him sail out into the Ohio with that nigger's wig on his head; I've got no patience with a sneaking fellow that lays in ambeer for a man in the middle of the night. It was God's providence that the Duke was loose! It beats me! Well, I'll do what I can with the cyarcass. I reckon it would be hardly right to turn it over to his friends bloody and dirty as it is now."

While Thornton walked once more over the scene of the night's tragedy, Kirby set about preparing for his friends the body of Williams. When Thornton returned to the cottage he found the work done. Spite of Kirby's rough speeches, he had done it well. Entering the room where the body lay extended upon a long table, and covered with a white sheet, he was surprised and gratified to see it so decently arrayed; and as Kirby and the servant went out

bearing away a tub of bloody water and towels, he expressed in warm terms his commendation and his thanks.

Left alone with the body, he looked with close scrutiny at the face, searching in vain for any trace of the vindictiveness that had prompted such persistent hostility against him. On the fair, smooth, low forehead he saw a triangular scar, its outlines white and shining like a silver thread, and with a pang of remorse recognized the cut made by his seal ring in that encounter by the Anser. How trivial and mean seemed all human resentments in the presence of this enemy now invested with the silent majesty of death! "God forgive me!" he ejaculated under his breath, "and give me patience and self-control."

"A cry of women."

Going thence into the cabin where Elijah lay, Thornton found him attended by his mistress, and Barbara, and the old housekeeper, with a throng of slave-women hanging about the door. His mind continued to wander at intervals. Then he looked bewildered, lapsing into the state in which he was found by Charles Fetter after a night's tossing on the cabin floor. Forgetting all the assurances given him of the safety of his master and Barbara, he would inquire about them over and over. Then he would content himself with a general inquiry, "How's all?" His mind had been so strongly impressed by the danger to which Thornton and Barbara had been exposed, that he could not forbear to ask after them, even while they were present. Sometimes his questions were answered by pointing to them, while at other times he would look wistfully around, and fixing his eyes upon them, smile seemingly at his own fatuity.

When the Rector came in to see him, and took his hand, he looked into the good man's eyes, and recited, with a not unfaithful imitation of his simple, impressive manner, passages from the service of the Church: "We beseech Thee to hear us, good Lord!" "O Lamb of God dat takes away de sins of de worl', ha-ab mercy upon us!" Then again would come to his mind words learned in some earlier school than the Church. Looking around upon all the faces about him, he asked his master to please send for "Uncle

Charles Fetter." This was promptly done, and soon after Charles came in, with agitated face, and took a seat given him by Thornton at the bedside. The boy fixed his eyes on Charles's face with a look of ineffable affection, and stretched out his thin hand, and placed it in Charles's great black fist: and when Charles said, "How is you, son?" he answered, "One foot on de sho'." Then he looked around once more and asked for the children, and, obedient to a nod from the mistress, the old housekeeper went out and brought in little Dick and Mildred and Rob. He looked at them, faintly smiling as they came in. Little Mildred went up with a scared look to the bedside, but Dick, at the sight of 'Lijah's wasted face, burst into tears and rushed frantically out of the room. "Po' Mars Dick," Elijah said; "he's sorry to see me lookin' so po'ly," and, looking at his wasted hands, "I'm 'most sorry for myself."

The doctor now came in and laid a hand on his wrist, and when he released it looked with a bodeful glance at Thornton, and then went away. A moment after the boy seemed in a throe of pain, gasping for breath. This passed away, and he looked at the old housekeeper and said, "Good-by, all."

"Where is you goin', honey?" asked the old woman, rising quickly and bending over him, and he answered, "To heaven."

Then his head sank upon the pillows. There was about the muscles of the mouth a slight twitching, which shifted to the cheek, beneath the eyes, whence it flitted to the brow, where there was a momentary tremulous movement, the eyes opening with a wide stare as of wonder, and then all was still, and Elijah was dead.

At this moment Mr. Joe Sterrett and his wife and her maid came upon the scene. They came amidst the loud cries of slave women about the door. But these were all silenced by a shriek from Mrs. Sterrett's Jane, who stared in a wild, bewildered way, then ran out of sight.

## CHAPTER LXII

### LOVE-MAKING AT LASTLANDS

"Yea, here they heard continually the singing of birds, and saw every day the flowers appear on the earth, and heard the voice of the turtle in the land."

THERE had long been great happiness within the borders of the Lastlands plantation, and now still more was promised by the coming there of John D. This chronicler would gladly, for the benevolent reader's gratification, depict all this happiness, but finds much of it beyond his powers. So large a part of it grew out of that delicate passion with which he feels himself incompetent to deal, that the reader must be content with the merest sketch. In truth, as everybody knows, what passes between lovers is known only to themselves. While the writer of romance may paint from his imagination rose-colored scenes, and revel in the purple light of love, to delight sentimental readers, the veritable chronicler can give only such glimpses as chance to be witnessed by interested or casual observers.

With the love-making that now went on at Lastlands all its inhabitants were in lively sympathy. Even Thornton's love for his wife seemed to be kindled anew. Whether by reason of the increased beauty revealed in her matronly estate, or because from having been, when childless, one of the fondest of wives, now, blest with children, she had become one of the chariest; or because Thornton being now free from all distracting cares, and all his love concentrated here, where he had "garnered up his heart,"—or because of all these together,—he was now the fondest of husbands, and people were accustomed to say that he was courting his wife a second time. The season, too, was propitious. It was "the leafy month of June"; the roses all in bloom;



the wildgrape everywhere, wafting from unseen censers its delicate, delicious fragrance, alternated with other sweet nameless odors that dwell in the woods. Not only the voice of the turtle, but the more delightful voice of the wood-thrush was now heard in the land, sounding his sweet prelude, which seemed to say, with the Queen of Love,

"Bid me discourse, I will enchant thine ear";

a promise always fulfilled.

Thornton and his wife kept aloof, allowing the young couple to wander at their will about the delightful precincts of Lastlands. They strolled through the groves, and along the Anser, visiting the old loitering places, the Ridge-lick, where they recalled the coming of the doe and her fawns, and other early reminiscences, and then to the herdsman's cottage, where they were cordially met by old Kirby. The old familiar laugh with which he had been accustomed to greet them now gave place to a respectful and somewhat embarrassed salutation. He did not once give that deprecatory shake of the head, as before; perhaps because he saw what he knew would bring great happiness to all Lastlands, and now deprecated nothing. The young pair lingered upon the bridge across the branch, and watched the minnows and the crawfish, as of old, and laughed together as they looked at Barbara's name on the rail, still distinct, though carved "so many, many years ago."

It was late in the day, the sun on the horizon, when Thornton, standing at the window of his wife's chamber, saw Barbara and John D. go across the lawn to the gate of the old garden, when he quickly signaled his wife to join him, and they saw the young couple pass side by side through the old garden gate. As they entered there, John D.'s arm was passed about her waist, and with slow steps they went along between the rows of blooming roses. When they had gone out of sight, Thornton said, "Did you ever see anything sweeter than that? Do you remember an old garden in Virginia where a young couple used to walk in that way?"

"Yes," she answered; "I remember something like it. They are very happy. Barbara will make a lovely wife."

"Yes, I knew a young woman once that did the same; but after a long time, when children came to bless her, she put away her love for everything but these children, even her love for their father."

"You silly man!"

"It's true! You won't even allow him an equal share of love for them! You know, you said that you did not think the father much akin to the children; that the mother was all! I verily believe that if I were combustible, and no other fuel at hand, you would put me under the pot to warm their porridge!"

"You silly man; you would be but a crackling thorn."

"I am in earnest, Miss Betty. You used to dote upon me before the children came to bless us, but you think little of me now."

She looked grave at this, and Thornton put his arm about her, and would have drawn her to him, but she broke away, crying out, "See! they are going to put little Rob upon his horse," and then flew away down to the lawn, where the child sat in the saddle, with his Uncle Dick holding the rein.

Then Thornton followed, and Barbara and John D. came out of the garden, in the twilight, the young moon shining low in the west, when, to dispel the glamour of love, came a cavalcade of young women in carriages, and young men as outriders, to take tea and pass the evening. Lastlands had become a gay place then, and its wide colonnades, front and rear, the great white columns festooned with glycene and climbing roses, often echoed the happy laughter of young people making sport, and making love there, in the sweet summer nights.

Dick Thornton wandered about the place like a sprite, a benevolent sprite, ever contriving some new pleasure for the young people. Stores of sweetmeats and bonbons were loaded out from the French confectioners in town, and rockets were set off and other pyrotechnic displays made at night, for their diversion. Meantime, he kept himself aloof, happy in being the means of happiness to others. Often the only manifestation of his presence was the glow

of his cigar at night, beneath the "Bible tree," where he sat in quiet contemplation of all this happiness.

It was not then customary to announce engagements, except on the near approach of the wedding day. Even to Phoebe and Paul, who had felt so much solicitude for this consummation, no notice was given. Nay, between Barbara and her aunt hardly more than one word had been spoken. After the scene which the aunt and Thornton had witnessed from their window, when the two women met alone the face of the good aunt told that she knew all; and when she said "Well, Barb.?" and stretched her arms toward her, Barbara's proud head fell, and the two women came together in close embrace, and cried, but spoke no word. But that was the last of their crying over their happiness.

We must not linger over this old, old story, the same from the beginning of the world, yet ever new, as Cupid is ever a child. To John D., all Lastlands now wore an air of enchantment. The bluegrass and the flowers shone with uncommon hues. All nature seemed clad in new vestments, touched by some magical hand and invested with a new glory. The cooing of the doves, and the serenade of the mocking-birds, and the carol of the woodthrush entranced him as never before; and the incense spilled down from the bloom of the wildgrape intoxicated his senses. How changed seemed Lastlands from what it was when he came home and found Barbara away! or from that black day when she sent him off, declaring that she would never marry anybody! Amidst the gaiety that followed at night, John D.'s blazing countenance was enough to advertise to the young people there the happy issue out of all his troubles, and thence the news was spread as by the four winds.

The wedding came off soon after. A thousand Chinese lanterns illuminated Lastlands. One ox and many whole sheep were barbecued, old Kirby looking after the "cyar-casses." Fireworks were set off in many forms, along the shores of the Anser and from rafts anchored in the stream:

"And wheels the circling dance, and breaks  
The rocket molten into flakes  
Of crimson or of emerald rain."

## CHAPTER LXIII

### THE SEERS

"I taught the prophets from the beginning," saith the Lord, "and cease not even to this day to speak to all."

IF THIS were a romance, it would now properly end with the marriage of Barbara and John D. And lest with this event whatever interest may have been awakened in the reader has subsided, the writer is well inclined to end it here. Its bulk also warns him that with this minor history (which it really is) he may trespass too far upon the reader's patience. Yet, finding among the papers of Mr. Ould some letters written a few years later by John D., when he and Barbara paid a visit to the East, which he thinks may interest the reader, he gives some parts of them here. The following is from a letter from Boston:

"I have had a hearty welcome here from my old college friends. Many even of those whom I considered as only acquaintances have been equally cordial. It gratifies these good people to find that Boston attracts the old graduates back again from afar; flattering the just pride they all feel in the 'Hub.' For my part, I find that I love the old place with its sober, unfashionable ways far better than other cities with more show and glare. And a 'Boston boy,' to use a lady's phrase, is very 'nice.' 'Puritanic,' do you say? Well, not enough to hurt. They are not so demonstrative as ours, but very genuine and constant. When they (and this is true also of the girls) shake your hand with a regular pump-handle movement of the arm and say, in a measured way, with each downward stroke, 'How—do—you—do?' you may be sure they are pleased to see you.



"I am glad to be able to tell you something of your favorite, Mr. Webster. '*Vidi tantum*,' I may say, though I heard him speak some words, and saw him smile. I have seen him twice—the first time while I was standing on the steps of the Tremont House, looking over at the theater, and recalling the old times, and saw 'Old Crafts,' of the box-office, and Ostinelli, the leader of the orchestra, go into the house. Soon after Mr. Webster came along on the sidewalk near me. He was dressed in a well-worn suit of blue cloth with tarnished gilt buttons, and a broad slouch hat, and was hurrying along the pavement, when he met an acquaintance who appeared to be very glad to see him. But Mr. Webster seemed abstracted, and after an exchange of a few words left him and hastened away; and then, stopping suddenly, when fifty yards off, and turning about, as if he had forgotten to answer a question asked him, roared back to his friend in a voice that might serve to hail ships at sea, 'My wife is at Barnstable,' and then again pushed on.

"A few days after this my friend Philips called on me at the hotel, and when he took leave I accompanied him to the hall, and while we stood talking near the office Mr. Webster came in. He came to call on some stranger there, and while he waited for the report of the servant sent to know if the gentleman was in his room, we had a fair opportunity to observe him. He was now dressed in his favorite suit of blue cloth, with gilt buttons, a buff waistcoat, and a shining hat, all new. He was clean-shaven, his great mass of black hair neatly coiffured, his boots polished with Day & Martin, presenting a splendid figure. Soon young Charley Stetson announced that the gentleman was not in his room, and Mr. Webster called for a card, upon which he wrote some words, and left it to be delivered immediately when the gentleman should return. 'Then he started away, but after a few steps halted, and looking back at Stetson in a familiar way, said, 'Charley, I want to take him down to Marshfield. I shall be at Mr. Choate's office until three o'clock. Send for me there, when he comes. Don't forget!' Charley shook his head in a way to suggest the absolute absurdity of supposing that he would forget,

and the great man smiled (and *such* a smile!). Philips and I smiled sympathetically.

"But the smile on the face of Philips soon gave place to a look of great seriousness, and after Mr Webster had gone out, turning to me, he said, 'What do you think of him?'"

"Think of him!" I answered.

"Yes; how do you think he is looking?"

"Magnificently!"

"Don't you think that he is beginning to dwindle?"

"To *dwindle*?"

"Yes; don't you think his legs are getting smaller and his belly bigger?"

"Legs getting smaller and belly bigger! Why, Philips, what on earth do you mean?"

"Well, I mean that he is wasting his time down at Barnstable, fishing, and shooting, and feasting, and playing at farming, while he ought to be busy at some great work."

"Is he to have no recreation?" I asked. "What would you have him do?"

"Well," he replied, "he ought to be writing a great constitutional—a history of the—well, some great work," he repeated, at a loss to set a task for the great man. "If he should die now he would leave behind him nothing but a volume of speeches."

"I was at once reminded, by this talk, of the suggestion of the little man from Rhode Island to make Mr. Sterrett's great racer, Ormus, a horse of general utility, and put him in harness. I am afraid that a public opinion adverse to Mr. Webster is rapidly forming here. Organizations for the promotion of special reforms are very numerous—anti-slavery, temperance, vegetarian, missionary, peace societies—and pugnacity is a characteristic of them all, even of the peace society: they are all looking for something to smash. It would not be difficult to unite them against a broad, catholic man like Mr. Webster—above all isms but patriotism—and turn their combined batteries upon him. Such a movement is said to be now afoot; and opinions are rapidly spread here by a peculiar social contagion."

"As for my friend Philips, he is an intellectual sybarite; ostensibly a lawyer, but not desiring clients; ambitious of

distinction, able, studious, combative, in want of a field of action. He has probably heard complaints against the great Daniel, and now idly gives them currency; affording another instance of that habit, characteristic of these good people and derived from their English fathers, of depreciating, singly and in detail, everything that is best among them, and yet maintaining their general superiority to all the world.

"Of course, we have been to the theater, the Tremont. I feel inclined to go also, *'en garçon,'* to Pelby's, but will not. It is delightful and easy to revive the old days I passed here, where things change very slowly. I see the same fine old Italian leader in the orchestra, with shining bald head, and recall the time when we Harvard puppies, in full evening costume, our heads fresh from the curling tongs of Dudley and Bogue, the hairdressers in School street, used to fill one or more of the best boxes, on great theatrical occasions, and applaud with kidded hands some fine piece from the orchestra, and receive a grateful bow from the leader. At the hour for the opening of the box-office I went for our tickets, and got a smile of recognition from old Crafts, and gave him my hand and a hearty shake, remembering how faithfully he used to fill our orders for the best box in the house; even on great occasions, when magnates of 'society' were our competitors and would have had our priority set aside in their behalf, standing up manfully for us against 'influence.' 'Influence be blowed!' They didn't know what they were asking! Business was business with old Crafts! He knew that the patronage of 'influence' was only occasional and spasmodic—like a wet-weather spring—while from the mass of Cambridge boys flowed a perennial stream, to be relied on at all times and all seasons, even in a 'September gale' affording a quantum of patrons of the drama.

"I saw the same old actors. Andrews is still the 'Merry Andrew' of the company, with his comic song between the acts, full of local hits or touching some craze of the day. Once it was the threatened war with France; now it is the temperance movement, the 'Bedham Muster' and the 'Striped Pig,' all to the tune of the 'Merchant of Rotter-

dam.' In the parquette were the same old bachelors with their spectacles and their malacca canes and their silk handkerchiefs; and in the boxes the dandies that had been to 'Yurrupe,' with lorgnettes and in foreign toggerie. There were also some ladies of fashion there, with whom I had been so often associated in the old time, as a part of the audience, that they now seemed like familiar acquaintances; and though unknown to them I actually took off my hat and saluted Miss Gore and the beautiful Mrs. Tudor, and had my salute returned with smiles, before I had time to think how unwarrantable a liberty I was taking! showing the high breeding that never dreams of intentional impertinence. And then they had glanced at Barbara, by my side, whose face is a credential everywhere.

"I send by mail some of the lucubrations of the new philosophers who have set the literary world agog here. Their Boanerges is Mr. Emerson. I know little of him except what I have learned from a South Carolina friend, who, having been rusticated, selected him for his tutor, and undertook, with his help, to make up in three months the leeway of twelve. He has a very exalted opinion of both the character and talents of Mr. Emerson and was led captive by him. But these Carolinians are themselves so addicted to metaphysics that I take his estimate with much allowance. Against Mr. E. is quoted here a truism, in his Phi Beta Kappa address, uttered in the peculiar verbiage of the sect, 'A popgun is a popgun, though all the sages of the world affirm it to be the crack of doom.' Against the sect at large is widely quoted a saying of the great Boston lawyer, Jeremiah Mason, 'I cannot understand them; but my girls find no difficulty in them.' For my part, I find nothing new in these philosophers except a new nomenclature. All the rest—even the seers, their chief hobbies—are as old as authentic history. As for the 'earnest men,' they are simply the 'long-eared rout,' well known of old."

The lucubrations of the philosophers of whom John D. speaks so flippantly are not to be found among the papers of Mr. Ould; but most readers will remember something



of the new philosophy which in that day stirred the literary atmosphere of New England, and at a later day had its organ, *The Dial*. As for Mr. Emerson, the lettered world now knows the "Philosopher of Concord," and they that had personal knowledge of him know him literally by heart. This chronicler begs leave to observe that he does not despise their "earnest men," nor does he altogether approve them, being, somehow, able to see them only in a kind of melodramatic light, and knew them not in their quiddity as Lamb's friend knew a leg of mutton. But he thinks nobly of the seers. For are not these the Vates, the prophets, the poets of the olden time, whose fine intelligence could penetrate even the future, whose inspired dreams presaged the wonders of these latter days? To what has been already quoted, in the first chapter of this chronicle, from a leading philosopher of our day, may now be added, from the same source, the following: "Ovid foreshadowed the discoveries of the geologist: the Atlantis was an imagination, but Columbus found a western world: and though the quaint forms of centaurs and satyrs have an existence only in the realms of art, yet creatures approaching man more nearly than they in essential structure, and yet as thoroughly brutal as the goats, or the horse's half of the mythical compound, are now not only known, but notorious." It may be added that in advance of Harvey—in that speech of Brutus to Portia,

"You are my true and honorable wife,  
As dear to me as are the ruddy drops  
That visit my sad heart"—

a seer had announced the fact of the circulation of the blood: and, in Ariel's promise to "put a girdle about the earth in forty minutes," had presaged the electric telegraph.

And there be seers now! But, as—it is said—no age ever recognized itself even as a romantic age, so this age may not recognize itself as an age of seers, though they be with us all the same. Nay, some maintain that, in accordance with the accelerated pace of all things in this latter day, a prediction of one of these seers has come to pass in his own

time: that in which, under the guise of "the hot season," was presaged our great Civil War, whose fervent heat should melt all the iron barriers and partitions of social life. And this chronicler has learned, on good authority, that in Boston now

"Society has lost its ancient guards,  
And Temple Place and Brattle street *are* interchanging cards."

But whatever may be thought as to the prophetic character of these seers, it is certain that, "having eyes to see and not merely to glare withal," they are able to discern things invisible to the common eye, and to reveal to us phases of human nature lying occult, exanimate, unrecognized, which at their touch spring into light and life and recognition. Who but a seer could have revealed that subtle phase of New England character, so full of gentleness and self-depreciation—tender even in exacting light perfunctory service from his hired man, and acknowledging this with a burst of gratitude?

"I called my servant and he came.  
How kind it was of him  
To mind a slender man like me—  
He of the mighty limb!"

Could any but a seer have presented that other phase of the same character, the antipode of this, "The Modern Thor," his hammer in his hand, and his spoor—tobacco stain and the tracks of a number-ten boot—upon the snow of Alaska?

What man short of a seer could have pictured in prose paragraphs, as best befitted the subject, that almost unspeakable Major Gutripper, whom we of the South in the same breath recognize and deplore?

Nay, who but a seer, by a touch on what lurks everywhere—in church, in state, in mart, and, to the vulgar eye, a commonplace or airy nothing—could reveal, and give a local habitation and a name to the worst fiend that roams the earth and snares men's souls—"The Money Devil"? Depend upon it, reader, there are seers among us! Let us congratulate ourselves upon this, and rejoice that they are

not now stoned or starved, as of old, but, even in their own land, get some honor and reward.

But there be seers and seers. From of old, God has provided for man inspired spiritual teachers, prophets, psalmists, poets. Nowhere do we recognize the voice of Divine inspiration, as in these. "They teach the heart within the heart, and the secret depths of the spirit." They give assurance of "a refuge and a strength, a very help in trouble, though the earth do change, though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea." Why shall we believe God's methods to be now changed or abandoned? Nay, in this material age, when men have come to think God's universe a machine, to run forever, with no superintending God, but only such a god as might as well have died when creation was completed, is there not more need than ever of divinely inspired teachers? And they are not now lacking, nor ever will be:

"I fear not Thy withdrawal; more I fear  
Seeing, to know Thee not, hoodwinked with dreams  
Of signs and wonders, while, unnoticed, Thou,  
Walking Thy garden, still commun'st with men:  
Missed in the commonplace of miracle."

## CHAPTER LXIV

### BELL, BOOK AND CANDLE

**"Bell, book and candle shall not keep me back  
When gold and silver beck me to come on."**

THIS chronicle is nearly at an end. As the pioneers that lingered in the settlement after the fierce elements of the wilderness had been subdued, so this chronicler lingers at his task, though bewildered amidst the mighty changes of these latter days, and dazed by the frightful velocity with which everything moves. Since we have realized the dream of the poet, and can put a girdle about the earth in forty minutes, all things seem to be adjusting themselves to this terrible momentum. To go abroad now we no longer journey, but are projected across the land like shot from a cannon; a device full of peril to ourselves, and to all that may chance to lie in our line of fire. We used to say of any unusual event, "It will be a nine days' wonder." It is a rare wonder now that lasts nine hours. Riches used to come by inheritance or by years of patient toil and self-denial. Now men grow rich—rich in a measure that staggers belief—in a night! The beggar of to-day to-morrow may be playing at loggats with millions. As science has now revealed the fact that motion and heat are identical, perhaps this accelerated pace may be only the logical approach to the end of all sublunary things, simply marking the speed with which we are nearing the final conflagration!

New ideas of life, of its value and its purport, are now everywhere bruited. It is even gravely disputed whether life be worth living! And, as it is the way of men to endeavor to express by metaphor whatever is to them a mystery, new figures of speech have come into vogue to express this mysterious entity. It is no longer a stream flowing



with greater or less smoothness or turbulence into the ocean of eternity, nor itself an ocean "glassing softest skies" or tossed by tempests, but is now a battle—"The Battle of Life." And, verily, in its great centers, it is a battle, a battle of Ishmaelites, where every man's hand is against every other man, where no quarter is shown, and where they that stumble and fall are trampled under foot by the throng. Above the din is heard, intermittently, the voice of the philosopher calling from his mossy turret, "Whence do we come? and whither do we go?"—no man heeding him.

Long ago the writer of this chronicle limped away from that battlefield; content thereafter, "like a hurt wildfowl, to creep in sedges"—to pass in a small town, in quiet, the remainder of his days:

"Satisfied to contemplate in peace,  
From a small sheltering state, as from the shore,  
The wild and stormy current of the world."

But, alack! who can dwell upon this planet and not partake of the momentum with which it spins? Just in the midst of the preceding paragraph, while speaking of men playing at loggats with millions, this chronicler was himself seized by a sudden spasm of cupidity—possessed as of a devil—and, abandoning his pleasing task, the solace of his old age, he posted off to the great center of capital, the city of New York, there to make sale or otherwise profitably dispose of a large body of coal lands possessed by him in a remote mountain region. He has returned from that expedition, and now resumes his task. He did not dispose of his lands, but he gained by his visit some knowledge of the means by which the vast fortunes of the present day are acquired; knowledge so important in this hour, when the acquisition of riches engrosses the minds of all men, that he resolved at once, while the matter was fresh in his mind, to impart it to his readers. He has been confirmed in this resolution by looking back over the pages of this chronicle, and observing, with a keen sense of shortcoming, how much the matters with which it deals are lacking in serious import and practical significance. It did not ease his mind

to consider that the field had been reaped, and all the graver matter appropriated by the historian and the annalist, leaving to be gleaned by the chronicler only such trivial things as are here recorded: he was still haunted by a desire to set down something that should be of real practical use to the reader and meet the requirements of the day. He is not insensible of the solecism committed by thus going off upon a theme of the hour, after having dwelt so long on the past; but he cannot resist the impulse to point out to all that may have stood by him thus far the road to wealth. He cares not for critical canons. He knows his audience. "Business is business!" Let the reader who aspires to riches peruse this and the following chapter, and be happy! He will not find precise directions for the acquisition of riches (no man can give these), but he will find succinctly stated a general principle upon which they have in all times been acquired, and afterward indicated, a particular source from which they have been recently derived.

When this chronicler went to New York, bearing with him credentials from gentlemen well known in the world of finance, he was at once introduced to a coterie of great capitalists, men whose talk and whole concern was of millions. Their ideas and their schemes bewildered him. Even their vocabulary was for the most part unintelligible. The word of special force among these men was "*organization*." What he learned from them is concisely expressed in the following dictum of one of these millionaires: "*There are plenty of things lying around loose out of which fortunes may be made by organizing them. The oyster trade is already organized, but the clam trade is not organized. There is a fortune for any man who will organize the clam trade.*"

As in a single acorn are said to lie a thousand oak forests, so within this dictum lie enfolded, as the kernel in the nutshell, a thousand fortunes: a secret hardly second to that of the philosopher's stone. Let the reader, if he be an intending millionaire, lay it to heart; or, to his better understanding, "paste it in his hat."

As this chronicler finds himself to be nothing if not nar-

rative, and that the reader may get this information, as nearly as may be, from first hands, the second item, as to the source from which wealth has been of late suddenly acquired, will be given in further details of his visit to New York, in the next chapter. As it is a personal narrative, leave will be taken to relate it in the first person.

## CHAPTER LXV

### THE B. R. R. B.

“ ‘Bless railroads everywhere,’  
I said, ‘and the world’s advance!  
Bless every railroad share  
In Italy, Ireland, France!  
For never a beggar may now despair,  
And every rogue has a chance.’ ”

It is necessary to premise that three years before my visit to New York, recorded in the last chapter, there lived in the small town in which I have my home two tailors, father and son, “makers and menders and renovators of garments.” After having worked together many years, the father, his son coming of age, and his own health failing, laid aside his needle and his goose, and, “throwing up the sponge,” subsided into selling a lotion for the removal of grease spots. The son continued the old business, but finding, under the keen competition of dealers in ready-made clothing, his custom to fall away, until hardly anything remained except the cleaning and mending of garments, suddenly, after having mended all my old garments and those of half the well-to-do people of the town (a big job got by persistent solicitation), without a word of good-by to anybody he disappeared from the place. His name was William Reece.

It is proper to state also that, a short time before this, a young blacksmith of the town, Frank Blaze, went away; not mysteriously, as Reece did, but openly, with the avowed purpose of seeking work in the mining regions of the West.

One day, in New York, while weary with long waiting on the delusive schemes of the millionaires, tired of their jargon, and lonesome in a degree known only to strangers in a great crowded city, whom should I meet in Broadway but



the young blacksmith, Blaze! He was dressed in a suit of fashionable clothes, his great muscles showing through the light material and his big, brown hands as conspicuous as boxing gloves. He informed me that he was "stopping at the Fifth Avenue," and apologized for this extravagance by saying that, being in the city for only a few days, he thought he might, for that time, indulge himself in the best quarters. He apologized also for his fine clothes, confessing that he was to be married on his return home, and that these would serve for his wedding outfit. Both these offenses were readily condoned by me, and I could as readily have forgiven much graver offenses, in my delight at meeting with a fellow-townsmen. And how his eyes beamed upon me! And how he crushed my old, thin fingers in his iron grasp! At home I had known him but slightly. In my daily walks I had been accustomed to pass by his forge, and to receive and return his salute, as he stood in leather apron slowly pressing down his bellows, or pounding the red iron on his anvil; and I had seen him at church, clean-shaven and well-dressed, and had augured well of his future. I knew him as in a village we know everybody, their horses, and their cows, and their dogs—their necessities and their superfluities—from constant propinquity. But he had never been anything to me, I may say. Yet (strange power of association!), in that great, populous city, isolated on its wide-flowing tide of humanity, with thirst in my heart, and, as the mariner adrift, with

"Water, water everywhere,  
Nor any drop to drink,"

he was absolutely dear to me! How my heart warmed to him they alone can know who have felt what it is, far away in a strange land, to hear the accents of their mother tongue and grasp the hand of a friend. He brought with him "airs from heaven"! Upon his garments was the scent of the sweetbrier on my porch at home. I would not have given him for a street full of millionaires. I could not part with him. I took him to dine with me to my tavern, the Astor House, and there in the course of the day we talked each other into such a fever of homesickness that I gave

up my schemes with the millionaires, and next day we set out together for Kentucky!

On the way, young Vulcan proved very entertaining; relieving the tedium of the journey by narratives of his experience in Colorado and California, and his voyage by way of the Isthmus to New York. At last he said, "Colonel" (this chronicler is a conventional military man), "do you remember Will Reece at home—the tailor?"

"To be sure I do," I replied; "he mended all my old clothes just before he went away."

"Well, he's there in New York, at the Fifth Avenue, married to a beautiful young woman, and rich!"

"Mayn't you have been mistaken in your man?" I said. "Did you speak to him?"

"Yes! I saw him the day I got to New York. He sat with a beautiful young woman nearly opposite me at the table, and while I was studying his face she noticed this and called his attention to me, and pretty soon he came over and spoke to me, and shook hands, and was ever so glad to see me, and made me go over and sit with them. After a while he looked at his watch and said, 'Wife, I am going to take Mr. Blaze to the opera—will you go with us?'"

"'No,' she said, looking at *her* watch;\* 'it is too late. I should not have time to get ready. But you and Mr. Blaze go.'

\*To the back-countrymen no habit of the people of cities is more noticeable than that of often looking at their watches. Even before accepting an invitation to drink they consult their watches. "What for you look at your watch?" said a Louisiana Creole to one of them. "You nevvare reffuse." The average man of the back-country will approximate the time of day by a reckoning unconsciously kept in his mind, and will ascertain it with reasonable accuracy by a glance at the sun; and at night the touch of the moss on the trees will show the north, and he has a store of astronomical signs that serve his purpose. That is a characteristic touch of Shakespeare where the carrier at Gadshill observes that "Charles's wain is over the new chimney." What did Falstaff, or Prince Hal, or Poins, though "minions of the moon," know of these things? They knew only such signs as the taverns gave out, or the chimes at midnight, or the burning out of candles other than "night's candles."

"Reece wrote a note on a card, and sent it by a waiter to the office, and when we went out on the street we found a carriage waiting for us. 'To the Opera House,' said Reece to the driver.

"'All right, Mr. Reece,' answered the driver, looking at *his* watch; 'we are a little late, but if you will jump right in I'll make it.' We jumped right in, Reece calling out of the window, 'Tarbox, drive like the devil!' And he *did* drive, slowly until we had turned out of Broadway—and then like the devil indeed! Away we went, tearing along the street, and whirling around corners, in a way that I had never known before. I think Reece saw that I was a little uneasy, for he said, 'There's no danger in New York horses; they know just what they are about—they know every stone in the pavements.'

"When we got out at the ticket-office, Reece handed in a five-dollar gold piece, saying, 'Two tickets.' But the ticket-man looked at him, and smiled, and pushed back the money, and said, 'No, no, Mr. Reece,' and handed him two slips of paper, and Reece took back the money, and with these slips we went into the Opera House. You may be sure I was wondering at all this!"

"Didn't you ask him what business he was engaged in?" said I (thinking that he must have organized something, perhaps the clam trade, about which I had been thinking seriously).

"No, not then; but afterward, when we were having some raw oysters and a bottle of white wine at the hotel, and after I had told him all about my own affairs, even to the exact sum I had brought home, I did ask him, right square out, 'Will, how in the world did you get into such high clover?' and he answered me, lowering his voice, and speaking in a confidential way, 'I am *on* this big railroad business.' And then he talked of other things, leaving me about as wise as I was before."

And, reader, though I have felt the greatest interest in this case and still feel it for my reader's sake, a case so phenomenal, in which a young tailor from a Kentucky village rose in so short a time from abject poverty to affluence, and though I have made diligent inquiries, I know no more

of this matter than is conveyed in those words, "I am *on* this big railroad business!"

Verily, this B. R. R. B.,—to express it in the cabalistic form so much affected by these institutions,—this B.R.R.B., I say, is evidently the greatest business mystery of the age!

It may be well to state that they, too, have their words of power, "water," "float," "scoop"—words manifestly used in a peculiar cabalistic sense; for what such aqueous terms can mean, applied in their ordinary sense to a business confined exclusively to land, it is difficult to conceive. For my own part, not caring at my advanced age to incur the responsibility of great riches, I decline to give the problem any further study, but commend it, along with the general principle enunciated in the last chapter, to such of my readers as are intending millionaires. Let them get *on* to the B. R. R. B. at once.



## CHAPTER LXVI

### CONCLUSION

"I passed by the walls of Balchutha, and they were desolate."

THE little town, The Falls, exists no longer.—*Etiam ruinæ periere*.—Even its ruins have perished, and a huge, smoky city now usurps its place. The very face of nature there has been altered. Beargrass Creek no longer pours out from the shade of primeval forests its clear waters in front of the town. By a new channel they have been diverted into the river at a point far away from its ancient mouth, its old course has been filled up, and the dreary perspective of a railway lies above its bed. All the primitive woods about its banks have been hewn down, their leaves withered into dust, and their trunks and limbs consumed in the fiery breath of brick kilns and distilleries; and the same fate has befallen all the beautiful grove that once environed the town.

Corn Island, with its wilderness of trees and vines and flowers—all save its stone base—has vanished, as the Garden of Eden, washed away by the flood, leaving no trace behind. The fishhawks and the countless waterfowl that came to the falls visit there no more. The screaming eagles have given place to shrieking locomotives, which, gliding on threads of steel, in mid-air above the falls, draw in their train the endless burdens of commerce. Even the roar of the waters has been silenced, drowned in the louder roar of traffic through a hundred avenues.

Yet, at times, when this chronicler, drawn thither as a pilgrim to a shrine, visits the new city, and is lodged in the great tavern there, whose windows look out on the wide expanse of the river and the falls, if the wind chances to sit in the northwest, and he lies awake, as an old man is

apt to do, in the dead waste and middle of the night—when “traffic has lain down to rest,” and silence broods over the wide streets—then once more he hears the old song of the river. But it bears no longer its ancient burden, a lullaby bringing solace and slumber, but strikes upon the ear with the rude dissonance of a bell

“Sounding  
Over the wide-watered shore,  
Swinging slow, with solemn roar,”

filling his mind with only sorrowful remembrances of “days that are no more,” and visions of manly forms and sweet, loved faces—vanished long ago.

All the fine plantations about The Falls have changed owners and have been subdivided and put to new uses. Berry Hill is now a breeding place for trotting horses; Oxmore, Moghera Gloss, Wood Lawn, Spring Station, Hayfield, Locust Grove, Farmington, are in a like condition.

Lastlands, too, has suffered a disastrous change. Going out there lately, the chronicler found everywhere along the way the same destruction of the primitive woods, and in the multitude of new lanes and avenues was often bewildered or lost. The road, so often thronged of old with planters’ carriages and horsemen, is now crowded only with the carts and wagons of butchers and market gardeners, blinding the eyes with dust. The stately plantation of the Thorntons is hardly recognizable. All the woods along the Anser have been hewn away, and the wide pastures cut up by unsightly fences into rectangular fields. The great wood on the north from which not a “switch should be cut” has long been felled, and its whole area turned into cabbage gardens, and dotted over with commonplace cottages.

Only thirty acres now belong to the “great-house,” and the place has been converted into a beer garden, where the Teutons now come together on holidays, and drink beer and light wine, and sing the songs of “Fatherland”; peaceful assemblies into which the natives sometimes inject whisky and a “free fight.”

The garden and the graveyard alone are there unchanged. The first owes its preservation to the love of the Teuton for

flowers, and the last to its strong stone wall and iron gateway. Ivy from the old burying-ground in Virginia covers and hides the wall and stone coping. From the graves have sprouted trees, in which a colony of green herons have their roosting place. One recent monument, a broken shaft of white marble, is there to mark the last resting-place of a scion of the house, brought home from a distant battlefield; for Kentucky still "claims from war its richest spoil—the ashes of her dead."

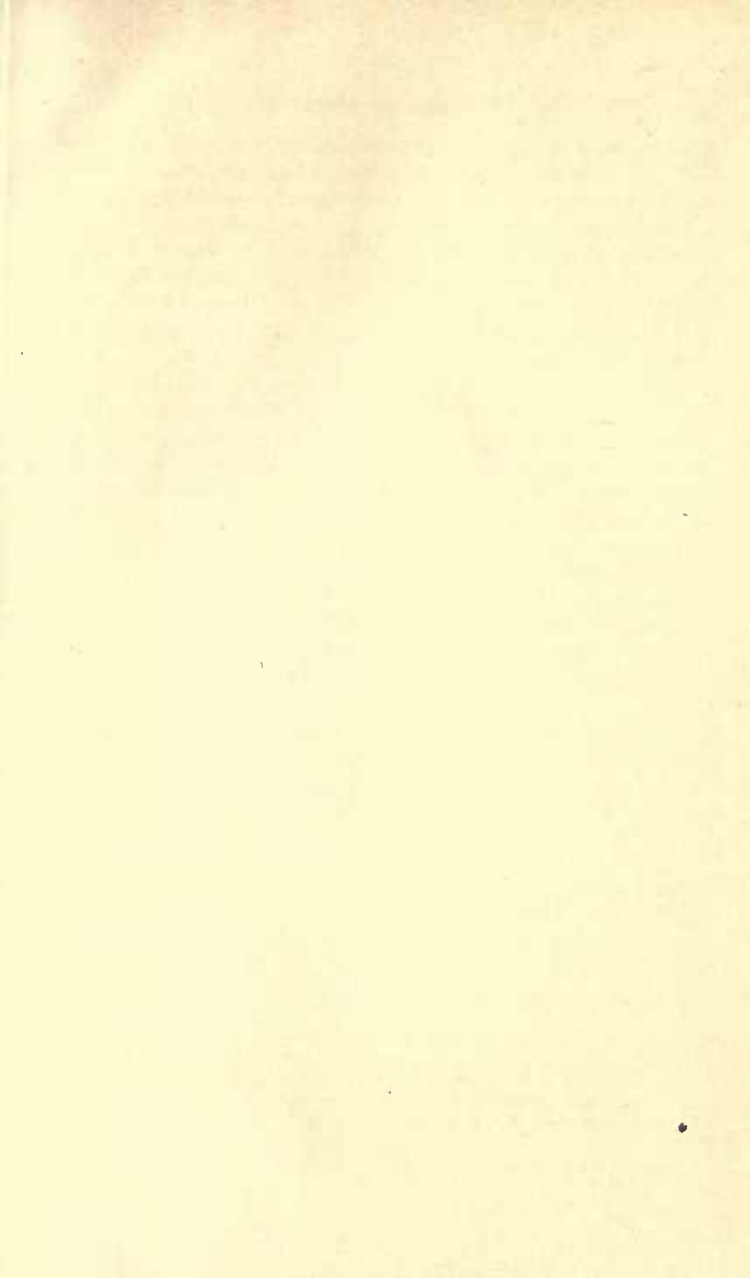
The mansion is still beautiful with the mellow hue of age, but its fine colonnades have mouldered away, and their place is disfigured by modern carpentry. The floor of the great drawing-room is now a ballroom with its narrow ashen strips still sound, but the wainscoting has been painted a dull white, hiding the grain of the natural wood, and a portion of the room has been set off by a partition for a kitchen, and has a stove in it.

From the door of the hall a painted sign projects horizontally, bearing the legend, "Wien und Bier." Entering there the chronicler found the barroom with the usual appurtenances, and a flaxen-haired young woman in attendance.

In the library were numerous tables and chairs, and two men drinking beer and smoking pipes, and speaking in unmistakable gutturals. On a table lay two beer-stained newspapers, of which he deciphered the titles, *Anzeiger* and *Volkblatt*.

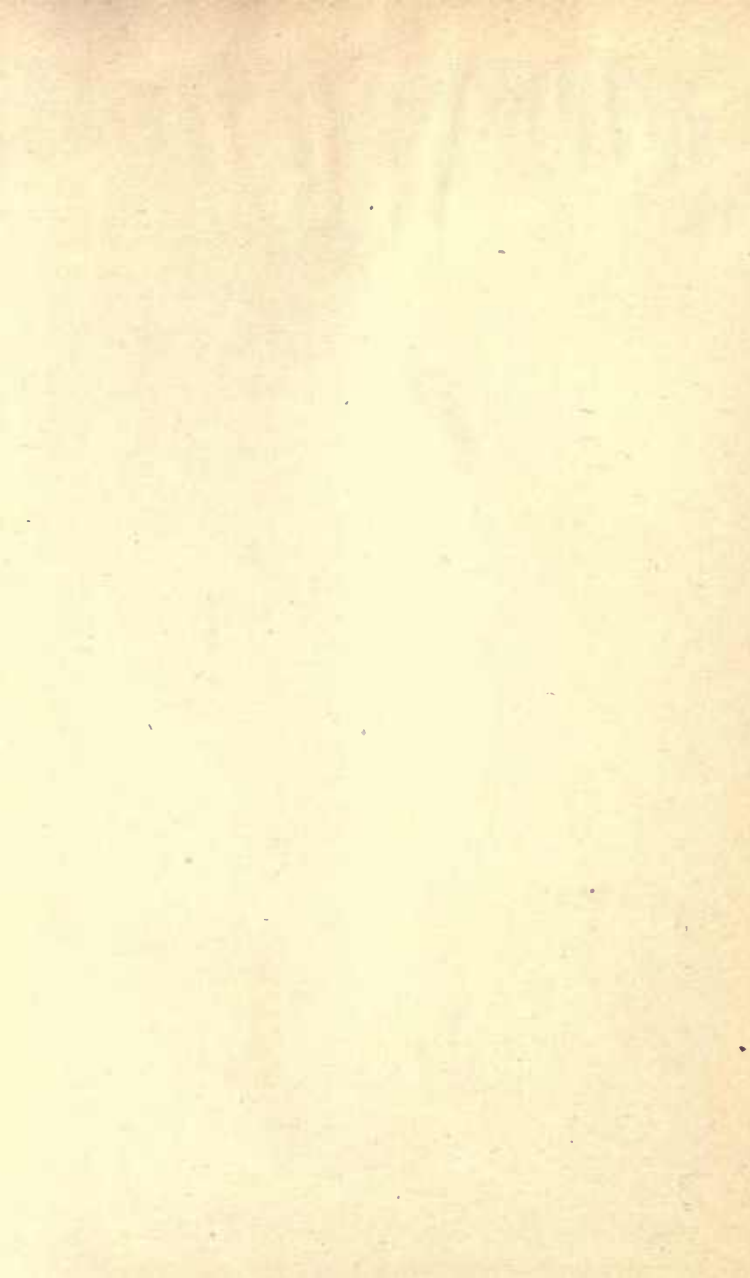
The wild roses brought by John D. from the ancestral home in Virginia still flourish on the walls and flaunt their flowers and foliage across the small diamond window-panes. On one of these were found scratched in a delicate hand, doubtless by some female scion of the house, these musical lines of Mr. Halleck:

"Wild roses on the Abbey towers  
Are gay in their young bud and bloom;  
They were born of a race of funeral flowers  
That garlanded in long gone hours  
A Templar's knightly tomb."









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