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Say, what can politicians do,  
When things run riot, plague, and vex us?  
But shoulder *hook*, and start anew,  
Cut stick, and go AHEAD in TEXAS!!!  
THE AUTHOR.

---

WRITTEN BY HIMSELF.

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THE NARRATIVE BROUGHT DOWN FROM THE DEATH OF  
COL. CROCKETT TO THE BATTLE OF SAN JACINTO,  
BY AN EYE-WITNESS.

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## P R E F A C E.

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COLONEL CROCKETT, at the time of leaving Tennessee for Texas, made a promise to his friends that he would keep notes of whatever might occur to him of moment, with the ulterior view of laying his adventures before the public. He was encouraged in this undertaking by the favourable manner in which his previous publications had been received: and if he had been spared throughout the Texian struggle, it cannot be doubted that he would have produced a work replete with interest, and such as would have been universally read. His plain and unpolished style may occasionally offend the taste of those who are sticklers for classic refinement; while others

will value it for that frankness and sincerity which is the best voucher for the truth of the facts he relates. The manuscript has not been altered since it came into the possession of the editor; though it is but proper to state that it had previously undergone a slight verbal revision; and the occasional interlineations were recognised to be in the handwriting of the Bee hunter, so frequently mentioned in the progress of the narrative. These corrections were doubtless made at the author's own request, and received his approbation.

This worthy and talented young man was well known in New Orleans. His parents were wealthy, he had received a liberal education, was the pride and soul of the circle in which he moved, but his destiny was suddenly overshadowed by an act in which he had no agency, but his proud father in a moment of anger turned his face upon him, and the romantic youth, with a wounded spirit, commenced the

roving life which he had pursued with success for four or five years. His father recently found out the great injustice that had been done his proud spirited son, recalled him, and a reconciliation took place; but the young man had become enamoured of Texas, and a young woman at Nacogdoches, and had already selected a plantation in Austin's colony, on which he intended to have settled in the course of the coming year. The following letter will explain the manner in which the manuscript was preserved, and how it came into my possession :—

San Jacinto, May 3, 1836.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—

I write this from the town of Lynchburg, on the San Jacinto, to inform you that I am laid up in ordinary at this place, having been wounded in the right knee by a musket ball, in the glorious battle of the 20th ultimo. Having some friends residing here, I was anxious to get among them, for an invalid has not much chance of receiving

proper attention from the army surgeons in the present state of affairs. I send you a literary curiosity, which I doubt not you will agree with me should be laid before the public. It is the journal of Colonel Crockett, from the time of his leaving Tennessee up to the day preceding his untimely death at the Alamo. The manner of its preservation was somewhat singular. The Colonel was among the six who were found alive in the fort after the general massacre had ceased. General Castrillon, as you have already learned, was favourably impressed with his manly and courageous deportment, and interceded for his life, but in vain. After the fort had been ransacked, these papers were found in the Colonel's baggage, by the servant of Castrillon, who immediately carried them to his master. After the battle of San Jacinto, they were found in the baggage of Castrillon, and as I was by at the time, and recognised the manuscript, I secured it, and saved it from being cast away as worthless, or torn up as

cartridge paper. By way of beguiling the tedious hours of my illness, I have added a chapter, and brought down a history of the events to the present time. Most of the facts I have recorded, I gathered from Castrillon's servant, and other Mexican prisoners. The manuscript is at your service to do with as you please, but I should advise its publication, and should it be deemed necessary, you are at liberty to publish this letter also, by way of explanation.

With sincere esteem, your friend,

CHARLES T. BEALE.

To Alex. J. Dumas Esq., New Orleans.

The deep interest that has been taken, for several years past, in the sayings and doings of Colonel Crockett, has induced me to lay this last of his literary labours before the public, not doubting that it will be read with as much avidity as his former publications, though in consequence of the death of the author before he had revised the

sheets for the press, it will necessarily be ushered into the world with many imperfections on its head, for which indulgence is craved by the public's obedient servant,

ALEX. J. DUMAS.

New Orleans, June, 1836

# ADVENTURES

IN

## TEXAS.

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### CHAPTER I.

IT is a true saying that no one knows the luck of a lousy calf, for though in a country where, according to the Declaration of Independence, the people are all born free and equal, those who have a propensity to go ahead may aim at the highest honours, and they may ultimately reach them too, though they start at the lowest rowel of the ladder, —still it is a huckelberry above my persimmon to cipher out how it is with six months' schooling only, I, David Crockett, find myself the most popular bookmaker of the day; and such is the demand for my works that I cannot write them half fast enough, no how I can fix it. This problem would bother even my friend Major Jack Downing's rule of three, to bring out square after all his practice

on the Post Office accounts and the public lands to boot.

I have been told that there was one Shakspeare more than two hundred years ago, who was brought up a hostler, but finding it a dull business, took to writing plays, and made as great a stir in his time as I do at present; which will go to show, that one ounce of the genuine horse sense is worth a pound of your book learning any day, and if a man is only determined to go ahead, the more kicks he receives in his breech the faster he will get on his journey.

Finding it necessary to write another book, that the whole world may be made acquainted with my movements, and to save myself the trouble of answering all the questions that are poked at me, as if my own private business was the business of the nation, I set about the work, and offer the people another proof of my capacity to write my own messages and state papers, should I be pitched upon to run against the Little Flying Dutchman, a thing not unlikely from present appearances; but somehow I feel rather dubious that my learning may not make against me, as "the greatest and the best" has set the example of writing his long rigmaroles by proxy, which I rather reckon is the easiest plan.

I begin this book on the 8th day of July, 1835, at Home, Weakley county, Tennessee. I have just returned from a two weeks' electioneering canvass, and I have spoken every day to large concourses of people with my competitor. I have him badly plagued, for he does not know as much about "the Government," the deposits, and the Little Flying Dutchman, whose life I wrote, as I can tell the people; and at times he is as much bothered as a fly in a tar pot to get out of the mess. A candidate is often stumped in making stump-speeches. His name is Adam Huntsman; he lost a leg in an Indian fight, they say, during the last war, and the Government run him on the score of his military services. I tell him in my speech that I have great hopes of writing one more book, and that shall be the second fall of Adam, for he is on the Eve of an almighty thrashing. He relishes the joke about as much as a doctor does his own physic. I handle the administration without gloves, and I do believe I will double my competitor, if I have a fair shake, and he does not work like a mole in the dark. Jacksonism is dying here faster than it ever sprung up, and I predict that "the Government" will be the most unpopular man, in one year more, that ever had any pretensions to the high place he now fills. Four weeks from to-

morrow will end the dispute in our elections, and if old Adam is not beaten out of his hunting shirt my name isn't Crockett.

While on the subject of election matters, I will just relate a little anecdote, about myself, which will show the people to the east, how we manage these things on the frontiers. It was when I first run for Congress; I was then in favour of the Hero, for he had chalked out his course so sleek in his letter to the Tennessee legislature, that, like Sam Patch, says I, "there can be no mistake in him," and so I went ahead. No one dreamt about the monster and the deposits at that time, and so, as I afterward found, many, like myself, were taken in by these fair promises, which were worth about as much as a flash in the pan when you have a fair shot at a fat bear.

But I am losing sight of my story.—Well, I started off to the Cross Roads, dressed in my hunting shirt, and my rifle on my shoulder. Many of our constituents had assembled there to get a taste of the quality of the candidates at orating. Job Snelling, a gander-shanked Yankee, who had been caught somewhere about Plymouth Bay, and been shipped to the west with a cargo of cod fish and rum, erected a large shantee, and set up shop for the occasion. A large posse of the voters had

assembled before I arrived, and my opponent had already made considerable headway with his speechifying and his treating, when they spied me about a rifle shot from the camp, sauntering along as if I was not a party in the business. "There comes Crockett," cried one. "Let us hear the colonel," cried another, and so I mounted the stump that had been cut down for the occasion, and began to bushwhack in the most approved style.

I had not been up long before there was such an uproar in the crowd that I could not hear my own voice, and some of my constituents let me know, that they could not listen to me on such a dry subject as the welfare of the nation, until they had something to drink, and that I must treat 'em. Accordingly I jumped down from the rostrum, and led the way to the shantee, followed by my constituents, shouting, "Huzza for Crockett," and "Crockett for ever !"

When we entered the shantee, Job was busy dealing out his rum in a style that showed he was making a good day's work of it, and I called for a quart of the best, but the crooked critur returned no other answer than by pointing at a board over the bar, on which he had chalked in large letters, "*Pay to-day and trust to-morrow.*" Now that

idea brought me all up standing ; it was a sort of cornering in which there was no back out, for ready money in the west, in those times, was the shyest thing in all natur, and it was most particularly shy with me on that occasion.

The voters, seeing my predicament, fell off to the other side, and I was left deserted and alone, as the Government will be, when he no longer has any offices to bestow. I saw, plain as day, that the tide of popular opinion was against me, and that, unless I got some rum speedily, I should lose my election as sure as there are snakes in Virginny, —and it must be done soon, or even burnt brandy wouldn't save me. —So I walked away from the shantee, but in another guess sort from the way I entered it, for on this occasion I had no train after me, and not a voice shouted "Huzza for Crockett." Popularity sometimes depends on a very small matter indeed ; in this particular it was worth a quart of New England rum, and no more.

Well, knowing that a crisis was at hand, I struck into the woods with my rifle on my shoulder, my best friend in time of need, and as good fortune would have it, I had not been out more than a quarter of an hour before I treed a fat coon, and in the pulling of a trigger he lay dead at the root of the tree. I soon whipped his hairy jacket off his

back, and again bent my way towards the shantee, and walked up to the bar, but not alone, for this time I had half a dozen of my constituents at my heels. I threw down the coon skin upon the counter, and called for a quart, and Job, though busy in dealing out rum, forgot to point at his chalked rules and regulations, for he knew that a coon was as good a legal tender for a quart, in the west, as a New York shilling, any day in the year.

My constituents now flocked about me, and cried "Huzza for Crockett," "Crockett for ever," and finding that the tide had taken a turn, I told them several yarns, to get them in a good humour, and having soon despatched the value of the coon, I went out and mounted the stump, without opposition, and a clear majority of the voters followed me to hear what I had to offer for the good of the nation. Before I was half through, one of my constituents moved that they would hear the balance of my speech, after they had washed down the first part with some more of Job Snelling's extract of cornstalk and molasses, and the question being put, it was carried unanimously. It wasn't considered necessary to call the yeas and nays, so we adjourned to the shantee, and on the way I began to reckon that the fate of the nation pretty much depended upon my shooting another coon.

While standing at the bar, feeling sort of bashful while Job's rules and regulations stared me in the face, I cast down my eyes, and discovered one end of the coon skin sticking between the logs that supported the bar. Job had slung it there in the hurry of business. I gave it a sort of quick jerk, and it followed my hand as natural as if I had been the rightful owner. I slapped it on the counter, and Job, little dreaming that he was barking up the wrong tree, shoved along another bottle, which my constituents quickly disposed of with great good humour, for some of them saw the trick, and then we withdrew to the rostrum to discuss the affairs of the nation.

I don't know how it was, but the voters soon became dry again, and nothing would do, but we must adjourn to the shantee, and as luck would have it, the coon skin was still sticking between the logs, as if Job had flung it there on purpose to tempt me. I was not slow in raising it to the counter, the rum followed of course, and I wish I may be shot, if I didn't, before the day was over, get ten quarts for the same identical skin, and from a fellow too, who in those parts was considered as sharp as a steel trap, and as bright as a pewter button.

This joke secured me my election, for it soon

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circulated like smoke among my constituents, and they allowed, with one accord, that the man who could get the whip hand of Job Snelling in fair trade, could outwit Old Nick himself, and was the real grit for them in Congress. Job was by no means popular; he boasted of always being wide awake, and that any one who could take him in was free to do so, for he came from a stock that sleeping or waking had always one eye open, and the other not more than half closed. The whole family were geniuses. His father was the inventor of wooden nutmegs, by which Job said he might have made a fortune, if he had only taken out a patent and kept the business in his own hands; his mother Patience manufactured the first white oak pumpkin seeds of the mammoth kind, and turned a pretty penny the first season; and his aunt Prudence was the first to discover that corn husks, steeped in tobacco water, would make as handsome Spanish wrappers as ever came from Havanna, and that oak leaves would answer all the purposes of filling, for no one would discover the difference except the man who smoked them, and then it would be too late to make a stir about it. Job himself bragged of having made some useful discoveries; the most profitable of which was the art of converting mahogany sawdust into cayenne

pepper, which he said was a profitable and safe business; for the people have been so long accustomed to having dust thrown in their eyes, that there wasn't much danger of being found out.

The way I got to the blind side of the Yankee merchant was pretty generally known before the election day, and the result was, that my opponent might as well have whistled jigs to a milestone as attempt to beat up for votes in that district. I beat him out and out, quite back into the old year, and there was scarce enough left of him, after the canvass was over, to make a small grease spot. He disappeared without even leaving as much as a mark behind; and such will be the fate of Adam Huntsman, if there is a fair fight and no gouging.

After the election was over, I sent Snelling the price of the rum, but took good care to keep the fact from the knowledge of my constituents. Job refused the money, and sent me word, that it did him good to be taken in occasionally, as it served to brighten his ideas; but I afterwards learnt that when he found out the trick that had been played upon him, he put all the rum I had ordered in his bill against my opponent, who, being elated with the speeches he had made on the affairs of the nation, could not descend to examine into the particulars of the bill of a vender of rum in the small way.

## CHAPTER II.

*August 11, 1835.* I AM now at home in Weakley county. My canvass is over, and the result is known. Contrary to all expectation, I am beaten two hundred and thirty votes, from the best information I can get; and in this instance, I may say, bad is the best. My mantle has fallen upon the shoulders of Adam, and I hope he may wear it with becoming dignity, and never lose sight of the welfare of the nation, for the purpose of elevating a few designing politicians to the head of the heap. The rotten policy pursued by "the Government" cannot last long; it will either work its own downfall, or the downfall of the republic, soon, unless the people tear the seal from their eyes, and behold their danger time enough to avert the ruin.

I wish to inform the people of these United States what I had to contend against, trusting that the exposé I shall make will be a caution to the people not to repose too much power in the hands of a single man, though he should be "the greatest and the best."—I had, as I have already said, Mr.

Adam Huntsman for my competitor, aided by the popularity of both Andrew Jackson and governor Carroll and the whole strength of the Union Bank at Jackson. I have been told by good men, that some of the managers of the bank on the days of the election were heard say, that they would give twenty-five dollars a vote for votes enough to elect Mr. Huntsman. This is a pretty good price for a vote, and in ordinary times a round dozen might be got for the money.

I have always believed, since Jackson removed the deposits, that his whole object was to place the treasury where he could use it to influence elections; and I do believe he is determined to sacrifice every dollar of the treasury to make the Little Flying Dutchman his successor. If this is not my creed I wish I may be shot. For fourteen years since I have been a candidate I never saw such means used to defeat any candidate, as were put in practice against me on this occasion. There was a disciplined band of judges and officers to hold the elections at almost every poll. Of late years they begin to find out that there's an advantage in this, even in the west. Some officers held the election, and at the same time had nearly all they were worth bet on the election. Such judges I should take it are like the handle of a jug, all on

one side; and I am told it doesn't require much schooling to make the tally list correspond to a notch with the ballot box, provided they who make up the returns have enough loose tickets in their breeches pockets. I have no doubt that I was completely rascalled out of my election, and I do regret that duty to myself and to my country compels me to expose such villany.

Well might Governor Poindexter exclaim—  
“Ah! my country, what degradation thou hast fallen into!” Andrew Jackson was, during my election canvass, franking the extra Globe with a prospectus in it to every post office in this district, and upon one occasion he had my mileage and pay as a member drawn up and sent to this district, to one of his minions, to have it published just a few days before the election. This is what I call small potatoes and few of a hilk. He stated that I had charged mileage for one thousand miles and that it was but seven hundred and fifty miles, and held out the idea that I had taken pay for the same mileage that Mr. Fitzgerald had taken, when it was well known that he charged thirteen hundred miles from here to Washington, and he and myself both live in the same county. It is somewhat remarkable how this fact should have escaped the keen eye of “the Government.”

The General's pet, Mr. Grundy, charged for one thousand miles from Nashville to Washington, and it was sanctioned by the legislature, I suppose because he would huzza! for Jackson; and because I think proper to refrain from huzzaing until he goes out of office, when I shall give a screamer, that will be heard from the Mississippi to the Atlantic, or my name's not Crockett—for this reason he came out openly to 'electioneer against me. I now say, that the oldest man living never heard of the President of a great nation to come down to open electioneering for his successor. It is treating the nation as if it was the property of a single individual, and he had the right to bequeath it to whom he pleased—the same as a patch of land for which he had the patent. It is plain to be seen that the poor superannuated old man is surrounded by a set of horse leeches, who will stick to him while there is a drop of blood to be got, and their maws are so capacious that they will never get full enough to drop off. The Land office, the Post office, and the Treasury itself, may all be drained, and we shall still find them craving for more. They use him to promote their own private interest, and for all his sharp sight, he remains as blind as a dead lion to the jackals who are tearing him to pieces. In fact, I do believe he is a perfect tool in their hands,

ready to be used to answer any purpose to promote either their interest or gratify their ambition.

I come within two hundred and thirty votes of being elected, notwithstanding I had to contend against "the greatest and the best," with the whole power of the Treasury against me. The Little Flying Dutchman will no doubt calculate upon having a true game cock in Mr. Huntsman, but if he doesn't show them the White feather before the first session is over, I agree never to be set down for a prophet, that's all. I am gratified that I have spoken the truth to the people of my district regardless of consequences. I would not be compelled to bow down to the idol for a seat in Congress during life. I have never known what it was to sacrifice my own judgment to gratify any party, and I have no doubt of the time being close at hand when I will be rewarded for letting my tongue speak what my heart thinks. I have suffered myself to be politically sacrificed to save my country from ruin and disgrace, and if I am never again elected, I will have the gratification to know that I have done my duty.—Thus much I say in relation to the manner in which my downfall was effected, and in laying it before the public, "I take the responsibility." I may add in the words of the man in the play, "Crockett's occupation's gone."——

Two weeks and more have elapsed since I wrote the foregoing account of my defeat, and I confess the thorn still rankles, not so much on my own account as the nation's, for I had set my heart on following up the travelling deposits until they should be fairly gathered to their proper nest, like young chickens, for I am aware of the vermin that are on the constant look-out to pounce upon them, like a cock at a blackberry, which they would have done long since, if it had not been for a few such men as Webster, Clay, and myself. It is my parting advice, that this matter be attended to without delay, for before long the little chickens will take wing, and even the powerful wand of the magician of Kinderhook will be unable to point out the course they have flown.

As my country no longer requires my services, I have made up my mind to go to Texas. My life has been one of danger, toil, and privation, but these difficulties I had to encounter at a time when I considered it nothing more than right good sport to surmount them; but now I start anew upon my own hook, and God only grant that it may be strong enough to support the weight that may be hung upon it. I have a new row to hoe, a long and a rough one, but come what will I'll go ahead.

A few days ago I went to a meeting of my con-

stituents. My appetite for politics was at one time just about as sharp set as a saw mill, but late events has given me something of a surfeit,—more than I could well digest ; still habit they say is second natur, and so I went, and gave them a piece of my mind touching “the Government” and the succession, by way of a codicil to what I have often said before.

I told them to keep a sharp look-out for the deposits, for it requires an eye as insinuating as a dissecting knife to see what safety there is in placing one million of the public funds in some little country shaving shop with no more than one hundred thousand dollars capital. This bank, we will just suppose, without being too particular, is in the neighbourhood of some of the public lands, where speculators, who have every thing to gain and nothing to lose, swarm like crows about carrion. They buy the United States’ land upon a large scale, get discounts from the aforesaid shaving shop, which are made upon a large scale also, upon the United States’ funds ; they pay the whole purchase money with these discounts, and get a clear title to the land, so that when the shaving shop comes to make a Flemish account of her transactions, “the Government” will discover that he has not only lost the original deposite, but a large body

of the public lands to boot. So much for taking the responsibility.

I told them that they were hurrying along a broad M'Adamized road to make the Little Flying Dutchman the successor, but they would no sooner accomplish that end, than they would be obliged to buckle to, and drag the Juggernaut through many narrow and winding and out-of-the-way paths, and hub deep in the mire. That they reminded me of the Hibernian, who bet a glass of grog with a hod carrier, that he could not carry him in his hod up a ladder to the third story of a new building. He seated himself in the hod, and the other mounted the ladder with his load upon his shoulder. He ascended to the second story pretty steadily, but as he approached the third his strength failed him, he began to totter, and Pat was so delighted at the prospect of winning his bet, that he clapped his hands and shouted, "By the powers the grog's mine," and he made such a stir in the hod, that I wish I may be shot if he didn't win it, but he broke his neck in the fall. And so I told my constituents that they might possibly gain the victory, but in doing so, they would ruin their country.

I told them moreover of my services, pretty straight up and down, for a man may be allowed to speak on such subjects when others are about to

forget them ; and I also told them of the manner in which I had been knocked down and dragged out, and that I did not consider it a fair fight any how they could fix it. I put the ingredients in the cup pretty strong I tell you, and I concluded my speech by telling them that I was done with politics for the present, and that they might all go to hell, and I would go to Texas.

When I returned home I felt a sort of cast down at the change that had taken place in my fortunes, and sorrow, it is said, will make even an oyster feel poetical. I never tried my hand at that sort of writing, but on this particular occasion such was my state of feeling, that I began to fancy myself inspired ; so I took pen in hand, and as usual I went ahead. When I had got fairly through, my poetry looked as zigzag as a worm fence ; the lines wouldn't tally, no how ; so I showed them to Peleg Longfellow, who has a first-rate reputation with us for that sort of writing, having some years ago made a carrier's address for the Nashville Banner, and Peleg lopped off some lines, and stretched out others ; but I wish I may be shot if I don't rather think he has made it worse than it was when I placed it in his hands. It being my first, and no doubt last piece of poetry, I will print it in this place, as it will serve to express my feelings on

leaving my home, my neighbours, and friends and country, for a strange land, as fully as I could in plain prose.

Farewell to the mountains whose mazes to me  
Were more beautiful far than Eden could be ;  
No fruit was forbidden, but Nature had spread  
Her bountiful board, and her children were fed.  
The hills were our garner—our herds wildly grew,  
And Nature was shepherd and husbandman too.  
I felt like a monarch, yet thought like á man,  
As I thank'd the Great Giver, and worshipp'd his plan.

The home I forsake where my offspring arose :  
The graves I forsake where my children repose.  
The home I redeem'd from the savage and wild ;  
The home I have loved as a father his child ;  
The corn that I planted, the fields that I clear'd,  
The flocks that I raised, and the cabin I rear'd ;  
The wife of my bosom—Farewell to ye all !  
In the land of the stranger I rise—or I fall.

Farewell to my country !—I fought for thee well,  
When the savage rush'd forth like the demons from hell.  
In peace or in war I have stood by thy side—  
My country, for thee I have lived—would have died !  
But I am cast off—my career now is run,  
And I wander abroad like the prodigal son—  
Where the wild savage roves, and the broad prairies  
spread,  
The fallen—despised—will again go ahead !

## CHAPTER III.

IN my last chapter I made mention of my determination to cut and quit the States until such time as honest and independent men should again work their way to the head of the heap ; and as I should probably have some idle time on hand before that state of affairs shall be brought about, I promised to give the Texians a helping hand, on the high road to freedom.—Well, I was always fond of having my spoon in a mess of that kind, for if there is any thing in this world particularly worth living for, it is freedom ; any thing that would render death to a brave man particularly pleasant, it is freedom.

I am now on my journey, and have already tortled along as far as Little Rock on the Arkansas, about one hundred and twenty-five miles from the mouth. I had promised to write another book, expecting, when I made that promise, to write about politics, and use up “the Government,” his successor, the removal of the deposits, and so on, matters and things that come as natural to me as

bear hunting; but being rascalled out of my election, I am taken all aback, and I must now strike into a new path altogether. Still I will redeem my promise, and make a book, and it shall be about my adventures in Texas, hoping that my friends, Messrs. Webster and Clay and Biddle, will keep a sharp look-out upon "the Government" during my absence.—I am told that every author of distinction writes a book of travels now-a-days.

My thermometer stood somewhat below the freezing point as I left my wife and children; still there was some thawing about the eyelids, a thing that had not taken place since I first ran away from my father's house when a thoughtless vagabond boy. I dressed myself in a clean hunting shirt, put on a new fox skin cap with the tail hanging behind, took hold of my rifle Betsey, which all the world knows was presented to me by the patriotic citizens of Philadelphia, as a compliment for my unflinching opposition to the tyrannic measures of "the Government," and thus equipped I started off, with a heavy heart, for Mill's Point, to take steamboat down the Mississippi, and go ahead in a new world.

While walking along, and thinking whether it was altogether the right grit to leave my poor country at a time she most needed my services, I

came to a clearing, and I was slowly rising a slope, when I was startled by loud, profane, and boisterous voices, (as loud and profane as have been heard in the White House of late years,) which seemed to proceed from a thick covert of undergrowth, about two hundred yards in advance of me, and about one hundred to the right of my road.

“You kin, kin you?”

“Yes, I kin, and am able to do it! Boo—oo—oo!—O! wake snakes, and walk your chinks! Brimstone and —— fire! Don’t hold me, Nick Stoval! The fight’s made up, and let’s go at it. —— my soul if I don’t jump down his throat and gallop every chitterling out of him, before you can say ‘quit!’”

“Now, Nick, don’t hold him! Jist let the wild cat come, and I’ll tame him. Ned ’ll see me a fair fight—won’t you, Ned?”

“O! yes, I’ll see you a fair fight; blast my old shoes if I don’t.”

“That’s sufficient, as Tom Haynes said, when he saw the elephant. Now let him come.”

Thus they went on, with countless oaths interspersed, which I dare not even hint at, and with much that I could not distinctly hear.

In mercy’s name! thought I, what a band of ruffians is at work here. I quickened my gait, and

had come nearly opposite to the thick grove whence the noise proceeded, when my eye caught indistinctly, through the foliage of the dwarf oaks and hickories that intervened, glimpses of a man or men, who seemed to be in a violent struggle; and I could occasionally catch those deep drawn emphatic oaths, which men in conflict utter, when they deal blows. I hurried to the spot, but before I reached it, I saw the combatants come to the ground, and after a short struggle, I saw the uppermost one (for I could not see the other) make a heavy plunge with both his thumbs, and at the same instant I heard a cry in the accent of keenest torture, "Enough! my eye is out!"

I stood completely horror-struck for a moment. The accomplices in the brutal deed had all fled at my approach, at least I supposed so; for they were not to be seen.

"Now blast your corn-shucking soul," said the victor, a lad about eighteen, as he rose from the ground, "come cutt'n your shines 'bout me agin, next time I come to the Court House, will you!—Get your owl-eye in agin if you can."

At this moment he saw me for the first time. He looked as though he couldn't help it, and was for making himself particularly scarce, when I called to him, "Come back, you brute, and assist me

in relieving the poor crittur you have ruined for ever."

Upon this rough salutation, he sort of collected himself, and with a taunting curl of the nose he replied, "You needn't kick before you're spurr'd. There an't nobody there, nor han't been nother. I was jist seein' how I could a' fout." So saying he bounded to his plough, which stood in the corner of the fence about fifty yards from the battle ground.

Now would any man in his senses believe that a rational being could make such a darned fool of himself? but I wish I may be shot, if his report was not as true as the last Post office report, every word, and a little more satisfactory. All that I had heard and seen was nothing more nor less than what is called a rehearsal of a knock-down and drag-out fight, in which the young man had played all the parts for his own amusement, and by way of keeping his hand in. I went to the ground from which he had risen, and there was the prints of his two thumbs, plunged up to the balls in the mellow earth, about the distance of a man's eyes apart, and the ground around was broken up, as if two stags had been engaged upon it.

As I resumed my journey I laughed outright at this adventure; for it reminded me of Andrew

Jackson's attack upon the United States Bank. He had magnified it into a monster, and then begun to rip and tear and swear and gouge, until he thought he had the monster on its back; and when the fight was over, and he got up to look about for his enemy, he could find none for the soul of him, for his enemy was altogether in his heated imagination. These fighting characters are never at peace, unless they have something to quarrel with, and rather than have no fight at all they will trample on their own shadows.

The day I arrived at Little Rock, I no sooner quit the steamer than I streaked it straight ahead for the principal tavern, which is nothing to boast of, nohow, unless a man happens to be like the member of Congress from the south, who was converted to Jacksonism, and then made a speech as long as the longitude about his political honesty. Some men it seems, take a pride in saying a great deal about nothing—like windmills, their tongues must be going whether they have any grist to grind or not. This is all very well in Congress, where every member is expected to make a speech to let his constituents know that some things can be done as well as others; but I set it down as being rather an imposition upon good nature to be compelled to listen, without receiving the consideration of eight

dollars per day, besides mileage, as we do in Congress. Many members will do nothing else for their pay but listen, day in and day out, and I wish I may be shot, if they do not earn every penny of it, provided they don't sleep, and Benton or little Isaac Hill will spin their yarns but once in a week. No man who has not tried it can imagine what dreadful hard work it is to listen. Splitting gum logs in the dog days is child's play to it. I've tried both, and give the preference to the gum logs.

Well, as I said, I made straight for the tavern, and as I drew nigh, I saw a considerable crowd assembled before the door. So, thought I, they have heard that Colonel Crockett intended to pay a visit to their settlement, and they have already got together to receive him in due form. I confess I felt a little elated at the idea, and commenced ransacking the lumber room of my brain, to find some one of my speeches that I might furbish up for the occasion; and then I shouldered my Betsey, straightened myself, and walked up to the door, charged to the muzzle, and ready to let fly.

But strange as it may seem, no one took any more notice of me, than if I had been Martin Van Buren, or Dick Johnson, the celebrated wool grower. This took me somewhat aback, and I inquired what

<http://stores.ebay.com/Ancestry-Found>

was the meaning of the gathering; and I learnt that a travelling showman had just arrived, and was about to exhibit for the first time the wonderful feats of Harlequin, and Punch and Judy, to the impatient natives. It was drawing towards night-fall, and expectation was on tiptoe; the children were clinging to their mother's aprons, with their chubby faces dimpled with delight, and asking "What is it like? when will it begin?" and similar questions, while the women, as all good wives are in duty bound to do, appealed to their husbands for information; but the call for information was not responded to in this instance, as is sometimes the case in Congress;—their husbands understood the matter about as well as "the Government" did the Post office accounts.

The showman at length made his appearance, with a countenance as wo-begone as that of "the Government" when he found his batch of dirty nominations rejected by the Senate, and mentioned the impossibility that any performance should take place that evening, as the lame fiddler had over-charged his head, and having but one leg at best, it did not require much to destroy his equilibrium. And as all the world knows, a puppet show without a fiddle is like roast pork and no apple sauce. This piece of intelligence was received with a gene-

ral murmur of dissatisfaction; and such was the indignation of his majesty, the sovereign people, at being thwarted in his rational amusements, that, according to the established custom in such cases made and provided, there were some symptoms of a disposition to kick up a row, break the show, and finish the amusements of the day by putting Lynch's law in practice upon the poor showman. There is nothing like upholding the dignity of the people, and so Lieut. Randolph thought, when with his cowardly and sacrilegious hand he dared to profane the anointed nose of "the Government," and bring the whole nation into contempt. If I had been present, may disgrace follow my career in Texas, if I wouldn't have become a whole hog Jackson man upon the spot, for the time being, for the nose of "the Government" should be held more sacred than any other member, that it may be kept in good order to smell out all the corruption that is going forward—not a very pleasant office, and by no means a sinecure.

The indignant people, as I have already said, were about to exercise their reserved rights upon the unlucky showman, and Punch and Judy too, when, as good fortune would have it, an old gentleman drove up to the tavern door in a sulky, with a box of books and pamphlets of his own

composition—(for he was an author like myself)—thus being able to vouch for the moral tendency of every page he disposed of. Very few booksellers can do the same, I take it. His linen and flannels, which he had washed in the brooks by the way-side, were hanging over the back of the crazy vehicle to dry, while his own snuffy countenance had long bid defiance to sun, wind, and water to bleach it.

His jaded beast stopped instinctively upon seeing a crowd, while the old man remained seated for some moments before he could recall his thoughts from the world of imagination, where they were gleaning for the benefit of mankind. He looked, it must be confessed, more like a lunatic than a moral lecturer; but being conscious of his own rectitude, he could not conceive how his outward Adam could make him ridiculous in the eyes of another; but a fair outside is every thing to the world. The tulip flower is highly prized, although indebted for its beauty to the corruption engendered at the root: and so it is with man.

We occasionally meet with one possessing sufficient philosophy to look upon life as a pilgrimage, and not as a mere round of pleasure: who, treating this world as a place of probation, is ready to encounter suffering, and not expecting the sunshine

of prosperity, escapes being overclouded by disappointment. Such is the character of the old preacher, whose ridiculous appearance in the eyes of the thoughtless and ignorant is only exceeded by the respect and veneration of those who are capable of estimating his real worth. I learnt that he was educated for the church, but not being able to obtain a living, he looked upon the whole earth as his altar, and all mankind as his flock. He was penniless, and therefore had no predilection for this or that section of the globe, for wherever he might be, his journey of probation still continued, and in every spot he found that human nature was the same. His life was literally that of a pilgrim. He was an isolated being, though his heart overflowed with the milk of human kindness; for being indiscriminate in his affection, very few valued it. He who commences the world with a general love for mankind, and suffers his feelings to dictate to his reason, runs a great hazard of reaping a plentiful harvest of ingratitude, and of closing a tedious existence in misanthropy. . But it was not so with the aged preacher.

Being unable to earn his bread as an itinerant lecturer,—for in those cases it is mostly poor preach and worse pay—he turned author, and wrote histories which contained but little information, and

sermons which, like many others, had nothing to boast of, beyond being strictly orthodox. He succeeded in obtaining a sulky, and a horse to drag it, by a plea of mercy, which deprived the hounds of their food, and with these he travelled over the western states, to dispose of the product of his brain; and when poverty was deprived of the benefit of his labour, in the benevolence of his heart he would deliver a moral lecture, which had the usual weight of homilies on this subject. A lecture is the cheapest thing that a man can bestow in charity, and many of our universal philanthropists have made the discovery.

The landlord now made his appearance, and gave a hearty welcome to the reverend traveller, and shaking him by the hand, added, that he never came more opportunely in all his life.

“Opportunely!” exclaimed the philosopher.

“Yes,” rejoined the other; “you have a heart and head that labour for the benefit of us poor mortals.”

“O! true, an excellent market for my pamphlets,” replied the other, at the same time beginning to open the trunk that lay before him.

“You misunderstand me,” added the landlord. “A poor showman, with a sick wife and five children, has arrived from New Orleans——”

“I will sell my pamphlets to relieve their wants, and endeavour to teach them resignation.”

“He exhibits to-night in my large room : you know the room, sir—I let him have it gratis.”

“You are an honest fellow. I will witness his show, and add my mite to his assistance.”

“But,” replied the innkeeper, “the lame fiddler is fond of the bottle, and is now snoring in the hayloft.”

“Degrading vice !” exclaimed the old man, and taking “God’s Revenge against Drunkenness” from the trunk, and standing erect in the sulky, commenced reading to his astonished audience. The innkeeper interrupted him by observing that the homily would not fill the empty purse of the poor showman, and unless a fiddler could be obtained, he must depend on charity, or go supperless to bed. And moreover, the people, irritated at their disappointment, had threatened to tear the show to pieces.

“But what’s to be done ?” demanded the parson.

“Your reverence shakes an excellent bow,” added the innkeeper, in an insinuating tone.

“I !” exclaimed the parson ; “I fiddle for a puppet show !”

“Not for the puppet show, but for the sick wife and five hungry children.”

A tear started into the eyes of the old man, as he added in an undertone, "If I could be concealed from the audience——"

"Nothing easier," cried the other; "we will place you behind the scenes, and no one will ever dream that you fiddled at a puppet show."

The matter being thus settled, they entered the house, and shortly afterward the sound of a fiddle squeaking like a giggling girl, tickled into ecstasies, restored mirth and good humour to the disappointed assemblage, who rushed in, helter-skelter, to enjoy the exhibition.

All being seated, and silence restored, they waited in breathless expectation for the rising of the curtain. At length Harlequin made his appearance, and performed astonishing feats of activity on the slack rope; turning somersets backward and forward, first on this side, and then on that, with as much ease as if he had been a politician all his life,—the parson sawing vigorously on his fiddle all the time. Punch followed, and set the audience in a roar with his antic tricks and jests; but when Judy entered with her broomstick, the burst of applause was as great as ever I heard bestowed upon one of Benton's slang-whang speeches in Congress, and I rather think quite as well merited.

As the plot thickened, the music of the parson became more animated; but unluckily in the warmth of his zeal to do justice to his station, his elbow touched the side scene, which fell to the floor, and exposed him, working away in all the ecstasies of little Isaac Hill, while reading one of his long orations about things in general to empty benches. No ways disconcerted by the accident, the parson seized upon it as a fine opportunity of conveying a lesson to those around him, at the same time that he might benefit a fellow mortal. He immediately mounted the chair upon which he was seated, and addressed the audience to the following effect:—

“Many of you have come here for amusement, and others no doubt to assist the poor man, who is thus struggling to obtain a subsistence for his sick wife and children.—Lo ! the moral of a puppet show !—But is this all ; has he not rendered unto you your money’s worth ? This is not charity. If you are charitably inclined, here is an object fully deserving of it.” He preached upon this text for full half an hour, and concluded with taking his hat to collect assistance from his hearers for the friendless showman and his family.

The next morning, when his sulky was brought to the door, the showman and his wife came out

to thank their benefactor. The old man placed his trunk of pamphlets before him, and proceeded on his pilgrimage, the little children following him through the village with bursts of gratitude.

## CHAPTER IV.

THE public mind having been quieted by the exhibition of the puppet show, and allowed to return to its usual channel, it was not long before the good people of Little Rock began to inquire what distinguished stranger had come among them ; and learning that it was neither more nor less than the identical Colonel Crockett, the champion of the fugitive deposits, than straight they went ahead at getting up another tempest in a teapot ; and I wish I may be shot, if I wasn't looked upon as almost as great a sight as Punch and Judy.

Nothing would answer but I must accept of an invitation to a public dinner. Now as public dinners have become so common, that it is enough to take away the appetite of any man, who has a proper sense of his own importance, to sit down and play his part in the humbug business, I had made up my mind to write a letter declining the honour, expressing my regret, and winding up with a flourish of trumpets about the patriotism of the citizens of Little Rock, and all that sort of thing,

when the landlord came in, and says he, "Colonel, just oblige me by stepping into the back yard a moment."

I followed the landlord in silence, twisting and turning over in my brain, all the while, what I should say in my letter to the patriotic citizens of Little Rock, who were bent on eating a dinner for the good of their country ; when he conducted me to a shed in the yard, where I beheld, hanging up, a fine fat cub bear, several haunches of venison, a wild turkey as big as a young ostrich, and small game too tedious to mention. "Well, Colonel, what do you think of my larder?" says he. "Fine!", says I ; "let us liquor." We walked back to the bar, I took a horn, and without loss of time I wrote to the committee, that I accepted of the invitation to a public dinner with pleasure,—that I would always be found ready to serve my country either by eating or fasting ; and that the honour the patriotic citizens of Little Rock had conferred upon me rendered it the proudest moment of my eventful life. The chairman of the committee was standing by while I wrote the letter, which I handed to him ; and so this important business was soon settled.

As there was considerable time to be killed, or got rid of in some way, before the dinner could

be cooked, it was proposed that we should go beyond the village, and shoot at a mark, for they had heard that I was a first-rate shot, and they wanted to see for themselves whether fame had not blown her trumpet a little too strong in my favour; for since she had represented "the Government" as being a first-rate statesman, and Colonel Benton as a first-rate orator, they could not receive such reports without proper allowance, as Congress thought of the Post office report.

Well, I shouldered my Betsey, and she is just about as beautiful a piece as ever came out of Philadelphia, and I went out to the shooting ground, followed by all the leading men in Little Rock, and that was a clear majority of the town, for it is remarkable that there are always more leading men in small villages than there are followers.

I was in prime order. My eye was as keen as a lizard, and my nerves were as steady and unshaken as the political course of Henry Clay; so at it we went, the distance one hundred yards. The principal marksmen, and such as had never been beat, led the way, and there was some pretty fair shooting, I tell you. At length it came to my turn. I squared myself, raised my beautiful Betsey to my shoulder, took deliberate aim, and smack I sent the bullet right into the centre of the bull's eye.

"There's no mistake in Betsey," said I, in a sort of careless way, as they were all looking at the target, sort of amazed, and not at all over pleased.

"That's a chance shot, Colonel," said one who had the reputation of being the best marksman in those parts.

"Not as much chance as there was," said I, "when Dick Johnson took his darkie for better for worse. I can do it five times out of six any day in the week." This I said in as confident a tone as "the Government" did when he protested that he forgave Colonel Benton for shooting him, and he was now the best friend he had in the world. I knew it was not altogether as correct as it might be, but when a man sets about going the big figure, halfway measures won't answer no how; and "the greatest and the best" had set me the example, that swagging will answer a good purpose at times.

They now proposed that we should have a second trial; but knowing that I had nothing to gain, and every thing to lose, I was for backing out and fighting shy; but there was no let-off, for the cock of the village, though whipped, determined not to stay whipped; so to it again we went. They were now put upon their mettle, and they fired much better than the first time; and it was what might

be called pretty sharp shooting. When it came to my turn, I squared myself, and turning to the prime shot, I gave him a knowing nod, by way of showing my confidence ; and says I, " Look-out for the bull's eye, stranger." I blazed away, and I wish I may be shot if I didn't miss the target. They examined it all over, and could find neither hair nor hide of my bullet, and pronounced it a dead miss ; when says I, " Stand aside and let me look, and I war'nt you I get on the right trail of the critter." They stood aside, and I examined the bull's eye pretty particular, and at length cried out, " Here it is ; there is no snakes if it ha'n't followed the very track of the other." They said it was utterly impossible, but I insisted on their searching the hole, and I agreed to be stuck up as a mark myself, if they did not find two bullets there. They searched for my satisfaction, and sure enough it all came out just as I had told them ; for I had picked up a bullet that had been fired, and stuck it deep into the hole, without any one perceiving it. They were all perfectly satisfied, that fame had not made too great a flourish of trumpets when speaking of me as a marksman ; and they all said they had enough of shooting for that day, and they moved, that we adjourn to the tavern and liquor.

We had scarcely taken drinks round before the landlord announced that dinner was ready, and I was escorted into the dining room by the committee, to the tune of "See the conquering hero comes," played upon a drum, which had been beaten until it got a fit of the sullen, and refused to send forth any sound ; and it was accompanied by the weasing of a fife that was sadly troubled with a spell of the asthma. I was escorted into the dining room, I say, somewhat after the same fashion that "the Government" was escorted into the different cities when he made his northern tour ; the only difference was, that I had no sycophants about me, but true hearted hospitable friends, for it was pretty well known that I had, for the present, abandoned all intention of running for the Presidency against the Little Flying Dutchman.

The dinner was first-rate. The bear meat, the venison, and wild turkey would have tempted a man who had given over the business of eating altogether ; and every thing was cooked to the notch precisely. The enterprising landlord did himself immortal honour on this momentous occasion ; and the committee, thinking that he merited public thanks for his patriotic services, handed his name to posterity to look at in the lasting columns of the Little Rock Gazette ; and when our child-

ren's children behold it, they will think of the pure patriots who sat down in good fellowship to feast on the bear meat and venison ; and the enthusiasm the occasion is calculated to awaken will induce them to bless the patriot who, in a cause so glorious, spared no pains in cooking the dinner, and serving it in a becoming manner.—And this is fame !

The fragments of the meats being cleared off, we went through the customary evolution of drinking thirteen regular toasts, after every one of which our drum with the loose skin grumbled like an old horse with an empty stomach ; and our asthmatic fife squeaked like a stuck pig, a spirit-stirring tune, which we put off christening until we should come to prepare our proceedings for posterity. The fife appeared to have but one tune in it ; possibly it mought have had more, but the poor fifer, with all his puffing and blowing, his too-too-tooing, and shaking his head and elbow, could not, for the body and soul of him, get more than one out of it. If the fife had had an extra tune to its name, sartin it wouldn't have been quite so hide bound on such an occasion, but have let us have it, good, bad, or indifferent. We warn't particular by no means.

Having gone through with the regular toasts, the president of the day drank, " Our distinguished

guest, Col. Crockett," which called forth a prodigious clattering all around the table, and I soon saw that nothing would do, but I must get up and make them a speech. I had no sooner elongated my outward Adam, than they at it again, with renewed vigour, which made me sort of feel that I was still somebody, though no longer a member of Congress.

In my speech I went over the whole history of the present administration ; took a long shot at the flying deposits, and gave an outline, a sort of charcoal sketch, of the political life of "the Government's" heir presumptive. I also let them know how I had been rascalled out of my election, because I refused to bow down to the idol ; and as I saw a number of young politicians around the table, I told them, that I would lay down a few rules for their guidance, which, if properly attended to, could not fail to lead them on the highway to distinction and public honour. I told them, that I was an old hand at the business, and as I was about to retire for a time, I would give them a little instruction gratis, for I was up to all the tricks of the trade, though I had practised but few.

"Attend all public meetings," says I, "and get some friend to move that you take the chair ; if you fail in this attempt, make a push to be appoint-

ed secretary ; the proceedings of course will be published, and your name is introduced to the public. But should you fail in both undertakings, get two or three acquaintances, over a bottle of whisky, to pass some resolutions, no matter on what subject ; publish them even if you pay the printer—it will answer the purpose of breaking the ice, which is the main point in these matters. Intrigue until you are elected an officer of the militia ; this is the second step toward promotion, and can be accomplished with ease, as I know an instance of an election being advertised, and no one attending, the innkeeper at whose house it was to be held, having a military turn, elected himself colonel of his regiment.” Says I, “ You may not accomplish your ends with as little difficulty, but do not be discouraged—Rome wasn’t built in a day.

“ If your ambition or circumstances compel you to serve your country, and earn three dollars a day, by becoming a member of the legislature, you must first publicly avow that the constitution of the state is a shackle upon free and liberal legislation ; and is, therefore, of as little use in the present enlightened age, as an old almanac of the year in which the instrument was framed. There is policy in this measure, for by making the constitution a

mere dead letter, your headlong proceedings will be attributed to a bold and unshackled mind ; whereas, it might otherwise be thought they arose from sheer mulish ignorance. ‘ The Government’ has set the example in his attack upon the constitution of the United States, and who should fear to follow where ‘ the Government’ leads ?

“ When the day of election approaches, visit your constituents far and wide. Treat liberally, and drink freely, in order to rise in their estimation, though you fall in your own. True, you may be called a drunken dog by some of the clean shirt and silk stocking gentry, but the real rough necks will style you a jovial fellow,—their votes are certain, and frequently count double. Do all you can to appear to advantage in the eyes of the women. That’s easily done—you have but to kiss and slabber their children, wipe their noses, and pat them on the head ; this cannot fail to please their mothers, and you may rely on your business being done in that quarter.

“ Promise all that is asked,” said I, “ and more if you can think of any thing. Offer to build a bridge or a church, to divide a country, create a batch of new offices, make a turnpike, or any thing they like. Promises cost nothing, therefore deny nobody who has a vote or sufficient influence to obtain one.

“Get up on all occasions, and sometimes on no occasion at all, and make long-winded speeches, though composed of nothing else than wind—talk of your devotion to your country, your modesty and disinterestedness, or on any such fanciful subject. Rail against taxes of all kinds, office holders, and bad harvest weather ; and wind up with a flourish about the heroes who fought and bled for our liberties in the times that tried men’s souls. To be sure you run the risk of being considered a bladder of wind, or an empty barrel ; but never mind that, you will find enough of the same fraternity to keep you in countenance.

“If any charity be going forward, be at the top of it, provided it is to be advertised publicly ; if not, it isn’t worth your while. None but a fool would place his candle under a bushel on such an occasion.

“These few directions,” said I, “if properly attended to, will do your business ; and when once elected, why a fig for the dirty children, the promises, the bridges, the churches, the taxes, the offices, and the subscriptions, for it is absolutely necessary to forget all these before you can become a thorough-going politician, and a patriot of the first water.”

My speech was received with three times three,

and all that; and we continued speechifying and drinking until nightfall, when it was put to vote, that we would have the puppet show over again, which was carried *nem.con.* The showman set his wires to work, just as "the Government" does the machinery in his big puppet show ; and we spent a delightful and rational evening. We raised a subscription for the poor showman; and I went to bed, pleased and gratified with the hospitality and kindness of the citizens of Little Rock. There are some first-rate men there, of the real half horse half alligator breed, with a sprinkling of the steam-boat, and such as grow nowhere on the face of the universal earth, but just about the back bone of North America.

## CHAPTER V.

THE day after our public dinner I determined to leave my hospitable friends at Little Rock, and cross Arkansas to Fulton on the Red River, a distance of about one hundred and twenty miles. They wanted me to stay longer ; and the gentleman who had the reputation of being the best marksman in those parts was most particularly anxious that we should have another trial of skill ; but says I to myself, "Crockett, you've had just about glory enough for one day, so take my advice, and leave well enough alone." I declined shooting, for there was nothing at all to be gained by it, and I might possibly lose some little of the reputation I had acquired. I have always found that it is a very important thing for a man who is fairly going ahead, to know exactly how far to go, and when to stop. Had "the Government" stopped before he meddled with the constitution, the deposits, and "taking the responsibility," he would have retired from office with almost as much credit as he entered upon it, which is as much as any public man can

reasonably expect. But the General is a whole team, and when fairly started, will be going ahead; and one might as well attempt to twist a streak of lightning into a true lover's knot as to stop him.

Finding that I was bent on going, for I became impatient to get into Texas, my kind friends at Little Rock procured me a good horse to carry me across to Red River. There are no bounds to the good feeling of the pioneers of the west; they consider nothing a trouble that will confer a favour upon a stranger that they chance to take a fancy to: true, we are something like chestnut burs on the outside, rather prickly if touched roughly, but there's good fruit within.

My horse was brought to the door of the tavern, around which many of the villagers were assembled. The drum and fife were playing what was intended for a lively tune, but the skin of the drum still hung as loose as the hide of a fat man far gone in a consumption; and the fife had not yet recovered from the asthma. The music sounded something like a fellow singing, "Away with melancholy," on the way to the gallows. I took my leave of the landlord, shook hands with the showman, who had done more than an average business, kissed his wife, who had recovered, and bidding farewell to all my kind-hearted friends, I mounted my horse,

and left the village, accompanied by four or five gentlemen. The drum and fife now appeared to exert themselves, and made more noise than usual, while the crowd sent forth three cheers to encourage me on my way.

I tried to raise some recruits for Texas among my companions, but they said they had their own affairs to attend to, which would keep them at home for the present, but no doubt they would come over and see us as soon as the disturbances should be settled. They looked upon Texas as being part of the United States, though the Mexicans did claim it ; and they had no doubt the time was not very distant when it would be received into the glorious Union.

My companions did not intend seeing me farther on my way than the Washita river, near fifty miles. Conversation was pretty brisk, for we talked about the affairs of the nation and Texas ; subjects that are by no means to be exhausted, if one may judge by the long speeches made in Congress, where they talk year in and year out ; and it would seem that as much still remains to be said as ever. As we drew nigh to the Washita, the silence was broken alone by our own talk and the clattering of our horses' hoofs ; and we imagined ourselves pretty much the only travellers, when

we were suddenly somewhat startled by the sound of music. We checked our horses, and listened, and the music continued. "What can all that mean?" says I. "Blast my old shoes if I know, Colonel," says one of the party. We listened again, and we now heard, "Hail, Columbia, happy land!" played in first-rate style. "That's fine," says I. "Fine as silk, Colonel, and leetle finer," says the other; "but hark, the tune's changed." We took another spell of listening, and now the musician struck up, in a brisk and lively manner, "Over the water to Charley." "That's mighty mysterious," says one; "Can't cipher it out no-how," says another; "A notch beyant my measure," says a third. "Then let us go ahead," says I, and off we dashed at a pretty rapid gait, I tell you—by no means slow.

As we approached the river we saw to the right of the road a new clearing on a hill, where several men were at work, and they running down the hill like wild Indians, or rather like the office holders in pursuit of the deposits. There appeared to be no time to be lost, so they ran, and we cut ahead for the crossing. The music continued all this time stronger and stronger, and the very notes appeared to speak distinctly, "Over the water to Charley."

When we reached the crossing we were struck all of a heap, at beholding a man seated in a sulky in the middle of the river, and playing for life on a fiddle. The horse was up to his middle in the water ; and it seemed as if the flimsy vehicle was ready to be swept away by the current. Still the fiddler fiddled on composedly, as if his life had been insured, and he was nothing more than a passenger. We thought he was mad, and shouted to him. He heard us, and stopped his music. "You have missed the crossing," shouted one of the men from the clearing. "I know I have," returned the fiddler. "If you go ten feet farther you will be drowned." "I know I shall," returned the fiddler. "Turn back," said the man. "I can't," said the other. "Then how the devil will you get out?" "I'm sure I don't know : come you and help me."

The men from the clearing, who understood the river, took our horses and rode up to the sulky, and after some difficulty, succeeded in bringing the traveller safe to shore, when we recognised the worthy parson who had fiddled for us at the puppet show at Little Rock. They told him that he had had a narrow escape, and he replied, that he had found that out an hour ago. He said he had been fiddling to the fishes for a full hour, and had

exhausted all the tunes that he could play without notes. We then asked him what could have induced him to think of fiddling at a time of such peril ; and he replied, that he had remarked in his progress through life, that there was nothing in univarsal natur so well calculated to draw people together as the sound of a fiddle ; and he knew, that he might bawl until he was hoarse for assistance, and no one would stir a peg ; but they would no sooner hear the scraping of his catgut, than they would quit all other business, and come to the spot in flocks. We laughed heartily at the knowledge the parson showed of human natur.—And he was right.

Having fixed up the old gentleman's sulky right and tight, and after rubbing down his poor jaded animal, the company insisted on having a dance before we separated. We all had our flasks of whisky ; we took a drink all round, and though the parson said he had had about enough fiddling for one day, he struck up with great good humour ; at it we went, and danced straight fours for an hour and better. We all enjoyed ourselves very much, but came to the conclusion, that dancing wasn't altogether the thing without a few petticoats to give it variety.

The dance being over, our new friends pointed

out the right fording, and assisted the parson across the river. We took another drink all round, and after shaking each other cordially by the hand, we separated, wishing each other all the good fortune that the rugged lot that has been assigned us will afford. My friends retraced the road to Little Rock, and I pursued my journey; and as I thought of their disinterested kindness to an entire stranger, I felt that the world is not quite as heartless and selfish as some grumblers would have us think.

The Arkansas is a pretty fine territory, being about five hundred and fifty miles in length from east to west, with a mean width of near two hundred, extending over an area of about one hundred thousand square miles. The face of the country from its great extent is very much diversified. It is pretty well watered, being intersected by the Arkansas river and branches of the Red, Washita, and White rivers. The Maserne mountains, which rise in Missouri, traverse Arkansas and extend into Texas. That part of the territory to the south-east of the Masernes is for the most part low, and in many places liable to be overflowed annually. To the north-west of the mountains the country presents generally an open expanse of prairie without wood, except near the borders of the streams. The seasons of the year partake of those extremes of heat

and cold, which might be expected in so great an extent, and in a country which affords so much difference of level. The summers are as remarkable as is the winters for extremes of temperature. The soil exhibits every variety, from the most productive to the most sterile. The forest trees are numerous and large; such as oak, hickory, sycamore, cotton-wood, locust, and pine. The cultivated fruit trees are the apple, pear, peach, plum, nectarine, cherry, and quince; and the various kinds of grain, such as wheat, rye, oats, barley, and Indian corn, succeed amazing well. Cotton, Indian corn, flour, peltry, salted provisions, and lumber, are the staples of this territory. Arkansas was among the most ancient settlements of the French in Louisiana. That nation had a hunting and trading post on the Arkansas river as early as the beginning of the eighteenth century. Arkansas, I rather reckon, will be admitted as a state into the Union during the next session of Congress; and if the citizens of Little Rock are a fair sample of her children, she cannot fail to go ahead.

I kept in company with the parson until we arrived at Greenville, and I do say, he was just about as pleasant an old gentleman to travel with, as any man who wasn't too darned particular could ask for. We talked about politics, religion, and natur,

farming and bear hunting, and the many blessings that an all bountiful Providence has bestowed upon our happy country. He continued to talk upon this subject, travelling over the whole ground as it were, until his imagination glowed, and his soul became full to overflowing; and he checked his horse, and I stopped mine also, and a stream of eloquence burst forth from his aged lips, such as I have seldom listened to: it came from the overflowing fountain of a pure and grateful heart. We were alone in the wilderness, but as he proceeded it seemed to me as if the tall trees bent their tops to listen; that the mountain stream laughed out joyfully as it bounded on like some living thing; that the fading flowers of autumn smiled, and sent forth fresher fragrance, as if conscious that they would revive in spring; and even the sterile rocks seemed to be endued with some mysterious influence. We were alone in the wilderness, but all things told me that God was there. That thought renewed my strength and courage. I had left my country, felt somewhat like an outcast, believed that I had been neglected and lost sight of: but I was now conscious that there was still one watchful Eye over me; no matter whether I dwelt in the populous cities, or threaded the pathless forest alone; no matter whether I stood in the high

places among men, or made my solitary lair in the untrodden wild, that Eye was still upon me. My very soul leaped joyfully at the thought ; I never felt so grateful in all my life ; I never loved my God so sincerely in all my life. I felt that I still had a friend.

When the old man finished I found that my eyes were wet with tears. I approached and pressed his hand, and thanked him, and says I, "Now let us take a drink." I set him the example, and he followed it, and in a style too that satisfied me, that if he had ever belonged to the Temperance society, he had either renounced membership or obtained a dispensation. Having liquored, we proceeded on our journey, keeping a sharp look-out for mill seats and plantations as we rode along.

I left the worthy old man at Greenville, and sorry enough I was to part with him, for he talked a great deal, and he seemed to know a little about every thing. He knew all about the history of the country ; was well acquainted with all the leading men ; knew where all the good lands lay in most of the western states, as well as the cutest clerk in the Land office ; and had traced most of the rivers to their sources. He was very cheerful and happy, though to all appearances very poor. I thought that he would make a first-rate agent for

taking up lands, and mentioned it to him ; he smiled, and pointing above, said, " My wealth lies not in this world."

I mounted my horse, and pushed forward on my road to Fulton. When I reached Washington, a village a few miles from the Red river, I rode up to the Black Bear tavern, when the following conversation took place between me and the landlord, which is a pretty fair sample of the curiosity of some folks :—

" Good morning, mister — I don't exactly recollect your name now," said the landlord as I alighted.

" It's of no consequence," said I.

" I'm pretty sure I've seen ye somewhere."

" Very likely you may, I've been there frequently."

" I was sure 'twas so; but strange I should forget your name," says he.

" It is indeed somewhat strange that you should forget what you never knew," says I.

" It is unaccountable strange. It's what I'm not often in the habit of, I assure you. I have, for the most part, a remarkably detentive memory. In the power of people that pass along this way, I've scarce ever made, as the doctors say, a *slapsus slinkum* of this kind afore."

"Eh heh!" I shouted, while the critter continued.

"Travelling to the western country, I presume, mister?"

"Presume any thing you please, sir," says I, "but don't trouble me with your presumptions."

"O Lord, no, sir—I won't do that—I've no ideer of that—not the least ideer in the world," says he; "I suppose you've been to the westward afore now?"

"Well, suppose I have?"

"Why, on that supposition, I was going to say you must be pretty well—that is to say, you must know something about the place."

"Eh heh!" I ejaculated, looking sort of mazed full in his face. The tarnel critter still went ahead.

"I take it you're a married man, mister?"

"Take it as you will, that is no affair of mine," says I.

"Well, after all, a married life is the most happiest way of living; don't you think so, mister?"

"Very possible," says I.

"I conclude you have a family of children, sir?"

"I don't know what reason you have to conclude so."

"O, no reason in the world, mister, not the least," says he; "but I thought I might just take the

liberty to make the presumption, you know, that's all, sir. I take it, mister, you're a man about my age?"

"Eh heh!"

"How old do you call yourself, if I may be so bold?"

"You're bold enough, the devil knows," says I; and as I spoke rather sharp, the varment seemed rather staggered, but he soon recovered himself, and came up to the chalk again.

"No offence, I hope—I—I—I—wouldn't be thought uncivil by any means; I always calculate to treat everybody with civility."

"You have a very strange way of showing it."

"True, as you say, I ginnerally take my own way in these ere matters.—Do you practise law, mister, or farming, or mechanicals?"

"Perhaps so," says I.

"Ah, I judge so; I was pretty certain it must be the case. Well, it's as good business as any there is followed now-a-days."

"Eh heh!" I shouted, and my lower jaw fell in amazement at his perseverance.

"I take it you've money at interest, mister?" continued the varment, without allowing himself time to take breath.

"Would it be of any particular interest to you to find out?" says I.

"O, not at all, not the least in the world, sir. I'm not at all inquisitive about other people's matters; I mind's my own business—that's my way."

"And a very odd way you have of doing it too."

"I've been thinking what persuasion you're of—whether you're a Unitarian or Baptist, or whether you belong to the Methodisses."

"Well, what's the conclusion?"

"Why, I have concluded that I'm pretty near right in my conjectures. Well, after all, I'm inclined to think they're the nearest right of any persuasion—though some folks think differently."

"Eh heh!" I shouted again.

"As to pollyticks, I take it, you—that is to say, I suppose you——"

"Very likely."

"Ah! I could have sworn it was so from the moment I saw you. I have a nack at finding out a man's sentiments. I dare say, mister, you're a justice in your own country?"

"And if I may return the compliment, I should say you're a just ass everywhere." By this time I began to get weary of his impertinence, and led my horse to the trough to water, but the darned critter followed me up.

"Why, yes," said he, "I'm in the commission of the peace, to be sure—and an officer in the

militia—though between you and I, I wouldn't wish to boast of it."

My horse having finished drinking, I put one foot in the stirrup, and was preparing to mount—"Any more inquiries to make?" said I.

"Why, no, nothing to speak on," said he. "When do you return, mister?"

"About the time I come back," said I; and leaping into the saddle galloped off. The pestiferous varment bawled after me, at the top of his voice,—

"Well, I shall look for ye then. I hope you won't fail to call."

Now, who in all natur do you reckon the crittur was, who afforded so fine a sample of the impertinent curiosity that some people have to pry into other people's affairs? I knew him well enough at first sight, though he seemed to have forgotten me. It was no other than Job Snelling, the manufacturer of cayenne pepper out of mahogany sawdust, and upon whom I played the trick with the coon skin. I pursued my journey to Fulton, and laughed heartily to think what a swither I had left poor Job in, at not gratifying his curiosity; for I knew he was one of those fellows who would peep down your throat just to ascertain what you had eaten for dinner.

When I arrived at Fulton, I inquired for a gentleman to whom my friends at Little Rock had given me a letter of introduction. I was received in the most hospitable manner ; and as the steamboat did not start for Natchitoches until the next day, I spent the afternoon in seeing all that was to be seen. I left my horse with the gentleman, who promised to have him safely returned to the owner; and I took the steamboat, and started on my way down the Red river, right well pleased with my reception at Fulton.

## CHAPTER VI.

THERE was a considerable number of passengers on board the boat, and our assortment was somewhat like the Yankee merchant's cargo of notions, pretty particularly miscellaneous, I tell you. I moved through the crowd from stem to stern, to see if I could discover any face that was not altogether strange to me ; but after a general survey, I concluded that I had never seen one of them before. There were merchants and emigrants and gamblers, but none who seemed to have embarked in the particular business that for the time being occupied my mind—I could find none who were going to Texas. All seemed to have their hands full enough of their own affairs, without meddling with the cause of freedom. The greater share of glory will be mine, thought I, so go ahead, Crockett.

I saw a small cluster of passengers at one end of the boat, and hearing an occasional burst of laughter, thinks I, there's some sport started in that quarter, and having nothing better to do, I'll go in for my share of it. Accordingly I drew nigh to the

cluster, and seated on a chest was a tall lank sea serpent looking blackleg, who had crawled over from Natchez under the hill, and was amusing the passengers with his skill at thimblorig; at the same time he was picking up their shillings just about as expeditiously as a hungry gobbler would a pint of corn. He was doing what might be called an average business in a small way, and lost no time in gathering up the fragments.

I watched the whole process for some time, and found that he had adopted the example set by the old tempter himself, to get the weathergage of us poor weak mortals. He made it a point to let his victims win always the first stake, that they might be tempted to go ahead; and then, when they least suspected it, he would come down upon them like a hurricane in a cornfield, sweeping all before it.

I stood looking on, seeing him pick up the chicken feed from the green horns, and thought if men are such darned fools as to be cheated out of their hard earnings by a fellow who had just brains enough to pass a pea from one thimble to another, with such slight of hand, that you could not tell under which he had deposited it; it is not astonishing that the magician of Kinderhook should play thimblorig upon the big figure, and attempt to cheat the whole nation. I thought that "the Government"

was playing the same game with the deposits, and with such address too, that before long it will be a hard matter to find them under any of the thimbles where it is supposed they have been originally placed.

The thimble conjurer saw me looking on, and eyeing me as if he thought I would be a good subject, said carelessly, "Come, stranger, won't you take a chance?" the whole time passing the pea from one thimble to the other, by way of throwing out a bait for the gudgeons to bite at. "I never gamble, stranger," says I, "principled against it; think it a slippery way of getting through the world at best." "Them are my sentiments to a notch," says he; "but this is not gambling by no means. A little innocent pastime, nothing more. Better take a hack by way of trying your luck at guessing." All this time he continued working with his thimbles; first putting the pea under one, which was plain to be seen, and then uncovering it, would show that the pea was there; he would then put it under the second thimble, and do the same, and then under the third; all of which he did to show how easy it would be to guess where the pea was deposited, if one would only keep a sharp look-out.

"Come, stranger," says he to me again, "you

had better take a chance. Stake a trifle, I don't care how small, just for the fun of the thing."

"I am principled against betting money," says I, "but I don't mind going in for drinks for the present company, for I'm as dry as one of little Isaac Hill's regular set speeches."

"I admire your principles," says he, "and to show that I play with these here thimbles just for the sake of pastime, I will take that bet, though I'm a whole hog temperance man. Just say when, stranger."

He continued all the time slipping the pea from one thimble to another ; my eye was as keen as a lizard's, and when he stopped, I cried out, "Now; the pea is under the middle thimble." He was going to raise it to show that it wasn't there, when I interfered, and said, "Stop, if you please," and raised it myself, and sure enough the pea was there ; but it mought have been otherwise if he had had the uncovering of it.

"Sure enough you've won the bet," says he. "You've a sharp eye, but I don't care if I give you another chance. Let us go fifty cents this bout ; I'm sure you'll win."

"Then you're a darned fool to bet, stranger," says I ; "and since that is the case, it would be little better than picking your pocket to bet with you ; so I'll let it alone."

"I don't mind running the risk," said he.

"But I do," says I; "and since I always let well enough alone, and I have had just about glory enough for one day, let us all go to the bar and liquor."

This called forth a loud laugh at the thimble conjurer's expense; and he tried hard to induce me to take just one chance more, but he mought just as well have sung psalms to a dead horse, for my mind was made up; and I told him, that I looked upon gambling as about the dirtiest way that a man could adopt to get through this dirty world; and that I would never bet any thing beyond a quart of whisky upon a rifle shot, which I considered a legal bet, and gentlemanly and rational amusement. "But all this cackling," says I, "makes me very thirsty, so let us adjourn to the bar and liquor."

He gathered up his thimbles, and the whole company followed us to the bar, laughing heartily at the conjurer; for, as he had won some of their money, they were sort of delighted to see him beaten with his own cudgel. He tried to laugh too, but his laugh wasn't at all pleasant, and rather forced. The barkeeper placed a big-bellied bottle before us; and after mixing our liquor, I was called on for a toast, by one of the company, a chap just

about as rough hewn as if he had been cut out of a gum log with a broad axe, and sent into the market without even being smoothed off with a jack plane, —one of them chaps who, in their journey through life, are always ready for a fight or a frolic, and don't care the toss of a copper which.

“Well, gentlemen,” says I, “being called upon for a toast, and being in a slave-holding state, in order to avoid giving offence, and running the risk of being Lynched, it may be necessary to premise that I am neither an abolitionist nor a colonizationist, but simply Colonel Crockett, of Tennessee, now bound for Texas.” When they heard my name they gave three cheers for Colonel Crockett; and silence being restored, I continued, “Now, gentlemen, I will offer you a toast, hoping, after what I have stated, that it will give offence to no one present; but should I be mistaken, I must imitate the ‘old Roman,’ and take the responsibility. I offer, gentlemen, The abolition of slavery: Let the work first begin in the two houses of Congress. There are no slaves in the country more servile than the party slaves in Congress. The wink or the nod of their masters is all sufficient for the accomplishment of the most dirty work.”

They drank the toast in a style that satisfied me, that the Little Magician might as well go to a pig-

sty for wool, as to beat round in that part for voters; they were all either for Judge White or Old Tippecanoe. The thimble conjurer having asked the barkeeper how much was to pay, was told there were sixteen smallers, which amounted to one dollar. He was about to lay down the blunt, but not in Benton's metallic currency, which I find has already become as shy as honesty with an office holder, but he planked down one of Biddle's notes, when I interfered, and told him that the barkeeper had made a mistake.

"How so?" demanded the barkeeper.

"How much do you charge," says I, "when you retail your liquor?"

"A fip a glass."

"Well, then," says I, "as Thimblerig here, who belongs to the temperance society, took it in wholesale, I reckon you can afford to let him have it at half price?"

Now, as they had all noticed that the conjurer went what is called the heavy wet, they laughed outright, and we heard no more about temperance from that quarter. When we returned to the deck the blackleg set to work with his thimbles again, and bantered me to bet; but I told him that it was against my principle, and as I had already reaped glory enough for one day, I would just let well

enough alone for the present. If the "old Roman," had done the same in relation to the deposits and "the monster," we should have escaped more difficulties than all the cunning of the Little Flying Dutchman, and Dick Johnson to boot, will be able to repair. I shouldn't be astonished if the new Vice President's head should get wool gathering, before they have half unravelled the knotted and twisted thread of perplexities that the old General has spun,—in which case his charming spouse will no doubt be delighted, for then they will be all in the family way. What a handsome display they will make in the White House. No doubt the first act of Congress will be to repeal the duties on Cologne and Lavender waters, for they will be in great demand about the Palace, particularly in the dog days.

One of the passengers, hearing that I was on board of the boat, came up to me, and began to talk about the affairs of the nation, and said a good deal in favour of "the Magician," and wished to hear what I had to say against him. He talked loud, which is the way with all politicians educated in the Jackson school; and by his slang-whanging, drew a considerable crowd around us. Now, this was the very thing I wanted, as I knew I should not soon have another opportunity of making a

political speech ; he no sooner asked to hear what I had to say against his candidate, than I let him have it, strong and hot as he could take, I tell you.

“ What have I to say against Martin Van Buren ? He is an artful, cunning, intriguing, selfish, speculating lawyer, who, by holding lucrative offices for more than half his life, has contrived to amass a princely fortune, and is now seeking the presidency, principally for sordid GAIN, and to gratify the most selfish ambition. His fame is unknown to the history of our country, except as a most adroit political manager and successful office hunter. He never took up arms in defence of his country, in her days of darkness and peril. He never contributed a dollar of his surplus wealth to assist her in her hours of greatest want and weakness. OFFICE and MONEY have been the gods of his idolatry ; and at their shrines has the ardent worship of his heart been devoted, from the earliest days of his manhood to the present moment. He can lay no claim to pre-eminent services as a statesman ; nor has he ever given any evidences of superior talent, except as a political electioneerer and intriguer. As a politician he is ‘ all things to all men.’ He is for internal improvement, and against it ; for the tariff, and against it ; for the bank monopoly, and against

it; for abolition of slavery, and against it; and for any thing else, and against any thing else; just as he can best promote his popularity and subserve his own private interest. He is so totally destitute of moral courage, that he never dares to give an opinion upon any important question until he first finds out whether it will be popular, or not. He is celebrated as the 'Little Non Committal Magician,' because he enlists on no side of any question until he discovers which is the strongest party; and then always moves in so cautious, sly, and secret a manner, that he can change sides at any time, as easily as a juggler or a magician can play off his arts of legerdemain.

"Who is Martin Van Buren? He is the candidate of the office holders and office expectants, who nominated him for the presidency, at a convention assembled in the city of Baltimore, in May last. The first account we have of his political life is while he was a member of the Senate of New York, at the time when Mr. Clinton was nominated as the federal candidate for the presidency, in opposition to Mr. Madison. The support he then gave Mr. Clinton afforded abundant evidence of that spirit of opposition to the institutions of his country, which was prominently developed in the conduct of those with whom he was united. Shortly

after the success of Mr. Madison, and during the prosecution of the war, Rufus King, of New York, (for whom Mr. Van Buren voted,) was elected to the Senate of the United States, avowedly opposed to the administration. Upon his entrance into that body, instead of devoting his energies to maintain the war, he commenced a tirade of abuse against the administration for having attempted relief to the oppressed seamen of our gallant navy, who had been compelled by British violence to arm themselves against their country, their firesides, and their friends. Thus Martin Van Buren countenanced, by his vote in the Senate of New York, an opposition to that war, which, a second time, convinced Great Britain that Americans could not be awed into bondage and subjection.

“Subsequent to this time Mr. Van Buren became himself a member of the United States Senate, and, while there, *opposed* every proposition to improve the west or to add to her numerical strength.

“He voted *against* the continuance of the national road through Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, and *against* appropriations for its preservation.

“He voted *against* the graduation of the price of the public lands.

“He voted *against* ceding the refuse lands to the states in which they lie.

“He voted *against* making donations of the lands to actual settlers.

“He again voted *against* ceding the refuse lands, not worth twenty-five cents per acre, to the new states for purposes of education and internal improvement.

“He voted *against* the bill providing ‘settlement and pre-emption rights’ to those who had assisted in opening and improving the western country, and thus deprived many an honest poor man of a home.

“He voted *against* donations of land to Ohio, to prosecute the Miami Canal; and, although a member of the Senate, he was not present when the vote was taken upon the engrossment of the bill giving land to Indiana for her Wabash and Erie Canal, and was known to have opposed it in all its stages.

“He voted *in favour* of erecting toll gates on the national road; thus demanding a tribute from the west for the right to pass upon her own highways, constructed out of her own money—a thing never heard of before.

“After his term of service had expired in the Senate, he was elected Governor of New York, by a plurality of votes. He was afterward sent to England as minister plenipotentiary, and upon his

return was elected Vice President of the United States, which office he now holds, and from which the office holders are seeking to transfer him to the presidency."

My speech was received with great applause, and the politician, finding that I was better acquainted with his candidate than he was himself, for I wrote his life, shut his fly trap, and turned on his heel without saying a word. He found that he had barked up the wrong tree. I afterward learnt that he was a mail contractor in those parts, and that he also had large dealings in the Land office, and therefore thought it necessary to chime in with his penny whistle, in the universal chorus. There's a large band of the same description, but I'm thinking Uncle Sam will some day find out that he has paid too much for the piper.

## CHAPTER VII.

AFTER my speech, and setting my face against gambling, poor Thimblorig was obliged to break off conjuring for want of customers, and call it half a day. He came and entered into conversation with me, and I found him a good-natured intelligent fellow, with a keen eye for the main chance. He belonged to that numerous class, that it is perfectly safe to trust as far as a tailor can sling a bull by the tail—but no farther. He told me that he had been brought up a gentleman; that is to say, he was not instructed in any useful pursuit by which he could obtain a livelihood, so that when he found he had to depend upon himself for the necessaries of life, he began to suspect, that dame nature would have conferred a particular favour if she had consigned him to the care of any one else. She had made a very injudicious choice when she selected him to sustain the dignity of a gentleman.

The first bright idea that occurred to him as a speedy means of bettering his fortune, would be to

marry an heiress. Accordingly he looked about himself pretty sharp, and after glancing from one fair object to another, finally his hawk's eye rested upon the young and pretty daughter of a wealthy planter. Thimblorig run his brazen face with his tailor for a new suit, for he abounded more in that metallic currency than he did in either Benton's mint drops or in Biddle's notes ; and having the gentility of his outward Adam thus endorsed by his tailor—an important endorsement, by-the-way, as times go—he managed to obtain an introduction to the planter's daughter.

Our worthy had the principle of going ahead strongly developed. He was possessed of considerable address, and had brass enough in his face to make a wash-kettle; and having once got access to the planter's house, it was no easy matter to dislodge him. In this he resembled those politicians who commence life as office holders; they will hang on tooth and nail, and even when death shakes them off, you'll find a commission of some kind crumpled up in their clenched fingers. Little Van appears to belong to this class—there's no beating his snout from the public crib. He'll feed there while there's a grain of corn left, and even then, from long habit, he'll set to work and gnaw at the manger.

Thimblorig got the blind side of the planter, and every thing to outward appearances went on swimmingly. Our worthy boasted to his cronies that the business was settled, and that in a few weeks he should occupy the elevated station in society that nature had designed him to adorn. He swelled like the frog in the fable, or rather like Johnson's wife, of Kentucky, when the idea occurred to her of figuring away at Washington. But there's many a slip 'twixt the cup and the lip, says the proverb, and suddenly Thimblorig discontinued his visits at the planter's house. His friends inquired of him the meaning of this abrupt termination of his devotions.

"I have been treated with disrespect," replied the worthy, indignantly.

"Disrespect! in what way?"

"My visits, it seems, are not altogether agreeable."

"But how have you ascertained that?"

"I received a hint to that effect; and I can take a hint as soon as another."

"A hint!—and have you allowed a hint to drive you from the pursuit? For shame. Go back again."

"No, no, never! a hint is sufficient for a man of my gentlemanly feelings. I asked the old man for his daughter."

"Well, what followed? what did he say?"

“Didn’t say a word.”

“Silence gives consent all the world over.”

“So I thought. I then told him to fix the day.”

“Well, what then?”

“Why, then he kicked me down stairs, and ordered his slaves to pump upon me. That’s hint enough for me, that my visits are not properly appreciated; and blast my old shoes if I condescend to renew the acquaintance, or notice them in any way until they send for me.”

As Thimblérig’s new coat became rather too seedy to play the part of a gentleman much longer in real life, he determined to sustain that character upon the stage, and accordingly joined a company of players. He began, according to custom, at the top of the ladder, and was regularly hissed and pelted through every gradation until he found himself at the lowest rowel. “This,” said he, “was a dreadful check to proud ambition;” but he consoled himself with the idea of peace and quiet in his present obscure walk; and though he had no prospect of being elated by the applause of admiring multitudes, he no longer trod the scene of mimic glory in constant dread of becoming a target for rotten eggs and oranges.—“And there was much in that,” said Thimblérig. But this calm could not continue for ever.

The manager, who, like all managers who pay salaries regularly, was as absolute behind the scenes as the "old Roman" is in the White House, had fixed upon getting up an eastern spectacle, called the Cataract of the Ganges. He intended to introduce a fine procession, in which an elephant was to be the principal feature. Here a difficulty occurred. What was to be done for an elephant? Alligators were plenty in those parts, but an elephant was not to be had for love or money. But an alligator would not answer the purpose, so he determined to make a pasteboard elephant as large as life, and twice as natural. The next difficulty was to find members of the company of suitable dimensions to perform the several members of the pasteboard star. The manager cast his eye upon the long gaunt figure of the unfortunate Thimblorig, and cast him for the hinder legs, the rump, and part of the back of the elephant. The poor player expostulated, and the manager replied, that he would appear as a star on the occasion, and would no doubt receive more applause than he had during his whole career. "But I shall not be seen," said the player. "All the better," replied the manager, "as in that case you will have nothing to apprehend from eggs and oranges."

Thimblorig, finding that mild expostulation avail-

ed nothing, swore that he would not study the part, and accordingly threw it up in dignified disgust. He said that it was an outrage upon the feelings of the proud representative of Shakspeare's heroes, to be compelled to play pantomime in the hinder parts of the noblest animal that ever trod the stage. If it had been the fore quarters of the elephant, it might possibly have been made a speaking part; at any rate he might have snorted through the trunk, if nothing more; but from the position he was to occupy, damned the word could he utter, or even roar with propriety. He therefore positively refused to act, as he considered it an insult to his reputation to tread the stage in such a character; and he looked upon the whole affair as a profanation of the legitimate drama. The result was, our worthy was discharged from the company, and compelled to commence hoeing another row.

He drifted to New Orleans, and hired himself as marker to a gambling table. Here he remained but a few months, for his ideas of arithmetic differed widely from those of his employer, and accordingly they had some difficulty in balancing the cash account; for when his employer, in adding up the receipts, made it nought and carry two, Thimblorig insisted that it should be nought and carry one; and in order to prove that he was correct,

he carried himself off, and left nothing behind him.

He now commenced professional blackleg on his own hook, and took up his quarters in Natchez under the hill. Here he remained, doing business in a small way, until Judge Lynch commenced his practice in that quarter, and made the place too hot for his comfort. He shifted his habitation, but not having sufficient capital to go the big figure, he practised the game of thimblorig until he acquired considerable skill, and then commenced passing up and down the river in the steamboats; and managed, by close attention to business, to pick up a decent livelihood in the small way, from such as had more pence in their pockets than sense in their noddles.

I found Thimblorig to be a pleasant talkative fellow. He communicated the foregoing facts with as much indifference as if there had been nothing disgraceful in his career; and at times he would chuckle with an air of triumph at the adroitness he had displayed in some of the knavish tricks he had practised. He looked upon this world as one vast stage, crowded with empirics and jugglers; and that he who could practise his deceptions with the greatest skill was entitled to the greatest applause.

I asked him to give me an account of Natchez and his adventures there, and I would put it in the

book I intended to write, when he gave me the following, which betrays that his feelings were still somewhat irritated at being obliged to give them leg bail when Judge Lynch made his appearance. I give it in his own words.

“Natchez is a land of fevers, alligators, niggers, and cotton bales : where the sun shines with force sufficient to melt the diamond, and the word ice is expunged from the dictionary, for its definition cannot be comprehended by the natives : where to refuse grog before breakfast would degrade you below the brute creation ; and where a good dinner is looked upon as an angel’s visit, and voted a miracle : where the evergreen and majestic magnolia tree, with its superb flower, unknown to the northern climes, and its fragrance unsurpassed, calls forth the admiration of every beholder ; and the dark moss hangs in festoons from the forest trees like the drapery of a funeral pall : where bears, the size of young jackasses, are fondled in lieu of pet dogs ; and knives, the length of a barber’s pole, usurp the place of toothpicks : where the filth of the town is carried off by buzzards, and the inhabitants are carried off by fevers : where nigger women are knocked down by the auctioneer, and knocked up by the purchaser : where the poorest slave has plenty of yellow boys, but not of Benton’s

mintage ; and indeed the shades of colour are so varied and mixed, that a nigger is frequently seen black and blue at the same time. And such is Natchez.

“ The town is divided into two parts, as distinct in character as they are in appearance. Natchez on the hill, situated upon a high bluff overlooking the Mississippi, is a pretty little town with streets regularly laid out, and ornamented with divers handsome public buildings. Natchez under the hill,—where, O ! where, shall I find words suitable to describe the peculiarities of that unholy spot ? ’Tis, in fact, the jumping off place. Satan looks on it with glee, and chuckles as he beholds the orgies of his votaries. The buildings are for the most part brothels, taverns, or gambling houses, and frequently the whole three may be found under the same roof. Obscene songs are sung at the top of the voice in all quarters. I have repeatedly seen the strumpets tear a man’s clothes from his back, and leave his body beautified with all the colours of the rainbow.

“ One of the most popular tricks is called the ‘ Spanish burial.’ When a greenhorn makes his appearance among them, one who is in the plot announces the death of a resident, and that all strangers must subscribe to the custom of the place

upon such an occasion. They forthwith arrange a procession; each person, as he passes the departed, kneels down and pretends to kiss the treacherous corpse. When the unsophisticated attempts this ceremony the dead man clinches him, and the mourners beat the fellow so entrapped until he consents to treat all hands; but should he be peniless, his life will be endangered by the severity of the castigation. And such is Natchez under the hill.

“An odd affair occurred while I was last there,” continued Thimblorig. “A steamboat stopped at the landing, and one of the hands went ashore under the hill to purchase provisions, and the adroit citizens of that delectable retreat contrived to rob him of all his money. The captain of the boat, a determined fellow, went ashore in the hope of persuading them to refund,—but that cock wouldn’t fight. Without farther ceremony, assisted by his crew and passengers, some three or four hundred in number, he made fast an immense cable to the frame tenement where the theft had been perpetrated, and allowed fifteen minutes for the money to be forthcoming; vowing, if it was not produced within that time, to put steam to his boat, and drag the house into the river. The money was instantly produced.

“I witnessed a sight during my stay there,” continued the thimble conjurer, “that almost froze my blood with horror, and will serve as a specimen of the customs of the far south. A planter, of the name of Foster, connected with the best families of the state, unprovoked, in cold blood, murdered his young and beautiful wife, a few months after marriage. He beat her deliberately to death in a walk adjoining his dwelling, carried the body to the hut of one of his slaves, washed the dirt from her person, and, assisted by his negroes, buried her upon his plantation. Suspicion was awakened, the body disinterred, and the villain’s guilt established. He fled, was overtaken, and secured in prison. His trial was, by some device of the law, delayed until the third term of the court. At length it came on, and so clear and indisputable was the evidence, that not a doubt was entertained of the result ; when, by an oversight on the part of the sheriff, who neglected swearing into office his deputy who summoned the jurors, the trial was abruptly discontinued, and all proceedings against Foster were suspended, or rather ended.

“There exists, throughout the extreme south, bodies of men who style themselves Lynchers. When an individual escapes punishment by some technicality of the law, or perpetrates an offence

not recognised in courts of justice, they seize him, and inflict such chastisement as they conceive adequate to the offence. They usually act at night, and disguise their persons. This society at Natchez embraces all the lawyers, physicians, and principal merchants of the place. Foster, whom all good men loathed as a monster unfit to live, was called into court, and formally dismissed. But the Lynchers were at hand. The moment he stepped from the court-house he was knocked down, his arms bound behind him, his eyes bandaged, and in this condition was marched to the rear of the town, where a deep ravine afforded a fit place for his punishment. His clothes were torn from his back, his head partially scalped, they next bound him to a tree ; each Lyncher was supplied with a cowskin, and they took turns at the flogging until the flesh hung in ribands from his body. A quantity of heated tar was then poured over his head, and made to cover every part of his person ; they finally showered a sack of feathers on him, and in this horrid guise, with no other apparel than a miserable pair of breeches, with a drummer at his heels, he was paraded through the principal streets at midday. No disguise was assumed by the Lynchers ; the very lawyers employed upon his trial took part in his punishment.

“Owing to long confinement his gait had become cramped, and his movements were very faltering. By the time the procession reached the most public part of the town, Foster fell down from exhaustion, and was allowed to lie there for a time, without exciting the sympathies of any one,—an object of universal detestation. The blood oozing from his stripes had become mixed with the feathers and tar, and rendered his aspect still more horrible and loathsome. Finding him unable to proceed further, a common dray was brought, and with his back to the horse's tail, the drummer standing over him playing the rogue's march, he was reconducted to prison, the only place at which he would be received.

“A guard was placed outside of the jail to give notice to the body of Lynchers when Foster might attempt to escape, for they had determined on branding him on the forehead and cutting his ears off. At two o'clock in the morning of the second subsequent day, two horsemen with a led horse stopped at the prison, and Foster was with difficulty placed astride. The Lynchers wished to secure him ; he put spurs to his beast, and passed them. As he rode by they fired at him ; a ball struck his hat, which was thrown to the ground, and he escaped ; but if ever found within the limits

of the state, will be shot down as if a price was set on his head.

“Sights of this kind,” continued Thimblorig, “are by no means unfrequent. I once saw a gambler, a sort of friend of mine, by-the-way, detected cheating at faro, at a time when the bets were running pretty high. They flogged him almost to death, added the tar and feathers, and placed him aboard a dug-out, a sort of canoe, at twelve at night; and with no other instruments of navigation than a bottle of whisky and a paddle, set him adrift in the Mississippi. He has never been heard of since, and the presumption is, that he either died of his wounds or was run down in the night by a steamer. And this is what we call Lynching in Natchez.”

Thimblorig had also been at Vicksburg in his time, and entertained as little liking for that place as he did for Natchez. He had luckily made his escape a short time before the recent clearing-out of the slight-of-hand gentry; and he reckoned some time would elapse before he would pay them another visit. He said they must become more civilized first. All the time he was talking to me he was seated on a chest, and playing mechanically with his pea and thimbles, as if he was afraid that he would lose the slight unless he kept his hand

in constant practice. Nothing of any consequence occurred in our passage down the river, and I arrived at Natchitoches in perfect health, and in good spirits.

## CHAPTER VIII.

NATCHITOCHES is a post town and seat of justice for the parish of Natchitoches, Louisiana, and is situated on the right bank of the Red river. The houses are chiefly contained in one street, running parallel to the river ; and the population I should reckon at about eight hundred. The soil in this parish is generally sterile, and covered with pine timber, except near the margin of Red river, where the greatest part of the inhabitants are settled on the alluvial banks. Some other, though comparatively small, tracts of productive soil skirt the streams. An extensive body of low ground, subject to annual submersion, extends along the Red river, which, it is said, will produce forty bushels of frogs to the acre, and alligators enough to fence it.

I stayed two days at Natchitoches, during which time I procured a horse to carry me across Texas to the seat of war. Thimblérig remained with me, and I found his conversation very amusing ; for he is possessed of humour and observation, and has seen something of the world. Between whiles he

would amuse himself with his thimbles, to which he appeared greatly attached, and occasionally he would pick up a few shillings from the tavern loungers. He no longer asked me to play with him, for he felt somewhat ashamed to do so, and he knew it would be no go.

I took him to task in a friendly manner, and tried to shame him out of his evil practices. I told him that it was a burlesque on human nature, that an able bodied man, possessed of his full share of good sense, should voluntarily debase himself, and be indebted for subsistence to such pitiful artifice.

"But what's to be done, Colonel?" says he. "I'm in the slough of despond, up to the very chin. A miry and slippery path to travel."

"Then hold your head up," says I, "before the slough reaches your lips."

"But what's the use?" says he; "it's utterly impossible for me to wade through; and even if I could, I should be in such a dirty plight, that it would defy all the waters in the Mississippi to wash me clean again. No," he added, in a desponding tone, "I should be like a live eel in a frying pan, Colonel, sort of out of my element, if I attempted to live like an honest man at this time o' day."

"That I deny. It is never too late to become honest," said I. "But even admit what you say

to be true—that you cannot live like an honest man, you have at least the next best thing in your power, and no one can say nay to it.”

“And what is that?”

“Die like a brave one. And I know not whether, in the eyes of the world, a brilliant death is not preferred to an obscure life of rectitude. Most men are remembered as they died, and not as they lived. We gaze with admiration upon the glories of the setting sun, yet scarcely bestow a passing glance upon its noonday splendour.”

“You are right; but how is this to be done?”

“Accompany me to Texas. Cut aloof from your degrading habits and associates here, and in fighting for their freedom, regain your own.”

He started from the table, and hastily gathering up the thimbles with which he had been playing all the time I was talking to him, he thrust them into his pocket, and after striding two or three times across the room, suddenly stopped, his leaden eye kindled, and grasping me by the hand violently, he exclaimed with an oath, “By —— I’ll be a man again. Live honestly, or die bravely. I go with you to Texas.”

I said what I could to confirm him in his resolution, and finding that the idea had taken fast hold of his mind, I asked him to liquor, which he did

not decline, notwithstanding the temperance habits that he boasted of ; we then took a walk on the banks of the river.

The evening preceding my departure from Natchitoches, a gentleman, with a good horse and a light wagon, drove up to the tavern where I lodged. He was accompanied by a lady who carried an infant in her arms. As they alighted I recognised the gentleman to be the politician at whom I had discharged my last political speech, on board the boat coming down the Red river. We had let him out in our passage down, as he said he had some business to transact some distance above Natchitoches. He entered the tavern, and seemed to be rather shy of me, so I let him go, as I had no idea of firing two shots at such small game.

The gentleman had a private room, and called for supper ; but the lady, who used every precaution to keep the child concealed from the view of any one, refused to eat supper, saying she was unwell. However, the gentleman made a hearty meal, and excused the woman, saying " My wife is subject to a pain in the stomach, which has deprived her of her food." Soon after supper the gentleman desired a bed to be prepared, which being done, they immediately retired to rest.

About an hour before daybreak, next morning,

the repose of the whole inn was disturbed by the screams of the child. This continued for some time, and at length the landlady got up to see what it was ailed the noisy bantling. She entered the chamber without a light, and discovered the gentleman seated in the bed alone, rocking the infant in his arms, and endeavouring to quiet it by saying, "Hush, my dear—mamma will soon return again." However the child still squalled on, and the long absence of the mother rendered it necessary that something should be done to quiet it.

The landlady proposed taking up the child, to see what was the reason of its incessant cries. She approached the bed, and requested the man to give her the infant, and tell her whether it was a son or a daughter; but this question redoubled his consternation, for he was entirely ignorant which sex the child belonged to; however, with some difficulty, he made the discovery, and informed the landlady it was a son.

She immediately called for a light, which was no sooner brought than the landlady began to unfold the wrapper from the child, and exclaim, "O, what a fine big son you have got!" But on a more minute examination they found, to their great astonishment, and to the mortification and vexation of the supposed father, that the child was a mulatto.

The wretched man, having no excuse to offer, immediately divulged the whole matter without reserve. He stated, that he had fell in with her on the road to Natchitoches the day before, and had offered her a seat in his vehicle. Soon perceiving that she possessed an uncommon degree of assurance, induced him to propose that they should pass as man and wife, to which she readily assented. No doubt she had left her own home in order to rid herself of the stigma which she had brought on herself by her lewd conduct; and at midnight she had eloped from the bed, leaving the infant to the paternal care of her pretended husband.

Immediate search was made for the mother of the child, but in vain. And, as the song says, "Single misfortunes ne'er come alone," to his great consternation and grief, she had taken his horse, and left the poor politician destitute of every thing except a fine *yellow boy*, but of a widely different description from those which Benton put in circulation.

By this time all the lodgers in the tavern had got up and dressed themselves, from curiosity to know the occasion of the disturbance. I descended to the street in front of the inn. The stars were faintly glimmering in the heavens, and the first beams of the morning sun were struggling through

the dim clouds that skirted the eastern horizon. I thought myself alone in the street, when the hush of morning was suddenly broken by a clear, joyful, and musical voice, which sang, as near as I could catch it, the following scrap of a song :

“O, what is the time of the merry round year  
That is fittest and sweetest for love ?  
Ere sucks the bee, ere buds the tree ;  
And primroses by two, by three,  
Faintly shine in the path of the lonely deer,  
Like the few stars of twilight above.”

I turned towards the spot whence the sounds proceeded, and discovered a tall figure leaning against the sign post. His eyes were fixed on the streaks of light in the east ; his mind was absorbed, and he was clearly unconscious of any one being near him. He continued his song in so full and clear a tone, that the street re-echoed—

“When the blackbird and thrush, at early dawn,  
Prelude from leafy spray—  
Amid dewy scents and blandishments,  
Like a choir attuning their instruments,  
Ere the curtain of nature aside be drawn  
For the concert the livelong day.”

I now drew nigh enough to see him distinctly. He was a young man, not more than twenty-two. His figure was light and graceful, at the same time that it indicated strength and activity. He was dressed in a hunting shirt, which was made with

uncommon neatness, and ornamented tastily with fringe. He held a highly finished rifle in his right hand, and a hunting pouch, covered with Indian ornaments, was slung across his shoulders. His clean shirt collar was open, secured only by a black riband around his neck. His boots were polished, without a soil upon them ; and on his head was a neat fur cap, tossed on in a manner which said, "I don't care a d——n," just as plainly as any cap could speak it. I thought it must be some popin-jay of a lark, until I took a look at his countenance. It was handsome, bright, and manly. There was no mistake in that face. From the eyes down to his breast he was sunburnt as dark as mahogany, while the upper part of his high forehead was as white and polished as marble. Thick clusters of black hair curled from under his cap. I passed on, unperceived, and he continued his song :—

“In the green spring-tide, all tender and bright,  
When the sun sheds a kindlier gleam  
O'er velvet bank, that sweet flowers prank,  
That have fresh dews and sunbeams drank—  
Softest, and most chaste, as enchanted light  
In the visions of maiden's dream.”

The poor politician, whose misfortunes had roused up the inmates of the tavern at such an unusual hour, now returned from the stable, where he had been in search of his horse and his woman ; but

they were both among the missing. He held a whip in his hand, and about a dozen men followed him, some from curiosity to see the result of the adventure, and others from better feelings. As he drew nigh to the front of the tavern, chafing with mortification at both his shame and his loss, his rage increasing to a flame as his windy exclamations became louder and louder, he chanced to espy the fantastic personage I have just described, still leaning against the sign post, carelessly humming his song, but in a lower tone, as he perceived he was not alone.

The irritated politician no sooner saw the stranger against the sign post, whose self satisfied air was in striking contrast with the excited feelings of the other, than he paused for a moment, appeared to recognise him; then coming up in a blustering manner, and assuming a threatening attitude, he exclaimed fiercely—

“You’re an infernal scoundrel—do you hear? an infernal scoundrel, sir!”

“I do, but it’s news to me,” replied the other, quietly.

“News, you scoundrel! do you call it news?”

“Entirely so.”

“You needn’t think to carry it off so quietly. I say, you’re an infernal scoundrel, and I’ll prove it.”

"I beg you will not; I shouldn't like to be proved a scoundrel," replied the other, smiling with most provoking indifference.

"No, I dare say you wouldn't. But answer me directly—did you, or did you not say, in presence of certain ladies of my acquaintance, that I was a mere——"

"Calf?—O, no, sir; the truth is not to be spoken at all times."

"The truth! Do you presume to call me a calf, sir?"

"O, no, sir; I call you——nothing," replied the stranger, just as cool and as pleasant as a morning in spring.

"It's well you do; for if you had presumed to call me ——"

"A man, I should have been grossly mistaken."

"Do you mean to say, I am not a man, sir?"

"That depends on circumstances."

"What circumstances?" demanded the other, fiercely.

"If I should be called as an evidence in a court of justice, I should be bound to speak the truth."

"And you would say, I was not a man, hey?—Do you see this cowskin?"

"Yes; and I have seen it with surprise ever since you came up," replied the stranger, calmly,

at the same time handing me his rifle, to take care of.

“With surprise!” exclaimed the politician who saw that his antagonist had voluntarily disarmed himself;—“Why, did you suppose I was such a coward, that I dare not use the article when I thought it was demanded?”

“Shall I tell you what I thought?”

“Do—if you dare.”

“I thought to myself, what use has a calf for a cowskin?” He turned to me, and said, “I had forgot, Colonel—shall I trouble you to take care of this also?” Saying which he drew a long hunting knife from his belt, and placed it in my hand. He then resumed his careless attitude against the sign post.

“You distinctly call me a calf, then?”

“If you insist upon it, you may.”

“You hear, gentlemen,” said he, speaking to the bystanders—“Do you hear the insult?—What shall I do with the scoundrel?”

“Dress him, dress him!” exclaimed twenty voices, with shouts and laughter.

“That I’ll do at once!” Then turning to the stranger, he cried out fiercely, “Come one step this way, you rascal, and I’ll flog you within an inch of your life.”

"I've no occasion."

"You're a coward."

"Not on your word."

"I'll prove it by flogging you out of your skin."

"I doubt it."

"I am a liar then—am I?"

"Just as you please."

"Do you hear that, gentlemen?"

"Ay, we hear," was the unanimous response.  
"You can't avoid dressing him now."

"O, heavens! grant me patience! I shall fly out of my skin."

"It will be so much the better for your pocket; calf skins are in good demand."

"I shall burst."

"Not here in the street, I beg of you. It would be disgusting."

"Gentlemen, can I any longer avoid flogging him?"

"Not if you are able," was the reply. "Go at him."

Thus provoked, thus stirred up, and enraged, the fierce politician went like lightning at his provoking antagonist. But before he could strike a blow he found himself disarmed of his cowskin, and lying on his back under the spout of a neighbour-

ing pump, whither the young man had carried him to cool his rage ; and before he could recover from his astonishment at such unexpected handling, he was as wet as a thrice drowned rat, from the cataracts of water which his laughing antagonist had liberally pumped upon him. His courage, by this time, had fairly oozed out ; and he declared, as he arose and went dripping away from the pump, that he would never again trust to quiet appearances ; and that the devil himself might, the next time, undertake to cowskin such a cucumber blooded scoundrel for him. The bystanders laughed heartily. The politician now went in pursuit of his horse and his woman, taking his yellow boy with him ; and the landlady declared that he richly deserved what he had got, even if he had been guilty of no other offence than the dirty imposition he had practised on her.

The stranger now came to me, and calling me by name, asked for his rifle and knife, which I returned to him. I expressed some astonishment at being known to him, and he said that he had heard of my being in the village, and had sought me out for the purpose of accompanying me to Texas. He told me that he was a bee hunter ; that he had travelled pretty much over that country in the way of his business, and that I would find him of

considerable use in navigating through the ocean of prairies.

He told me that honey trees are abundant in Texas, and that honey of an excellent quality, and in any quantity, may be obtained from them. There are persons who have a peculiar tact in coursing the bee, and thus discovering their deposits of the luscious food. This employment is not a mere pastime, but is profitable. The wax alone, thus obtained, is a valuable article of commerce in Mexico, and commands a high price. It is much used in churches, where some of the candles made use of are as long as a man's arm. It often happens that the hunters throw away the honey, and save only the wax.

"It is a curious fact," said the bee hunter, "in the natural history of the bee, that it is never found in a wild country, but always precedes civilization, forming a kind of advance guard between the white man and the savage. The Indians, at least, are perfectly convinced of this fact, for it is a common remark among them, when they observe these insects—'there come the white men.'"

Thimblorig came up, and the bee hunter spoke to him, calling him by name, for he had met with him in New Orleans. I told him that the conjurer had determined to accompany me also, at which

he seemed well pleased, and encouraged the poor fellow to adhere to that resolution; for he would be a man among men in Texas, and no one would be very particular in inquiring about his fortunes in the states. If once there, he might boldly stand up and feed out of the same rack with the best.

I asked him what was his cause of quarrel with the politician, and he told me that he had met him a few weeks before down at Baton Rouge, where the fellow was going the big figure; and that he had exposed him to some ladies, which completely cut his comb, and he took wing; that this was the first time they had met since, and being determined to have his revenge, he had attacked him without first calculating consequences.

With the assistance of our new friend, who was a generous, pleasant fellow, we procured a horse and rifle for Thimblorig; and we started for Nacogdoches, which is about one hundred and twenty miles west of Natchitoches, under the guidance of the bee hunter.

## CHAPTER IX.

OUR route, which lay along what is called the old Spanish road, I found to be much better defined on the map, than upon the face of the country. We had, in many instances, no other guide to the path than the blazes on the trees. The bee hunter was a cheerful communicative companion, and by his pleasant conversation rendered our journey any thing but fatiguing. He knew all about the country; had undergone a variety of adventure, and described what he had witnessed with such freshness, and so graphically, that if I could only remember one-half he told me about the droves of wild horses, buffalo, various birds, beautiful scenery of the wide spreading and fertile prairies, and his adventures with the roving tribes of Indians, I should fill my book, I am sure, much more agreeably than I shall be able to do on my own hook. When he'd get tired of talking, he'd commence singing, and his list of songs seemed to be as long as a rainy Sunday. He had a fine clear voice, and though I have heard the Woods sing at the Park

Theatre, in New York, I must give the Bee hunter the preference over all I have ever heard, except my friend Jim Crow, who, it must be allowed, is a real steamboat at the business, and goes a leetle ahead of any thing that will come after him.

He gave me, among other matters, the following account of a rencounter between one of the early settlers and the Indians :—

“Andrew Tumlinson,” said he, “belonged to a family which the colonists of De Witt will long remember as one of their chief stays in the dangers of settling those wilds, trod only by the children of the forest. This indefatigable champion of revenge for his father’s death, who had fallen some years before by Indian treachery, had vowed never to rest until he had received satisfaction. In order the better to accomplish his end, he was one of the foremost, if possible, in every skirmish with the Indians; and that he might be enabled to do so without restraint, he placed his wife under the care of his brother-in-law, shouldered his rifle, and headed a ranging party, who were resolved to secure peace to those who followed them, though purchased by their own death.

“He had been frequently victorious, in the most desperate fights, where the odds were greatly against him, and at last fell a victim to his own

imprudence. A Caddo had been seized as a spy, and threatened with death, in order to compel him to deliver up his knife. The fellow never moved a muscle, or even winked, as he beheld the rifles pointed at him. He had been found lurking in the yard attached to the house of a solitary and unprotected family, and he knew that the whites were exasperated at his tribe for injuries that they had committed. When discovered he was accompanied by his little son.

“Tumlinson spoke to him in Spanish, to learn what had brought him there at such a time, but instead of giving any satisfaction, he sprung to his feet, from the log where he was seated, at the same time seizing his rifle which was lying beside him. The owner of the house, with whom the Indian had been on a friendly footing, expostulated with him, and got him to surrender the gun, telling him that the whites only wished to be satisfied of his friendly intentions, and had no desire to injure one who might be useful in conciliating his red brethren.

“He appeared to acquiesce, and wrapping his blanket more closely around his body, moved on in silence ahead of the whites. Tumlinson approached him, and though the rest of the party privately cautioned him not to go too nigh, as they

believed the Indian had a knife under his blanket, he disregarded the warning, trusting for safety to his rifle and dexterity.

“He continued to interrogate the captive until he awakened his suspicions that his life was not safe. The Indian returned no answer but a short caustic laugh at the end of every question. Tumlinson at length beheld his countenance become more savage, which was followed by a sudden movement of the right hand beneath his blanket. He fired, and the next instant the Caddo’s knife was in his heart, for the savage sprung with the quickness of the wild cat upon his prey. The rifle ball had passed through the Indian’s body, yet his victim appeared to be no more in his grasp than a sparrow in the talons of an eagle, for he was a man of gigantic frame, and he knew that not only his own life, but that of his little son, would be taken on the spot. He called to the boy to fly, while he continued to plunge his knife into the bosom of his prostrate victim. The rest of the party levelled their rifles, and the victor shouted, with an air of triumph,—‘Do your worst. I have sacrificed another pale face to the spirits of my fathers.’ They fired, and he fell dead across the body of the unfortunate Tumlinson. The poor boy fell also. He had sprung forward some distance, when

his father was shot, and was running in a zig-zag manner, taught them in their youth, to avoid the balls of their enemies, by rendering it difficult for the best marksman to draw a sight upon them."

In order to afford me some idea of the state of society in the more thickly settled parts of Texas, the Bee hunter told me that he had set down to the breakfast table, one morning at an inn, at San Felipe, and among the small party around the board were eleven who had fled from the states charged with having committed murder. So accustomed are the inhabitants to the appearance of fugitives from justice that they are particularly careful to make inquiries of the characters of newcomers, and generally obtain early and circumstantial information concerning strangers. "Indeed," said he, "it is very common to hear the inquiry made, 'What did he do that made him leave home?' or, 'What have you come to Texas for?' intimating almost an assurance of one's being a criminal. Notwithstanding this state of things, however, the good of the public, and of each individual, is so evidently dependent on the public morals, that all appear ready to discountenance and punish crime. Even men who have been expatriated by fear of justice, are here among the last who would be disposed to shield a culprit guilty of a crime against life or

property." Thimblorig was delighted at this favourable account of the state of society, and said that it would be the very place for him to flourish in ; he liked their liberal way of thinking, for it did not at all tally with his ideas of natural law, that a man who happened to give offence to the straight laced rules of action established by a set of people contracted in their notions, should be hunted out of all society, even though willing to conform to their regulations. He was lawyer enough, he said, to know that every offence should be tried on the spot where it was committed ; and if he had stolen the pennies from his grandmother's eyes in Louisiana, the people in Texas would have nothing to do with that affair, nohow they could fix it. The dejected conjurer pricked up his ears, and from that moment was as gay and cheerful as a blue bird in spring.

As we approached Nacogdoches, the first object that struck our view was a flag flying at the top of a high liberty pole. Drums were beating, and fifes playing, giving an indication, not to be misunderstood, of the spirit that had been awakened in a comparative desert. The people of the town no sooner saw us than many came out to meet us. The Bee hunter, who was known to them, introduced me ; and it seems that they had already re-

ceived the news of my intended visit, and its object, and I met with a cordial and friendly reception.

Nacogdoches is the capitol of the department of that name, and is situated about sixty miles west of the river Sabine, in a romantic dell, surrounded by woody bluffs of considerable eminence, within whose inner borders, in a semicircle embracing the town, flow the two forks of the Nana, a branch of the Naches. It is a flourishing town, containing about one thousand actual citizens, although it generally presents twice that number on account of its extensive inland trade, one-half of which is supported by the friendly Indians. The healthiness of this town yields to none in the province, except Bexar, and to none whatsoever south of the same latitude, between the Sabine and the Mississippi. There was a fort established here, by the French, as far back as the year 1717, in order to overawe the wandering tribes of red men, between their borders and the colonists of Great Britain. The soil around it is of an easy nature and well adapted to cultivation.

I passed the day at Nacogdoches in getting information from the principal patriots as to the grievances imposed upon them by the Mexican government; and I passed the time very pleasantly, but I rather reckon not quite as much so as my

friend the Bee hunter. In the evening, as I had missed him for several hours while I was attending to the affairs of the patriots, I inquired for my companion, and was directed, by the landlord, to an apartment appropriated to his family, and accordingly I pushed ahead. Before I reached the door, I heard the joyous and musical voice of the young rover singing as usual.

“I’d like to have a little farm,  
And leave such scenes as these,  
Where I could live, without a care,  
Completely at my ease.  
I’d like to have a pleasant house  
Upon my little farm,  
Airy and cool in summer time  
In winter close and warm.”

“And is there nothing else you’d like to have to make you happy, Edward?” demanded a gentle voice, which sounded even more musical in my ear than that of the Bee hunter.

“Yes, in good faith there is, my gentle Kate ; and I’ll tell you what it is,” he exclaimed, and resumed his song :—

“I’d like to have a little wife—  
I reckon I know who ;  
I’d like to have a little son—  
A little daughter too ;  
And when they’d climb upon my knee,  
I’d like a little toy  
To give my pretty little girl,  
Another for my boy.”

"O, fie, for shame of you to talk so, Edward!" exclaimed the same gentle voice.

"Well, my pretty Kate, if you'll only listen, now, I'll tell you what I wouldn't like."

"Let me hear that, by all means."

"I should not like my wife to shake  
A broomstick at my head—  
For then I might begin to think  
She did not love her Ned;  
But I should always like to see  
Her gentle as a dove;  
I should not like to have her scold—  
But be all joy and love."

"And there is not much danger, Edward, of her ever being otherwise."

"Bless your sweet lips, that I am certain of," exclaimed the Bee hunter, and I heard something that sounded marvellously like a kiss. But he resumed his song:—

"If I had these I would not ask  
For any thing beside;  
I'd be content thus smoothly through  
The tedious world to glide.  
My little wife and I would then  
No earthly troubles see—  
Surrounded by our little ones,  
How happy we would be."

I have always endeavoured to act up to the golden rule of doing as I would be done by, and as I never liked to be interrupted on such occasions,

I returned to the bar-room, where I found Thim-blerig seated on a table practising with his thimbles, his large white Vicksburg hat stuck in a most independent and impudent manner on the side of his head. About half a dozen men were looking on with amazement at his skill, but he got no bets. When he caught my eye his countenance became sort of confused, and he hastily thrust the thimbles into his pocket, saying, as he jumped from the table, "Just amusing myself a little, Colonel, to kill time, and show the natives that some things can be done as well as others.—Let us take an ideer." So we walked up to the bar, took a nip, and let the matter drop.

My horse had become lame, and I found I would not be able to proceed with him, so I concluded to sell him and get another. A gentleman offered to give me a mustang in exchange, and I gladly accepted of his kindness. The mustangs are the wild horses, that are to be seen in droves of thousands pasturing on the prairies. They are taken by means of a lazo, a long rope with a noose, which is thrown around their neck, and they are dragged to the ground with violence, and then secured. These horses, which are considerably smaller than those in the states, are very cheap, and are in such numbers, that in times of scarcity

of game the settlers and the Indians have made use of them as food. Thousands have been destroyed for this purpose.

I saw nothing of the Bee hunter until bed-time, and then I said nothing to him about what I had overheard. The next morning, as we were preparing for an early start, I went into the private apartment where my companion was, but he did not appear quite as cheerful as usual. Shortly afterward a young woman, about eighteen, entered the room. She was as healthy and blooming as the wild flowers of the prairie. My companion introduced me, she courtesied modestly, and turning to the Bee hunter, said, "Edward, I have made you a new deer skin sack since you were last here. Will you take it with you? Your old one is so soiled."

"No, no, dear Kate, I shall not have leisure to gather wax this time."

"I have not yet shown you the fine large gourd that I have slung for you. It will hold near a gallon of water." She went to a closet, and producing it, suspended it around his shoulders.

"My own kind Kate!" he exclaimed, and looked as if he would devour her with his eyes.

"Have I forgotten any thing?—Ah! yes, your

books." She ran to the closet, and brought out two small volumes.

"One is sufficient this time, Kate—my Bible. I will leave the poet with you." She placed it in his hunting bag, saying,

"You will find here some biscuit and deer sinews, in case you should get bewildered in the prairies. You know you lost your way the last time, and were nearly famished."

"Kind and considerate Kate."

I began to find out that I was a sort of fifth wheel to a wagon, so I went to the front of the tavern to see about starting. There was a considerable crowd there, and I made them a short address on the occasion. I told them, among other things, that "I will die with my Betsey in my arms. No, I will not die—I'll grin down the walls of the Alamo, and the Americans will lick up the Mexicans like fine salt."

I mounted my little mustang, and my legs nearly reached the ground. The thimble conjurer was also ready ; at length the Bee hunter made his appearance, followed by his sweetheart, whose eyes looked as though she had been weeping. He took a cordial leave of all his friends, for he appeared to be a general favourite ; he then approached Kate,

kissed her, and leaped upon his horse. He tried to conceal his emotion by singing, carelessly,

“Saddled and bridled, and booted rode he,  
A plume in his helmet, a sword at his knee.”

The tremulous and plaintive voice of Kate took up the next two lines of the song, which sounded like a prophecy :

“But toom cam’ the saddle, all bluidy to see,  
And hame cam’ the steed, but hame never cam’ he.”

We started off rapidly, and left Nacogdoches amid the cheering of true patriots and kind friends.

## CHAPTER X.

AN hour or two elapsed before the Bee hunter recovered his usual spirits, after parting from his kind little Kate of Nacogdoches. The conjurer rallied him good humouredly, and had become quite a different man from what he was on the west side of the Sabine. He sat erect in his saddle, stuck his large white Vicksburger conceitedly on his bushy head, carried his rifle with as much ease and grace as if he had been used to the weapon, and altogether he assumed an air of impudence and independence which showed that he had now a soul above thimbles. The Bee hunter at length recovered his spirits, and commenced talking very pleasantly, for the matters he related were for the most part new to me.

My companions, by way of beguiling the tediousness of our journey, repeatedly played tricks upon each other, which were taken in good part. One of them I will relate. We had observed that the Bee hunter always disappeared on stopping at a house, running in to talk with the inhabitants and

ingratiate himself with the women, leaving us to take care of the horses. On reaching our stopping place at night he left us as usual, and while we were rubbing down our mustangs, and hobbling them, a negro boy came out of the house with orders from our companion within to see to his horse. Thimblorig, who possessed a good share of roguish ingenuity, after some inquiries about the gentleman in the house, how he looked and what he was doing, told the boy, in rather a low voice, that he had better not come nearer to him than was necessary, for it was possible he might hurt him, though still he didn't think he would. The boy asked why he need be afraid of him. He replied, he did not certainly know that there was any reason—he hoped there was none—but the man had been bitten by a mad dog, and it was rather uncertain whether he was not growing mad himself. Still, he would not alarm the boy, but cautioned him not to be afraid, for there might be no danger, though there was something rather strange in the conduct of his poor friend. This was enough for the boy; he was almost afraid to touch the horse of such a man; and when, a moment afterward, our companion came out of the house, he slunk away behind the horse, and though he was in a great hurry to get him unsaddled, kept his eyes fixed

steadily on the owner, closely watching his motions.

“Take off that bridle,” exclaimed the impatient Bee hunter, in a stern voice : and the black boy sprung off, and darted away as fast as his feet could carry him, much to the vexation and surprise of our companion, who ran after him a little distance, but could in no way account for his singular and provoking conduct. When we entered the house things appeared a great deal more strange ; for the negro had rushed hastily into the midst of the family, and in his terrified state communicated the alarming tale, that the gentleman had been bitten by a mad dog. He, unconscious all the time of the trick that was playing off, endeavoured, as usual, to render himself as agreeable as possible, especially to the females with whom he had already formed a partial acquaintance. We could see that they looked on him with apprehension, and retreated whenever he approached them. One of them took an opportunity to inquire of Thimblerig the truth of the charge ; and his answer confirmed their fears, and redoubled their caution ; though, after confessing with apparent candour, that his friend had been bitten, he stated that there was no certainty of evil consequences, and it was a thing which of course could not be mentioned to the sufferer.

As bed time approached the mistress of the house expressed her fears, lest trouble should arise in the night ; for the house, according to custom, contained but two rooms, and was not built for security. She therefore urged us to sleep between him and the door, and by no means to let him pass us. It so happened, however, that he chose to sleep next the door, and it was with great difficulty that we could keep their fears within bounds. The ill-disguised alarm of the whole family was not less a source of merriment to him who had been the cause, than of surprise and wonder to the subject of it. Whatever member of the household he approached promptly withdrew, and as for the negro, whenever he was spoken to by him, he would jump and roll his eyes. In the morning, when we were about to depart, we commissioned our belied companion to pay our bill ; but as he approached the hostess she fled from him, and shut the door in his face. "I want to pay our bill," said he. "O ! if you will only leave the house," cried she, in terror, "you are welcome to your lodging."

The jest, however, did not end here. The Bee hunter found out the trick that had been played upon him, and determined to retaliate. As we were about mounting, the conjurer's big white Vicks-

burger was unaccountably missing, and nowhere to be found. He was not altogether pleased with the liberty that had been taken with him, and after searching some time in vain, he tied a handkerchief around his head, sprung upon his horse, and rode off with more gravity than usual. We had rode about two miles, the Bee hunter bantering the other with a story of his hat lying in pawn at the house we had left, and urged upon him to return and redeem it ; but finding Thimblorig out of humour, and resolved not to return, he began to repent of his jest, and offered to go back and bring it, on condition that the past should be forgotten, and there should be no more retaliation. The other consented to the terms, so lighting a cigar with his sun glass, he set off at a rapid rate on his return. He had not been gone long before I presented Thimblorig with his hat, for I had seen the Bee hunter conceal it, and had secretly brought it along with me. It was some time before our absent friend overtook us, having frightened all the family away by his sudden return, and searched the whole house without success. When he perceived the object of his ride upon the head of the conjurer, and recollected the promise by which he had bound himself not to have any more jesting, he could only exclaim, "Well, it's hard, but it's fair." We

all laughed heartily, and good humour was once again restored.

Cane brakes are common in some parts of Texas. Our way led us through one of considerable extent. The frequent passage of men and horses had kept open a narrow path not wide enough for two mustangs to pass with convenience. The reeds, the same as are used in the northern states as fishing rods, had grown to the height of about twenty feet, and were so slender, that having no support directly over the path, they drooped a little inward, and intermingled their tops, forming a complete covering overhead. We rode about a quarter of a mile along this singular arched avenue with the view of the sky completely shut out. The Bee hunter told me that the largest brake is that which lines the banks of Caney Creek, and is seventy miles in length, with scarcely a tree to be seen the whole distance. The reeds are eaten by cattle and horses in the winter when the prairies yield little or no other food.

When we came out of the brake we saw three black wolves jogging like dogs ahead of us, but at too great a distance to reach them with a rifle. Wild turkeys and deer repeatedly crossed our path, and we saw several droves of wild horses pasturing in the prairies. These sights awakened the ruling

passion strong within me, and I longed to have a hunt upon a large scale ; for though I had killed many bears and deers in my time, I had never brought down a buffalo in all my life, and so I told my friends ; but they tried to dissuade me from it, by telling me that I would certainly lose my way, and perhaps perish ; for though it appeared as a cultivated garden to the eye, it was still a wilderness. I said little more on the subject until we crossed the Trinidad river, but every mile we travelled I found the temptation grow stronger and stronger.

The night after we crossed the river we fortunately found shelter in the house of a poor woman, who had little but the barest necessities to offer us. While we were securing our horses for the night we beheld two men approaching the house on foot. They were both armed with rifles and hunting knives, and though I have been accustomed to the sight of men who have not stepped far over the line of civilization, I must say these were just about the roughest samples I had seen anywhere. One was a man of about fifty years old, tall and raw-boned. He was dressed in a sailor's round jacket, with a tarpaulin on his head. His whiskers nearly covered his face ; his hair was coal black and long, and there was a deep scar across his forehead, and

another on the back of his right-hand. His companion, who was considerably younger, was bare-headed, and clad in a deer skin dress made after our fashion. Though he was not much darker than the old man, I perceived that he was an Indian. They spoke friendly to the Bee hunter, for they both knew him, and said they were on their way to join the Texian forces, at that time near the San Antonio river. Though they had started without horses, they reckoned they would come across a couple before they went much farther. The right of ownership to horse flesh is not much regarded in Texas, for those that have been taken from the wild droves are soon after turned out to graze on the prairies, the owner having first branded them with his mark, and hobbled them by tying their fore feet together, which will enable another to capture them just as readily as himself.

The old woman set about preparing our supper, and apologized for the homely fare, which consisted of bacon and fried onions, when the Indian went to a bag and produced a number of eggs of wild fowls, and a brace of fat rabbits, which were speedily dressed, and we made as good a meal as a hungry man need wish to set down to. The old man spoke very little; but the Indian, who had lived much among the whites, was talkative, and

manifested much impatience to arrive at the army. The first opportunity that occurred I inquired of the Bee hunter who our new friends were, and he told me that the old man had been for many years a pirate with the famous Lafitte, and that the Indian was a hunter belonging to a settler near Galveston Bay. I had seen enough of land rats at Washington, but this was the first time that I was ever in company with a water rat to my knowledge; however, baiting that black spot on his escutcheon, he was a well behaved and inoffensive man. Vice does not appear so shocking when we are familiar with the perpetrator of it.

Thimblorig was for taking airs upon himself after learning who our companions were, and protested to me, that he would not sit down at the same table with a man who had outraged the laws in such a manner; for it was due to society that honest men should discountenance such unprincipled characters, and much more to the same effect; when the old man speedily dissipated the gambler's indignant feelings by calmly saying, "Stranger, you had better take a seat at the table, I think," at the same time drawing a long hunting knife from his belt, and laying it on the table. "I think you had better take some supper with us," he added, in a mild tone, but fixing his eye sternly

upon Thimblerig. The conjurer first eyed the knife, and then the fierce whiskers of the pirate, and, unlike some politicians, he wasn't long in making up his mind what course to pursue, but he determined to vote as the pirate voted, and said, "I second that motion, stranger," at the same time seating himself on the bench beside me. The old man then commenced cutting up the meat, for which purpose he had drawn his hunting knife, though the gambler had thought it was for a different purpose; and being relieved from his fears, every thing passed off quite sociable.

Early the following morning we compensated the old woman for the trouble she had been at, and we mounted our horses and pursued our journey, our new friends following on foot, but promising to arrive at the Alamo as soon as we should. About noon we stopped to refresh our horses beneath a cluster of trees that stood in the open prairie, and I again spoke of my longing for a buffalo hunt. We were all seated on the grass, and they strived hard to dissuade me from the folly of allowing a ruling passion to lead me into such imminent danger and difficulty as I must necessarily encounter. All this time, while they were running down my weakness, as they called it, Thimblerig was amusing himself with his eternal thimbles and pea

upon the crown of his big white hat. I could not refrain from laughing outright to see with what gravity and apparent interest he slipped the pea from one thimble to another while in the midst of a desert. Man is a queer animal, and Colonel Dick Johnson is disposed to make him even queerer than Dame Nature originally intended.

The Bee hunter told me, that if I was determined to leave them, he had in his bag a paper of ground coffee, and biscuit, which little Kate of Nacogdoches had desired him to carry for my use, which he handed to me, and proposed drinking her health, saying that she was one of the kindest and purest of God's creatures. We drank her health, and wished him all happiness when she should be his own, which time he looked forward to with impatience. He still continued to dissuade me from leaving them, and all the time he was talking his eyes were wandering above, when suddenly he stopped, sprang to his feet, looked around for a moment, then leaped on his mustang, and without saying a word, started off like mad, and scoured along the prairie. We watched him, gradually diminishing in size, until he seemed no larger than a rat, and finally disappeared in the distance. I was amazed, and thought to be sure the man was crazy; and Thimblorig, who continued his game,

responded that he was unquestionably out of his head.

Shortly after the Bee hunter had disappeared we heard a noise something like the rumbling of distant thunder. The sky was clear, there were no signs of a storm, and we concluded it could not proceed from that cause. On turning to the west we saw an immense cloud of dust in the distance, but could perceive no object distinctly, and still the roaring continued. "What can all this mean?" said I. "Burn my old shoes if I know," said the conjurer, gathering up his thimbles, and at the same time cocking his large Vicksburger fiercely on his head. We continued looking in the direction whence the sound proceeded, the cloud of dust became thicker and thicker, and the roaring more distinct—much louder than was ever heard in the White House at Washington.

We at first imagined that it was a tornado, but whatever it was, it was coming directly toward the spot where we stood. Our mustangs had ceased to graze, and cocked up their ears in evident alarm. We ran and caught them, took off the hobbles, and rode into the grove of trees; still the noise grew louder and louder. We had scarcely got under the shelter of the grove before the object approached near enough for us to ascertain what it

was. It was a herd of buffalo, at least four or five hundred in number, dashing along as swift as the wind, and roaring as if so many devils had broke loose. They passed near the grove, and, if we had not taken shelter there, we should have been in great danger of being trampled to death. My poor little mustang shook worse than a politician about to be turned out of office, as the drove came sweeping by. At their head, apart from the rest, was a black bull, who appeared to be their leader; he came roaring along, his tail straight an end, and at times tossing up the earth with his horns. I never felt such a desire to have a crack at any thing in all my life. He drew nigh the place where I was standing; I raised my beautiful Betsey to my shoulder, took deliberate aim, blazed away, and he roared, and suddenly stopped. Those that were near him did so likewise, and the concussion occasioned by the impetus of those in the rear was such, that it was a miracle that some of them did not break their legs or necks. The black bull stood for a few moments pawing the ground after he was shot, then darted off around the cluster of trees, and made for the uplands of the prairies. The whole herd followed, sweeping by like a tornado, and I do say, I never witnessed a more beautiful sight to the eye of a hunter in all my life.

Bear hunting is no more to be compared to it than Colonel Benton is to Henry Clay. I watched them for a few moments, then clapped spurs to my mustang and followed in their wake, leaving Thimble-rig behind me.

I followed on the trail of the herd for at least two hours, by which time the moving mass appeared like a small cloud in the distant horizon. Still, I followed, my whole mind absorbed by the excitement of the chase, until the object was entirely lost in the distance. I now paused to allow my mustang to breathe, who did not altogether fancy the rapidity of my movements, and to consider which course I would have to take to regain the path I had abandoned. I might have retraced my steps by following the trail of the buffalos, but it has always been my principle to go ahead, and so I turned to the west and pushed forward.

I had not rode more than an hour before I found that I was as completely bewildered as "the Government" was when he entered upon an examination of the Post office accounts. I looked around, and there was, as far as the eye could reach, spread before me a country apparently in the highest state of cultivation. Extended fields, beautiful and productive, groves of trees cleared from the under-wood, and whose margins were as regular as if the

art and taste of man had been employed upon them. But there was no other evidence that the sound of the axe, or the voice of man, had ever here disturbed the solitude of nature. My eyes would have cheated my senses into the belief that I was in an earthly paradise, but my fears told me that I was in a wilderness.

I pushed along, following the sun, for I had no compass to guide me, and there was no other path than that which my mustang made. Indeed, if I had found a beaten track, I should have been almost afraid to have followed it; for my friend the Bee hunter had told me, that once, when he had been lost in the prairies, he had accidentally struck into his own path, and had travelled around and around for a whole day before he discovered his error. This I thought was a poor way of going ahead; so I determined to make for the first large stream, and follow its course.

I had travelled several hours without seeing the trace of a human being, and even game was almost as scarce as Benton's mint drops, except just about election time, and I began to wish that I had followed the advice of my companions. I was a good deal bothered to account for the abrupt manner in which the Bee hunter had absconded; and I felt concerned for the poor thimble conjurer, who was

left alone, and altogether unaccustomed to the difficulties that he would have to encounter. While my mind was occupied with these unpleasant reflections, I was suddenly startled by another novelty quite as great as that I have just described.

I had just emerged from a beautiful grove of trees, and was entering upon an extended prairie, which looked like the luxuriant meadows of a thrifty farmer; and as if nothing should be wanting to complete the delusion, but a short distance before me, there was a drove of about one hundred beautiful horses quietly pasturing. It required some effort to convince my mind that man had no agency in this. But when I looked around, and fully realized it all, I thought of him who had preached to me in the wilds of the Arkansas, and involuntarily exclaimed, "God, what hast thou not done for man, and yet how little he does for thee! Not even repays thee with gratitude!"

I entered upon the prairie. The mustangs no sooner espied me than they raised their heads, whinnied, and began coursing around me in an extended circle, which gradually became smaller and smaller, until they closely surrounded me. My little rascally mustang enjoyed the sport, and felt disposed to renew his acquaintance with his wild companions; first turning his head to one,

then to another, playfully biting the neck of this one, rubbing noses with that one, and kicking up his heels at a third. I began to feel rather uncomfortable, and plied the spur pretty briskly to get out of the mess, but he was as obstinate as the "old Roman" himself, who will be neither led nor driven. I kicked, and he kicked, but fortunately he became tired first, and he made one start, intending to escape from the annoyance if possible. As I had an annoyance to escape from likewise, I beat the devil's tattoo on his ribs, that he might have some music to dance to, and we went ahead right merrily, the whole drove following in our wake, head up, and tail and mane streaming. My little critter, who was both blood and bottom, seemed delighted at being at the head of the heap; and having once got fairly started, I wish I may be shot if I did not find it impossible to stop him. He kept along, tossing his head proudly, and occasionally neighing, as much as to say, "Come on, my hearties, you see I ha'n't forgot our old amusement yet." And they did come on with a vengeance, clatter, clatter, clatter, as if so many fiends had broke loose. The prairie lay extended before me as far as the eye could reach, and I began to think that there would be no end to the race.

My little animal was full of fire and mettle, and

as it was the first bit of genuine sport that he had had for some time, he appeared determined to make the most of it. He kept the lead for full half an hour, frequently neighing as if in triumph and derision. I thought of John Gilpin's celebrated ride, but that was child's play to this. The proverb says, "The race is not always to the swift, nor the battle to the strong," and so it proved in the present instance. My mustang was obliged to carry weight, while his competitors were as free as nature had made them. A beautiful bay, who had trod close upon my heels the whole way, now came side by side with my mustang, and we had it hip and thigh for about ten minutes, in such style as would have delighted the heart of a true lover of the turf. I now felt an interest in the race myself, and for the credit of my bit of blood, determined to win if it was at all in the nature of things. I plied the lash and spur, and the little critter took it quite kindly, and tossed his head, and neighed, as much as to say, "Colonel, I know what you're after—Go ahead!"—and he cut dirt in beautiful style, I tell you.

This could not last for ever. At length my competitor darted ahead, somewhat the same way that Adam Huntsman served me last election, except that there was no gouging; and my little

fellow was compelled to clatter after his tail, like a needy politician after an office holder when he wants his influence, and which my mustang found it quite as difficult to reach. He hung on like grim death for some time longer, but at last his ambition began to flag; and having lost ground, others seemed to think that he was not the mighty critter he was cracked up to be, no how, and they tried to outstrip him also. A second shot ahead, and kicked up his heels in derision as he passed us; then a third, a fourth, and so on, and even the scrubbiest little rascal in the whole drove was disposed to have a fling at their broken down leader. A true picture of politicians and their truckling followers, thought I. We now followed among the last of the drove until we came to the banks of the Navasola river. The foremost leaped from the margin into the rushing stream, the others, politician like, followed him, though he would lead them to destruction; but my wearied animal fell on the banks, completely exhausted with fatigue. It was a beautiful sight to see them stemming the torrent, ascend the opposite bank, and scour over the plain, having been refreshed by the water. I relieved my wearied animal from the saddle, and employed what means were in my power to restore him.

## CHAPTER XI.

AFTER toiling for more than an hour to get my mustang upon his feet again, I gave it up as a bad job, as little Van did when he attempted to raise himself to the moon by the waistband of his breeches. Night was fast closing in, and as I began to think that I had had just about sport enough for one day, I might as well look around for a place of shelter for the night, and take a fresh start in the morning, by which time I was in hopes my horse would be recruited. Near the margin of the river a large tree had been blown down, and I thought of making my lair in its top, and approached it for that purpose. While beating among the branches I heard a low growl, as much as to say, "Stranger, the apartments are already taken." Looking about to see what sort of a bed-fellow I was likely to have, I discovered, not more than five or six paces from me, an enormous Mexican cougar eyeing me as an epicure surveys the table before he selects his dish, for I have no doubt the cougar looked upon me as the subject of a

future supper. Rays of light darted from his large eyes, he showed his teeth like a negro in hysterics, and he was crouching on his haunches, ready for a spring; all of which convinced me that unless I was pretty quick upon the trigger, posterity would know little of the termination of my eventful career, and it would be far less glorious and useful than I intend to make it.

One glance satisfied me that there was no time to be lost, as Pat thought when falling from a church steeple, and exclaimed, "This would be mighty pleasant, now, if it would only last,"—but there was no retreat, either for me or the cougar, so I levelled my Betsey, and blazed away. The report was followed by a furious growl, (which is sometimes the case in Congress,) and the next moment, when I expected to find the tarnal critter struggling with death, I beheld him shaking his head as if nothing more than a bee had stung him. The ball had struck him on the forehead, and glanced off, doing no other injury than stunning him for an instant, and tearing off the skin, which tended to infuriate him the more. The cougar wasn't long in making up his mind what to do, nor was I neither; but he would have it all his own way, and vetoed my motion to back out. I had not retreated three steps before he sprang at

me like a steamboat ; I stepped aside, and as he lit upon the ground I struck him violently with the barrel of my rifle, but he didn't mind that, but wheeled round and made at me again. The gun was now of no use, so I threw it away, and drew my hunting knife, for I knew we should come to close quarters before the fight would be over. This time he succeeded in fastening on my left arm, and was just beginning to amuse himself by tearing the flesh off with his fangs, when I ripped my knife into his side, and he let go his hold much to my satisfaction.

He wheeled about and came at me with increased fury, occasioned by the smarting of his wounds. I now tried to blind him, knowing that if I succeeded he would become an easy prey ; so as he approached me I watched my opportunity, and aimed a blow at his eyes with my knife, but unfortunately it struck him on the nose, and he paid no other attention to it than by a shake of the head and a low growl. He pressed me close, and as I was stepping backward my foot tripped in a vine, and I fell to the ground. He was down upon me like a night-hawk upon a June bug. He seized hold of the outer part of my right thigh, which afforded him considerable amusement ; the hinder part of his body was toward my face ; I grasped his tail with

my left hand, and tickled his ribs with my hunting knife, which I held in my right. Still, the critter wouldn't let go his hold; and as I found that he would lacerate my leg dreadfully unless he was speedily shaken off, I tried to hurl him down the bank into the river, for our scuffle had already brought us to the edge of the bank. I stuck my knife into his side, and summoned all my strength to throw him over. He resisted, was desperate heavy; but at last I got him so far down the declivity that he lost his balance, and he rolled over and over until he landed on the margin of the river; but in his fall he dragged me along with him. Fortunately I fell uppermost, and his neck presented a fair mark for my hunting knife. Without allowing myself time even to draw breath, I aimed one desperate blow at his neck, and the knife entered his gullet up to the handle, and reached his heart. He struggled for a few moments, and died. I have had many fights with bears, but that was mere child's play; this was the first fight ever I had with a cougar, and I hope it may be the last.

I now returned to the tree top to see if any one else would dispute my lodging; but now I could take peaceable and quiet possession. I parted some of the branches, and cut away others to

make a bed in the opening; I then gathered a quantity of moss, which hung in festoons from the trees, which I spread on the litter, and over this I spread my horse blanket; and I had as comfortable a bed as a weary man need ask for. I now took another look at my mustang, and from all appearances he would not live until morning. I ate some of the cakes that little Kate of Nacogdoches had made for me, and then carried my saddle into my tree top, and threw myself down upon my bed, with no very pleasant reflections at the prospect before me.

I was weary, and soon fell asleep, and did not awake until daybreak the next day. I felt somewhat stiff and sore from the wounds I had received in the conflict with the cougar; but I considered myself as having made a lucky escape. I looked over the bank, and as I saw the carcass of the cougar lying there, I thought that it was an even chance that we had not exchanged conditions; and I felt grateful that the fight had ended as it did. I now went to look after my mustang, fully expecting to find him as dead as the cougar; but what was my astonishment to find that he had disappeared without leaving trace of hair or hide of him. I first supposed that some beasts of prey had consumed the poor critter; but then they

wouldn't have eaten his bones ; and he had vanished as effectually as the deposits, without leaving any mark of the course they had taken. This bothered me amazing ; I couldn't figure it out by any rule that I had ever heard of, so I concluded to think no more about it.

I felt a craving for something to eat, and looking around for some game, I saw a flock of geese on the shore of the river. I shot a fine fat gander, and soon stripped him of his feathers ; and gathering some light wood, I kindled a fire, run a long stick through my goose, for a spit, and put it down to roast, supported by two sticks with prongs. I had a desire for some coffee ; and having a tin cup with me, I poured the paper of ground coffee that I had received from the Bee hunter into it, and made a strong cup, which was very refreshing. Off of my goose and biscuit I made a hearty meal, and was preparing to depart, without clearing up the breakfast things, or knowing which direction to pursue, when I was somewhat taken aback by another of the wild scenes of the west. I heard a sound like the trampling of many horses, and I thought to be sure the mustangs or buffalos were coming upon me again ; but on raising my head, I beheld in the distance about fifty mounted Cumanches, with their spears glittering in the morning

sun, dashing toward the spot where I stood at full speed. As the column advanced it divided, according to their usual practice, into two semicircles, and in an instant I was surrounded. Quicker than thought I sprang to my rifle, but as my hand grasped it, I felt that resistance against so many would be of as little use as pumping for thunder in dry weather.

The chief was for making love to my beautiful Betsey, but I clung fast to her, and assuming an air of composure, I demanded whether their nation was at war with the Americans. "No," was the reply. "Do you like the Americans?" "Yes, they are our friends." "Where do you get your spear heads, your rifles, your blankets, and your knives from?" "Get them from our friends, the Americans." "Well, do you think if you were passing through their nation, as I am passing through yours, they would attempt to rob you of your property?" "No, they would feed me, and protect me; and the Cumanche will do the same by his white brother."

I now asked him what it was had directed him to the spot where I was, and he told me, that they had seen the smoke from a great distance, and had come to see the cause of it. He inquired what had brought me there alone; and I told him

that I had come to hunt, and that my mustang had become exhausted, and though I thought he was about to die, that he had escaped from me ; at which the chief gave a low chuckling laugh, and said it was all a trick of the mustang, which is the most wily and cunning of all animals. But he said that as I was a brave hunter he would furnish me with another ; he gave orders, and a fine young horse was immediately brought forward.

When the party approached there were three old squaws at their head, who made a noise with their mouths, and served as trumpeters. I now told the chief that, as I now had a horse, I would go for my saddle, which was in the place where I had slept. As I approached the spot I discovered one of the squaws devouring the remains of my roasted goose, but my saddle and bridle were nowhere to be found. Almost in despair of seeing them again, I observed, in a thicket at a little distance, one of the trumpeters kicking and belabouring her horse to make him move off, while the sagacious beast would not move a step from the troop. I followed her, and, thanks to her restive mustang, secured my property, which the chief made her restore to me. Some of the warriors had by this time discovered the body of the cougar, and had already commenced skinning it ; and see-

ing how many stabs were about it, I related to the chief the desperate struggle I had had ; he said, " Brave hunter, brave man," and wished me to be adopted into his tribe, but I respectfully declined the honour. He then offered to see me on my way ; and I asked him to accompany me to the Colorado river, if he was going in that direction, which he agreed to do. I put my saddle on my fresh horse, mounted, and we darted off, at a rate not much slower than I had rode the day previous with the wild herd, the old squaws at the head of the troop braying like young jackasses the whole way.

About three hours after starting we saw a drove of mustangs quietly pasturing in the prairie at a distance. One of the Indians immediately got his lasso ready, which was a long rope made of hide plaited like whip cord, with an iron ring at one end, through which the rope was passed so as to form a noose ; and thus prepared, he darted ahead of the troop to make a capture. They allowed him to approach pretty nigh, he all the time flourishing his lasso ; but before he got within reaching distance, they started off at a brisk canter, made two or three wide circuits around him, as if they would spy-out what he was after, then abruptly changed their course, and disappeared.

One mustang out of all the drove remained standing quietly ; the Indian made up to him, threw the lasso, but the mustang dodged his head between his fore legs, and escaped the noose, but did not attempt to escape. The Indian then rode up to him, and the horse very patiently submitted while he put a bridle on him, and secured him. When I approached, I immediately recognised in the captive the pestilent little animal that had shammed sickness and escaped from me the day before ; and when he caught my eye he cast down his head and looked rather sheepish, as if he were sensible and ashamed of the dirty trick he had played me. I expressed my astonishment to the Indian chief at the mustang's allowing himself to be captured without an effort to escape ; and he told me, that they are generally hurled to the ground with such violence when first taken with the lasso, that they remember it ever after, and that the sight of it will subdue them to submission, though they may have run wild for years. Just so with an office holder, who, being kicked out, turns patriot — shake a commission at him, and the fire of his patriotism usually escapes in smoke.

We travelled all day, and toward evening we came across a small drove of buffalos ; and it was a beautiful sight to behold with what skill the Indians

hunted down this noble game. There are no horsemen who ride more gracefully than the Cumanches ; and they sit so closely, and hold such absolute control over the horse, that he seems to be part of their own person. I had the good fortune to bring down a young heifer, and as it was the only beef that we killed, the chief again complimented me as being a brave hunter ; and while they were preparing the heifer for our supper I related to him many of my hunting exploits, at which he manifested pleasure and much astonishment for an Indian. He again urged upon me to become one of the tribe.

We made a hearty supper, hobbled our mustangs, which we turned into the prairie to graze, and then encamped for the night. I awoke about two hours before daybreak, and looking over the tract of country through which we had travelled, the sky was as bright and clear as if the sun had already risen. I watched it for some time without being able to account for it, and asked my friend, the chief, to explain, who told me that the prairie was on fire, and that it must have caught when we cooked our dinner. I have seen hundreds of acres of mountain timber on fire in my time, but this is the first time that I ever saw a prairie burning.

Nothing of interest occurred until we reached

the Colorado, and were following the river to the place where it crosses the road to Bexar, which place the Indians promised to conduct me to. We saw a light column of smoke ascending in the clear sky, and hastened toward it. It proceeded from a small cluster of trees near the river. When we came within five hundred yards of it, the warriors extended their line around the object, and the chief and myself cautiously approached it. When we came within eyeshot, what was my astonishment to discover a solitary man seated on the ground near the fire, so intent upon some pursuit that he did not perceive our approach. We drew nigh to him, and still he was unconscious of our approach. It was poor Thimblérig practising his game of thimbles upon the crown of his white Vicksburger. This is what I call the ruling passion most amazing strong. The chief shouted the war whoop, and suddenly the warriors came rushing in from all quarters, preceded by the old squaw trumpeters squalling like mad. The conjurer sprang to his feet, and was ready to sink into the earth when he beheld the ferocious looking fellows that surrounded him. I stepped up, took him by the hand, and quieted his fears. I told the chief that he was a friend of mine, and I was very glad to have found him, for I was afraid that he had perished. I now

thanked him for his kindness in guiding me over the prairies, and gave him a large Bowie knife, which he said he would keep for the sake of the brave hunter. The whole squadron then wheeled off, and I saw them no more. I have met with many polite men in my time, but no one who possessed in a greater degree what may be called true spontaneous politeness than this Cumanche chief, always excepting Philip Hone, Esq., of New York, whom I look upon as the politest man I ever did see; for when he asked me to take a drink at his own side-board he turned his back upon me, that I mightn't be ashamed to fill as much as I wanted. That was what I call doing the fair thing.

Thimblérig was delighted at meeting me again, but it was some time before he recovered sufficiently from the cold sweat into which the sudden appearance of the Indians had thrown him to recount his adventures to me. He said that he felt rather down-hearted when he found himself abandoned both by the Bee hunter and myself, and he knew not which course to pursue; but after thinking about the matter for two hours, he had made up his mind to retrace the road we had travelled over, and had mounted his mustang for that purpose, when he spied the Bee hunter laden with honey. The mystery of his abrupt departure was

now fully accounted for; he had spied a solitary bee shaping its course to its hive, and at the moment he couldn't control the ruling passion, but followed the bee without reflecting for a moment upon the difficulties and dangers that his thoughtlessness might occasion his friends.

I now asked him what had become of the Bee hunter, and he said that he had gone out in pursuit of game for their supper, and he expected that he would return shortly, as he had been absent at least an hour. While we were still speaking our friend appeared, bending under the weight of a wild turkey. He manifested great joy at meeting with me so unexpectedly; and desiring the conjurer to pluck the feathers off the bird, which he cheerfully undertook, for he said he had been accustomed to plucking pigeons, we set about preparing our supper.

The position we occupied was directly on the route leading to Bexar, and at the crossings of the Colorado. We were about to commence our supper, for the turkey was done in beautiful style, when the sound of a horse neighing startled us. We looked over the prairie, and beheld two men approaching on horseback, and both armed with rifles and knives. The Bee hunter said that it was time for us to be on our guard, for we should

meet, perhaps, more enemies than friends as soon as we crossed the river, and the new-comers were making directly for the spot we occupied; but, as they were only two, it occasioned no uneasiness.

As they drew nigh we recognised the strangers; they turned out to be the old pirate and the Indian hunter who had lodged with us a few nights before. We hailed them, and on seeing us they alighted and asked permission to join our party, which we gladly agreed to, as our journey was becoming rather more perilous every mile we advanced. They partook of our turkey, and as they had some small cakes of bread, which they threw into the general stock, we made a hearty supper; and, after a battle song from the Bee hunter, we prepared to rest for the night.

Early next morning we crossed the river, and pushed forward for the fortress of Alamo. The old pirate was still as taciturn as ever, but his companion was talkative and in good spirits. I asked him where he had procured their mustangs, and he said that he had found them hobbled in Burnet's Grant just at a time that he felt very tired; and as he believed that no one would lay claim to them at Bexar, he couldn't resist mounting one, and persuading his friend to mount the other.

Nothing of interest occurred until we came

within about twenty miles of San Antonio. We were in the open prairie, and beheld a band of about fifteen or twenty armed men approaching us at full speed. "Look out for squalls," said the old pirate, who had not spoken for an hour; "they are a scouting party of Mexicans." "And are three or four times our number," said Thimblorig. "No matter," replied the old man; "they are convicts, jail birds, and cowardly ruffians, no doubt, who would tremble at a loud word as much as a mustang at the sight of the lasso.—Let us spread ourselves, dismount, and trust to our arms."

We followed his orders, and stood beside our horses, which served to protect our persons, and we awaited the approach of the enemy. When they perceived this movement of ours, they checked their speed, appeared to consult together for a few minutes, then spread their line, and came within rifle shot of us. The leader called out to us in Spanish, but as I did not understand him, I asked the old man what it was, who said he called upon us to surrender.

"There will be a brush with those blackguards," continued the pirate. "Now each of you single out your man for the first fire, and they are greater fools than I take them for if they give us a chance at a second.—Colonel, as you are a good shot, just

settle the business for that talking fellow with the red feather ; he's worth any three of the party."

"Surrender, or we fire," shouted the fellow with the red feather in Spanish.

"Fire, and be d——d," returned the pirate, at the top of his voice, in plain English.

And sure enough they took his advice, for the next minute we were saluted with a discharge of musketry, the report of which was so loud that we were convinced they all had fired. Before the smoke had cleared away we had each selected our man, fired, and I never did see such a scattering among their ranks as followed. We beheld several mustangs running wild without their riders over the prairie, and the balance of the company were already retreating at a more rapid gait than they approached. We hastily mounted, and commenced pursuit, which we kept up until we beheld the independent flag flying from the battlements of the fortress of Alamo, our place of destination. The fugitives succeeded in evading our pursuit, and we rode up to the gates of the fortress, announced to the sentinel who we were, and the gates were thrown open ; and we entered amid shouts of welcome bestowed upon us by the patriots.

## CHAPTER XII.

THE fortress of Alamo is at the town of Bexar, on the San Antonio river, which flows through the town. Bexar is about one hundred and forty miles from the coast, and contains upward of twelve hundred citizens, all native Mexicans, with the exception of a few American families who have settled there. Besides these there is a garrison of soldiers, and trading pedlars of every description, who resort to it from the borders of the Rio Grande, as their nearest depôt of American goods. A military outpost was established at this spot by the Spanish government in 1718. In 1731 the town was settled by emigrants sent out from the Canary Islands by the King of Spain. It became a flourishing settlement, and so continued until the revolution in 1812, since which period the Cumanche and other Indians have greatly harassed the inhabitants, producing much individual suffering, and totally destroying, for a season at least, the prospects of the town. Its site is one of the most beautiful in the western world. The air is salu-

brious, the water delightful, especially when mixed with a little of the ardent, and the health of the citizens is proverbial. The soil around it is highly fertile, and well calculated for cotton and grain.

The gallant young Colonel Travis, who commands the Texian forces in the fortress of Alamo, received me like a man; and though he can barely muster one hundred and fifty efficient men, should Santa Anna make an attack upon us, with the whole host of ruffians that the Mexican prisons can disgorge, he will have snakes to eat before he gets over the wall, I tell you. But one spirit appears to animate the little band of patriots—and that is liberty, or death. To worship God according to the dictates of their own conscience, and govern themselves as freemen should be governed.

All the world knows, by this time, that the town of Bexar, or, as some call it, San Antonio, was captured from the Mexicans by General Burlison, on the 10th day of December, 1835, after a severe struggle of five days and five nights, during which he sustained a loss of four men only, but the brave old Colonel Milam was among them. There were seventeen hundred men in the town, and the Texian force consisted of but two hundred and sixteen. The Mexicans had walled up the streets leading from the public square, intending to make

a desperate resistance : the Texians however made an entrance, and valiantly drove them from house to house, until General Cos retreated to the castle of Alamo, without the city, and there hoisted the white flag, and sent out the terms of capitulation, which were as follows :

General Cos is to retire within six days, with his officers, arms, and private property, on parole of honour. He is not to oppose the re-establishment of the constitution of 1824.

The infantry, and the cavalry, the remnant of Morale's battalion, and the convicts, to return, taking with them ten rounds of cartridge for safety against the Indians.

All public property, money, arms, and ammunition, to be delivered to General Burlison, of the Texian army,—with some other stipulations in relation to the sick and wounded, private property, and prisoners of war. The Texians would not have acceded to them, preferring to storm him in his stronghold, but at this critical juncture they hadn't a single round of ammunition left, having fought from the 5th to the 9th of the month. General Ugartechea had arrived but the day before with three hundred troops, and the four hundred convicts mentioned above, making a reinforcement of seven hundred men ; but such rubbish was no

great obstacle to the march of freedom. The Mexicans lost about three hundred men during the siege, and the Texians had only four killed, and twenty wounded. The articles of capitulation being signed, we marched into the town, took possession of the fortress, hoisted the independent flag, and told the late proprietors to pack up their moveables and clear out in the snapping of a trigger, as we did not think our pockets quite safe with so many jail birds around us. And this is the way the Alamo came into our possession; but the way we shall maintain our possession of it will be a subject for the future historian to record, or my name's not Crockett.—I wish I may be shot if I don't go ahead to the last.

I found Colonel Bowie, of Louisiana, in the fortress, a man celebrated for having been in more desperate personal conflicts than any other in the country, and whose name has been given to a knife of a peculiar construction, which is now in general use in the south-west. I was introduced to him by Colonel Travis, and he gave me a friendly welcome, and appeared to be mightily pleased that I had arrived safe. While we were conversing he had occasion to draw his famous knife to cut a strap, and I wish I may be shot if the bare sight of it wasn't enough to give a man

of a squeamish stomach the cholic, specially before breakfast. He saw I was admiring it, and said he, "Colonel, you might tickle a fellow's ribs a long time with this little instrument before you'd make him laugh; and many a time have I seen a man puke at the idea of the point touching the pit of his stomach."

My companions, the Bee hunter and the conjurer, joined us, and the colonel appeared to know them both very well. He had a high opinion of the Bee hunter, for turning to me, he said, "Colonel, you could not have had a braver, better, or more pleasant fellow for a companion than honest Ned here. With fifteen hundred such men I would undertake to march to the city of Mexico, and occupy the seat of Santa Anna myself before three months should elapse."

The colonel's life has been marked by constant peril and deeds of daring. A few years ago he went on a hunting excursion into the prairies of Texas, with nine companions. They were attacked by a roving party of Cumanches, about two hundred strong, and such was the science of the colonel in this sort of wild warfare, that after killing a considerable number of the enemy, he fairly frightened the remainder from the field of action, and they fled in utter dismay. The fight took

place among the high grass in the open prairie. He ordered his men to dismount from their horses and scatter; to take deliberate aim before they fired, but as soon as they had discharged their rifles, to fall flat on the ground and crawl away from the spot, and reload their pieces. By this scheme they not only escaped the fire of the Indians, but by suddenly discharging their guns from another quarter, they created the impression that their party was a numerous one; and the Indians, finding that they were fighting against an invisible enemy, after losing about thirty of their men, took to flight, believing themselves lucky in having escaped with no greater loss. But one of the colonel's party was slightly wounded, and that was owing to his remaining to reload his rifle without having first shifted his position.

Santa Anna, it is said, roars like an angry lion at the disgraceful defeat that his brother-in-law, General Cos, lately met with at this place. It is rumoured that he has recruited a large force, and commenced his march to San Louis de Potosi, and he is determined to carry on a war of extermination. He is liberal in applying his epithets to our countrymen in Texas, and denounces them as a set of perfidious wretches, whom the compassion of the generous Mexicans has permitted to take

refuge in their country; and who, like the serpent in the fable, no sooner warmed themselves than they stung their benefactors. This is a good joke.—By what title does Mexico lay claim to all the territory which belonged to Spain in North America? Each province or state of New Spain contended separately or jointly, just as it happened, for their independence, as we did, and were not united under a general government representing the whole of the Spanish possessions, which was only done afterward by mutual agreement or federation. Let it be remembered that the Spanish authorities were first expelled from Texas by the American settlers, who, from the treachery of their Mexican associates, were unable to retain it; but the second time they were more successful. They certainly had as good a right to the soil thus conquered by them, as the inhabitants of other provinces who succeeded against Spain. The Mexicans talk of the ingratitude of the Americans; the truth is, that the ingratitude has been on the other side. What was the war of Texas, in 1813, when the revolutionary spark was almost extinguished in Mexico? What was the expedition of Mina, and his three hundred American Spartans, who perished heroically in the very heart of Mexico, in the vain attempt to resuscitate and keep alive the spark of

independence which has at this time kindled such an ungrateful blaze? If a just estimate could be made of the lives and the treasures contributed by American enterprise in that cause, it would appear incredible. How did the Mexicans obtain their independence at last? Was it by their own virtue and courage? No, it was by the treachery of one of the king's generals, who established himself by successful treason, and they have been in constant commotion ever since, which proves they are unfit to govern themselves, much less a free and enlightened people at a distance of twelve hundred miles from them.

The Mexican government, by its colonization laws, invited and induced the Anglo-American population of Texas to colonize its wilderness, under the pledged faith of a written constitution, that they should continue to enjoy that constitutional liberty and republican government to which they had been habituated in the land of their birth, the United States of America. In this expectation they have been cruelly disappointed, as the Mexican nation has acquiesced in the late changes made in the government by Santa Anna; who, having overturned the constitution of this country, now offers the settlers the cruel alternative, either to abandon their homes, acquired by so many priva-

tions, or submit to the most intolerable of all tyranny, the combined despotism of the sword and the priesthood.

But Santa Anna charges the Americans with ingratitude! This is something like Satan reviling sin. I have gathered some particulars of the life of this moral personage from a gentleman at present in the Alamo, and who is intimately acquainted with him, which I will copy into my book exactly as he wrote it.

Santa Anna is about forty-two years of age, and was born in the city of Vera Cruz. His father was a Spaniard, of old Spain, of respectable standing, though poor; his mother was a Mexican. He received a common education, and at the age of thirteen or fourteen was taken into the military family of the then Intendant of Vera Cruz, General Davila, who took a great fancy to him, and brought him up. He remained with General Davila until about the year 1820. While with Davila he was made a major, and when installed he took the honours very coolly, and on some of his friends congratulating him, he said, "If you were to make me a god, I should desire to be something greater." This trait, developed at so early a period of his life, indicated the existence of that vaulting ambition which has ever since characterized his life.

After serving the Spanish royal cause until 1821, he left Vera Cruz, turned against his old master and benefactor, and placed himself at the head of some irregular troops which he raised on the sea-coast near Vera Cruz, and which are called Jarocho in their language, and which were denominated by him his Cossacks, as they are all mounted and armed with spears. With this rude cavalry he besieged Vera Cruz, drove Davila into the castle of San Juan d'Ulloa, and after having been repulsed again entered at a subsequent period, and got entire possession of the city, expelling therefrom the old Spanish troops, and reducing the power of the mother country in Mexico to the walls of the castle.

Subsequent to this, Davila is said to have obtained an interview with Santa Anna, and told him he was destined to act a prominent part in the history of his country. "And now," says he, "I will give you some advice: always go with the strongest party." He always acted up to this motto until he raised the *grito*, (or cry,) in other words, took up the cudgels for the friars and church. He then overturned the federal government, and established a central despotism, of which the priests and the military were the two privileged orders. His life has been, from the first, of

the most romantic kind ; constantly in revolutions, constantly victorious.

His manners are extremely affable ; he is full of anecdote and humour, and makes himself exceedingly fascinating and agreeable to all who come into his company ; he is about five feet ten, rather spare, has a moderately high forehead, with black hair, short black whiskers, without mustachios, and an eye large, black, and expressive of a lurking devil in his look ; he is a man of genteel and dignified deportment, but of a disposition perfectly heartless. He married a Spanish lady of property, a native of Alvarado, and through that marriage obtained the first part of his estate, called Manga de Clavo, six leagues from Vera Cruz. He has three fine children, yet quite young.

The following striking anecdote of Santa Anna illustrates his peculiar quickness and management : During the revolution of 1829, while he was shut up in Oxaca, and surrounded by the government troops, and reduced to the utmost straits for the want of money and provisions, having a very small force, there had been, in consequence of the siege and firing every day through the streets, no mass for several weeks. He had no money, and hit upon the following expedient to get it : he took possession of one of the convents, got hold of the

wardrobe of the friars, dressed his officers and some of his soldiers in it, and early in the morning had the bells rung for the mass. The people, delighted at having again an opportunity of adoring the Supreme Being, flocked to the church where he was; and after the house was pretty well filled, his friars showed their side-arms and bayonets from beneath their cowls, and closed the doors upon the assembled multitude. At this unexpected denouement there was a tremendous shrieking, when one of his officers ascended the pulpit, and told the people that he wanted ten thousand dollars, and must have it. He finally succeeded in getting about thirty-six hundred dollars, when he dismissed the congregation.

As a sample of Santa Anna's pious whims we relate the following :

In the same campaign of Oxaca, Santa Anna and his officers were there besieged by Rincon, who commanded the government troops. Santa Anna was in a convent surrounded by a small breastwork. Some of the officers one night, to amuse themselves, took the wooden saints out of the church and placed them as sentries, dressed in uniforms, on the breastwork. Rincon, alarmed on the morning at this apparent boldness, began to fire away at the wooden images, supposing them

to be flesh and blood ; and it was not until some of the officers who were not in the secret had implored Santa Anna to prevent this desecration that the firing ceased.

Many similar facts are related of him. He is, in fact, all things to all men ; and yet, after his treachery to Davila, he has the impudence to talk about ingratitude. He never was out of Mexico. If I only live to tree him, and take him prisoner, I shall ask for no more glory in this life.

## CHAPTER XIII.

I WRITE this on the nineteenth of February, 1836, at San Antonio. We are all in high spirits, though we are rather short of provisions, for men who have appetites that could digest any thing but oppression ; but no matter, we have a prospect of soon getting our bellies full of fighting, and that is victuals and drink to a true patriot any day. We had a little sort of convivial party last evening : just about a dozen of us set to work, most patriotically, to see whether we could not get rid of that curse of the land, whisky, and we made considerable progress ; but my poor friend, Thimble-rig, got sewed up just about as tight as the eyelet-hole in a lady's corset, and a little tighter too, I reckon ; for when we went to bed he called for a boot-jack, which was brought to him, and he bent down on his hands and knees, and very gravely pulled off his hat with it, for the darned critter was so thoroughly swiped that he didn't know his head from his heels. But this wasn't all the folly he committed : he pulled off his coat and laid it

on the bed, and then hung himself over the back of a chair; and I wish I may be shot if he didn't go to sleep in that position, thinking every thing had been done according to Gunter's late scale. Seeing the poor fellow completely used up, I carried him to bed, though he did belong to the Temperance society; and he knew nothing about what had occurred until I told him next morning. The Bee hunter didn't join us in this blow-out. Indeed, he will seldom drink more than just enough to prevent his being called a total abstinence man. But then he is the most jovial fellow for a water drinker I ever did see.

This morning I saw a caravan of about fifty mules passing by Bexar, and bound for Santa Fe. They were loaded with different articles to such a degree that it was astonishing how they could travel at all, and they were nearly worn out by their labours. They were without bridle or halter, and yet proceeded with perfect regularity in a single line; and the owners of the caravan rode their mustangs with their enormous spurs, weighing at least a pound a piece, with rowels an inch and a half in length, and lever bits of the harshest description, able to break the jaws of their animals under a very gentle pressure. The men were dressed in the costume of Mexicans. Colonel

Travis sent out a guard to see that they were not laden with munitions of war for the enemy. I went out with the party. The poor mules were bending under a burden of more than three hundred pounds, without including the panniers, which were bound so tight as almost to stop the breath of the poor animal. Each of the sorrowful line came up, spontaneously, in turn to have his girth unbound and his load removed. They seemed scarcely able to keep upon their feet, and as they successively obtained relief, one after another heaved a long and deep sigh, which it was painful to hear, because it proved that the poor brutes had been worked beyond their strength. What a world of misery man inflicts upon the rest of creation in his brief passage through life !

Finding that the caravan contained nothing intended for the enemy, we assisted the owners to replace the heavy burdens on the backs of the patient but dejected mules, and allowed them to pursue their weary and lonely way. For full two hours we could see them slowly winding along the narrow path, a faint line that ran like a thread through the extended prairie ; and finally they were whittled down to the little end of nothing in the distance, and were blotted out from the horizon.

The caravan had no sooner disappeared than one of the hunters, who had been absent several days, came in. He was one of those gentlemen who don't pride themselves much upon their costume, and reminded me of a covey who came into a tavern in New York when I was last in that city. He was dressed in five jackets, all of which failed to conceal his raggedness, and as he bolted in, he exclaimed,

“Worse than I look, by ——. But no matter, I've let myself for fourteen dollars a month, and find my own prog and lodging.”

“To do what?” demanded the barkeeper.

“To stand at the corner for a paper-mill sign—‘cash for rags’—that's all. I'm about to enter upon the stationery business, you see.” He tossed off his grog, and bustled out to begin his day's work.

But to return to the hunter. He stated that he had met some Indians on the banks of the Rio Frio, who informed him that Santa Anna, with a large force, had already crossed the Neuces, and might be expected to arrive before San Antonio in a few days. We immediately set about preparing to give him a warm reception, for we are all well aware, if our little band is overwhelmed by numbers, there is little mercy to be expected from the cowardly Mexicans—it is war to the knife.

I jocosely asked the ragged hunter, who was a smart, active young fellow, of the steamboat and alligator breed, whether he was a rhinoceros or a hyena, as he was so eager for a fight with the invaders. "Neither the one, nor t'other, Colonel," says he, "but a whole menagerie in myself. I'm shaggy as a bear, wolfish about the head, active as a cougar, and can grin like a hyena, until the bark will curl off a gum log. There's a sprinkling of all sorts in me, from the lion down to the skunk; and before the war is over you'll pronounce me an entire zoological institute, or I miss a figure in my calculation. I promise to swallow Santa Anna without gagging, if you will only skewer back his ears, and grease his head a little."

He told me that he was one in the fatal expedition fitted out from New Orleans, in November last, to join the contemplated attack upon Tampico by Mehia and Peraza. They were, in all, about one hundred and thirty men, who embarked as emigrants to Texas; and the terms agreed upon were, that it was optional whether the party took up arms in defence of Texas, or not, on landing. They were at full liberty to act as they pleased. But the truth was, Tampico was their destination, and an attack on that city the covet design, which was not made known before land was in sight.

The emigrants were landed, some fifty, who doubtless had a previous understanding, joined the standard of General Mehia, and the following day a formidable fort surrendered without an attack.

The whole party were now tendered arms and ammunition, which even those who had been decoyed accepted; and, the line being formed, they commenced the attack upon the city. The hunter continued: "On the 15th of November our little army, consisting of one hundred and fifty men, marched into Tampico, garrisoned by two thousand Mexicans, who were drawn up in battle array in the public square of the city. We charged them at the point of the bayonet, and although they so greatly outnumbered us, *in two minutes* we completely routed them; and they fled, taking refuge on the house tops, from which they poured a destructive fire upon our gallant little band. We fought them until daylight, when we found our number decreased to fifty or sixty broken down and disheartened men. Without ammunition, and deserted by the officers, twenty-eight immediately surrendered. But a few of us cut our way through, and fortunately escaped to the mouth of the river, where we got on board a vessel and sailed for Texas.

"The twenty-eight prisoners wished to be con-

sidered as prisoners of war ; they made known the manner in which they had been deceived, but they were tried by a court-martial of Mexican soldiers, and condemned to be shot on the 14th day of December, 1835, which sentence was carried into execution."

After receiving this account from my new friend, the old pirate and the Indian hunter came up, and they went off to liquor together, and I went to see a wild Mexican hog, which one of the hunters had brought in. These animals have become scarce, which circumstance is not to be deplored, for their flesh is of little value ; and there will still be hogs enough left in Mexico, from all I can learn, even though these should be extirpated.

*February 22.* The Mexicans, about sixteen hundred strong, with their President Santa Anna at their head, aided by Generals Almonte, Cos, Sesma, and Castrillon, are within two leagues of Bexar. General Cos, it seems, has already forgot his parole of honour, and has come back to retrieve the credit he lost in this place in December last. If he is captured a second time, I don't think he can have the impudence to ask to go at large again without giving better bail than on the former occasion. Some of the scouts came in, and bring reports that Santa Anna has been endeavouring to

excite the Indians to hostilities against the Texians, but so far without effect. The Cumanches, in particular, entertain such hatred for the Mexicans, and at the same time hold them in such contempt, that they would rather turn their tomahawks against them, and drive them from the land, than lend a helping hand. We are up and doing, and as lively as Dutch cheese in the dog-days. The two hunters that I have already introduced to the reader left the town, this afternoon, for the purpose of reconnoitring.

*February 23.* Early this morning the enemy came in sight, marching in regular order, and displaying their strength to the greatest advantage, in order to strike us with terror. But that was no go; they'll find that they have to do with men who will never lay down their arms as long as they can stand on their legs. We held a short council of war, and, finding that we should be completely surrounded, and overwhelmed by numbers, if we remained in the town, we concluded to withdraw to the fortress of Alamo, and defend it to the last extremity. We accordingly filed off, in good order, having some days before placed all the surplus provisions, arms, and ammunition in the fortress. We have had a large national flag made; it is composed of thirteen stripes, red and white, alter-

nately, on a blue ground with a large white star, of five points, in the centre, and between the points the letters TEXAS. As soon as all our little band, about one hundred and fifty in number, had entered and secured the fortress in the best possible manner, we set about raising our flag on the battlements; on which occasion there was no one more active than my young friend, the Bee hunter. He had been all along sprightly, cheerful, and spirited, but now, notwithstanding the control that he usually maintained over himself, it was with difficulty that he kept his enthusiasm within bounds. As soon as we commenced raising the flag he burst forth, in a clear, full tone of voice, that made the blood tingle in the veins of all who heard him :—

“ Up with your banner, Freedom,  
Thy champions cling to thee;  
They'll follow where'er you lead 'em,  
To death, or victory ;—  
Up with your banner, Freedom.

Tyrants and slaves are rushing  
To tread thee in the dust ;  
Their blood will soon be gushing,  
And stain our knives with rust ;—  
But not thy banner, Freedom.

While stars and stripes are flying,  
Our blood we'll freely shed ;  
No groan will 'scape the dying,  
Seeing thee o'er his head ;—  
Up with your banner, Freedom.”

This song was followed by three cheers from all within the fortress, and the drums and trumpets commenced playing. The enemy marched into Bexar, and took possession of the town, a blood-red flag flying at their head, to indicate that we need not expect quarters if we should fall into their clutches. In the afternoon a messenger was sent from the enemy to Colonel Travis, demanding an unconditional and absolute surrender of the garrison, threatening to put every man to the sword in case of refusal. The only answer he received was a cannon shot, so the messenger left us with a flea in his ear, and the Mexicans commenced firing grenades at us, but without doing any mischief. At night Colonel Travis sent an express to Colonel Fanning, at Goliad, about three or four days' march from this place, to let him know that we are besieged. The old pirate volunteered to go on this expedition, and accordingly left the fort after night fall.

*February 24.* Very early this morning the enemy commenced a new battery on the banks of the river, about three hundred and fifty yards from the fort, and by afternoon they amused themselves by firing at us from that quarter. Our Indian scout came in this evening, and with him a reinforcement of thirty men from Gonzales, who are just in the nick

of time to reap a harvest of glory; but there is some prospect of sweating blood before we gather it in. An accident happened to my friend Thimblorig this afternoon. He was intent on his eternal game of thimbles, in a somewhat exposed position, while the enemy were bombarding us from the new redoubt. A three ounce ball glanced from the parapet and struck him on the breast, inflicting a painful but not dangerous wound. I extracted the ball, which was of lead, and recommended to him to drill a hole through it, and carry it for a watch seal. "No," he replied, with energy, "may I be shot six times if I do; that would be making a bauble for an idle boast. No, Colonel, lead is getting scarce, and I'll lend it out at compound interest.—Curse the thimbles!" he muttered, and went his way, and I saw no more of him that evening.

*February 25.* The firing commenced early this morning, but the Mexicans are poor engineers, for we haven't lost a single man, and our outworks have sustained no injury. Our sharp shooters have brought down a considerable number of stragglers at a long shot. I got up before the peep of day, hearing an occasional discharge of a rifle just over the place where I was sleeping, and I was somewhat amazed to see Thimblorig mounted alone on

the battlement, no one being on duty at the time but the sentries. "What are you doing there?" says I. "Paying my debts," says he, "interest and all." "And how do you make out?" says I. "I've nearly got through," says he; "stop a moment, Colonel, and I'll close the account." He clapped his rifle to his shoulder, and blazed away, then jumped down from his perch, and said, "That account's settled; them chaps will let me play out my game in quiet next time." I looked over the wall, and saw four Mexicans lying dead on the plain. I asked him to explain what he meant by paying his debts, and he told me that he had run the grape shot into four rifle balls, and that he had taken an early stand to have a chance of picking off stragglers. "Now, Colonel, let's go take our bitters," said he; and so we did. The enemy have been busy during the night, and have thrown up two batteries on the opposite side of the river. The battalion of Matamoros is posted there, and cavalry occupy the hills to the east and on the road to Gonzales. They are determined to surround us, and cut us off from reinforcement, or the possibility of escape by a sortie.—Well, there's one thing they cannot prevent: we'll still go ahead, and sell our lives at a high price.

*February 26.* Colonel Bowie has been taken

sick from over exertion and exposure. He did not leave his bed to-day until twelve o'clock. He is worth a dozen common men in a situation like ours. The Bee hunter keeps the whole garrison in good heart with his songs and his jests, and his daring and determined spirit. He is about the quickest on the trigger, and the best rifle shot we have in the fort. I have already seen him bring down eleven of the enemy, and at such a distance that we all thought it would be waste of ammunition to attempt it. His gun is first-rate, quite equal to my Betsey, though she has not quite as many trinkets about her. This day a small party sallied out of the fort for wood and water, and had a slight skirmish with three times their number from the division under General Sesma. The Bee hunter headed them, and beat the enemy off, after killing three. On opening his Bible at night, of which he always reads a portion before going to rest, he found a musket ball in the middle of it. "See here, Colonel," said he, "how they have treated the valued present of my dear little Kate of Nacogdoches." "It has saved your life," said I. "True," replied he, more seriously than usual, "and I am not the first sinner whose life has been saved by this book." He prepared for bed, and before retiring he prayed, and returned thanks for

his providential escape; and I heard the name of Catherine mingled in his prayer.

*February 27.* The cannonading began early this morning, and ten bombs were thrown into the fort, but fortunately exploded without doing any mischief. So far it has been a sort of tempest in a teapot; not unlike a pitched battle in the Hall of Congress, where the parties array their forces, make fearful demonstrations on both sides, then fire away with loud sounding speeches, which contain about as much meaning as the report of a howitzer charged with a blank cartridge. Provisions are becoming scarce, and the enemy are endeavouring to cut off our water. If they attempt to stop our grog in that manner, let them look out, for we shall become too wrathful for our shirts to hold us. We are not prepared to submit to an excise of that nature, and they'll find it out. This discovery has created considerable excitement in the fort.

*February 28.* Last night our hunters brought in some corn and hogs, and had a brush with a scout from the enemy beyond gun-shot of the fort. They put the scout to flight, and got in without injury. They bring accounts that the settlers are flying in all quarters, in dismay, leaving their possessions to the mercy of the ruthless invader, who is literally engaged in a war of extermination,

more brutal than the untutored savage of the desert could be guilty of. Slaughter is indiscriminate, sparing neither sex, age, nor condition. Buildings have been burnt down, farms laid waste, and Santa Anna appears determined to verify his threat, and convert the blooming paradise into a howling wilderness. For just one fair crack at that rascal, even at a hundred yards distance, I would bargain to break my Betsey, and never pull trigger again. My name's not Crockett if I wouldn't get glory enough to appease my stomach for the remainder of my life. The scouts report that a settler, by the name of Johnson, flying with his wife and three little children, when they reached the Colorado, left his family on the shore, and waded into the river to see whether it would be safe to ford with his wagon. When about the middle of the river he was seized by an alligator, and, after a struggle, was dragged under the water, and perished. The helpless woman and her babes were discovered, gazing in agony on the spot, by other fugitives who happily passed that way, and relieved them. Those who fight the battles experience but a small part of the privation, suffering, and anguish that follow in the train of ruthless war. The cannonading continued, at intervals, throughout the day, and all hands were kept up to their work.

The enemy, somewhat imboldened, draws nigher to the fort. So much the better.—There was a move in General Sesma's division toward evening.

*February 29.* Before daybreak we saw General Sesma leave his camp with a large body of cavalry and infantry, and move off in the direction of Goliad. We think that he must have received news of Colonel Fanning's coming to our relief. We are all in high spirits at the prospect of being able to give the rascals a fair shake on the plain. This business of being shut up makes a man wolfish.—I had a little sport this morning before breakfast. The enemy had planted a piece of ordnance within gun-shot of the fort during the night, and the first thing in the morning they commenced a brisk cannonade, point-blank, against the spot where I was snoring. I turned out pretty smart, and mounted the rampart. The gun was charged again, a fellow stepped forth to touch her off, but before he could apply the match I let him have it, and he keeled over. A second stepped up, snatched the match from the hand of the dying man, but Thimblorig, who had followed me, handed me his rifle, and the next instant the Mexican was stretched on the earth beside the first. A third came up to the cannon, my companion handed me another gun, and I fixed him off in like manner. A fourth, then

a fifth, seized the match, who both met with the same fate, and then the whole party gave it up as a bad job, and hurried off to the camp, leaving the cannon ready charged where they had planted it. I came down, took my bitters, and went to breakfast. Thimblorig told me that the place from which I had been firing was one of the snugest stands in the whole fort, for he never failed picking off two or three stragglers before breakfast, when perched up there. And I recollect, now, having seen him there, ever since he was wounded, the first thing in the morning, and the last at night,—and at times thoughtlessly playing at his eternal game.

*March 1.* The enemy's forces have been increasing in numbers daily, notwithstanding they have already lost about three hundred men in the several assaults they have made upon us. I neglected to mention in the proper place, that when the enemy came in sight we had but three bushels of corn in the garrison, but have since found eighty bushels in a deserted house. Colonel Bowie's illness still continues, but he manages to crawl from his bed every day, that his comrades may see him. His presence alone is a tower of strength.—The enemy becomes more daring as his numbers increase.

*March 2.* This day the delegates meet in general convention, at the town of Washington, to frame our Declaration of Independence. That the sacred instrument may never be trampled on by the children of those who have freely shed their blood to establish it, is the sincere wish of David Crockett. Universal independence is an almighty idea, far too extensive for some brains to comprehend. It is a beautiful seed that germinates rapidly, and brings forth a large and vigorous tree, but like the deadly Upas, we sometimes find the smaller plants wither and die in its shades. Its blooming branches spread far and wide, offering a perch of safety to all alike, but even among its protecting branches we find the eagle, the kite, and the owl preying upon the helpless dove and sparrow. Beneath its shade myriads congregate in goodly fellowship, but the lamb and the fawn find but frail security from the lion and the jackal, though the tree of independence waves over them. Some imagine independence to be a natural charter, to exercise without restraint, and to their fullest extent, all the energies, both physical and mental, with which they have been endowed; and for their individual aggrandizement alone, without regard to the rights of others, provided they extend to all the same privilege and freedom

of action. Such independence is the worst of tyranny.

*March 3.* We have given over all hopes of receiving assistance from Goliad or Refugio. Colonel Travis harangued the garrison, and concluded by exhorting them, in case the enemy should carry the fort, to fight to the last gasp, and render their victory even more serious to them than to us. This was followed by three cheers.

*March 4.* Shells have been falling into the fort like hail during the day, but without effect. About dusk, in the evening, we observed a man running toward the fort, pursued by about a dozen Mexican cavalry. The Bee hunter immediately knew him to be the old pirate who had gone to Goliad, and, calling to the two hunters, he sallied out of the fort to the relief of the old man, who was hard pressed. I followed close after. Before we reached the spot the Mexicans were close on the heel of the old man, who stopped suddenly, turned short upon his pursuers, discharged his rifle, and one of the enemy fell from his horse. The chase was renewed, but finding that he would be overtaken and cut to pieces, he now turned again, and, to the amazement of the enemy, became the assailant in his turn. He clubbed his gun, and dashed among them like a wounded tiger, and

they fled like sparrows. By this time we reached the spot, and, in the ardour of the moment, followed some distance before we saw that our retreat to the fort was cut off by another detachment of cavalry. Nothing was to be done but to fight our way through. We were all of the same mind. "Go ahead!" cried I, and they shouted, "Go ahead, Colonel!" We dashed among them, and a bloody conflict ensued. They were about twenty in number, and they stood their ground. After the fight had continued about five minutes, a detachment was seen issuing from the fort to our relief, and the Mexicans scampered off, leaving eight of their comrades dead upon the field. But we did not escape unscathed, for both the pirate and the Bee hunter were mortally wounded, and I received a sabre cut across the forehead. The old man died, without speaking, as soon as we entered the fort. We bore my young friend to his bed, dressed his wounds, and I watched beside him. He lay, without complaint or manifesting pain, until about midnight, when he spoke, and I asked him if he wanted any thing. "Nothing," he replied, but drew a sigh that seemed to rend his heart, as he added, "Poor Kate of Nacogdoches!" His eyes were filled with tears, as he continued, "Her words were prophetic, Colonel;" and then he sang, in a

low voice that resembled the sweet notes of his own devoted Kate,

“ But toom cam’ the saddle, all bluidy to see,  
And hame cam’ the steed, but hame never cam’ he.”

He spoke no more, and, a few minutes after, died.  
Poor Kate, who will tell this to thee !

*March 5.* Pop, pop, pop ! Bom, bom, bom !  
throughout the day.—No time for memorandums  
now.—Go ahead !—Liberty and independence for  
ever !

[*Here ends Col. Crockett's manuscript.*]

## CHAPTER XIV.

THE hand is cold that wrote the foregoing pages, and it devolves upon another to record the subsequent events. Before daybreak, on the 6th of March, the Alamo was assaulted by the whole force of the Mexican army, commanded by Santa Anna in person. The battle was desperate until daylight, when only six men belonging to the Texian garrison were found alive. They were instantly surrounded, and ordered, by General Castrillon, to surrender, which they did, under a promise of his protection, finding that resistance any longer would be madness. Colonel Crockett was of the number. He stood alone in an angle of the fort, the barrel of his shattered rifle in his right hand, in his left his huge Bowie knife dripping blood. There was a frightful gash across his forehead, while around him there was a complete barrier of about twenty Mexicans, lying pell-mell, dead, and dying. At his feet lay the dead body of that well known character, designated in the Colonel's narrative by the assumed name of Thim-

blerig, his knife driven to the haft in the throat of a Mexican, and his left hand clenched in his hair. Poor fellow, I knew him well, at a time when he was possessed of many virtues, but of late years the weeds had choked up the flowers; however, Colonel Crockett had succeeded in awakening in his bosom a sense of better things, and the poor fellow was grateful to the last, and stood beside his friend throughout the desperate havoc.

General Castrillon was brave and not cruel, and disposed to save the prisoners. He marched them up to that part of the fort where stood Santa Anna and his murderous crew. The steady, fearless step, and undaunted tread of Colonel Crockett on this occasion, together with the bold demeanour of the hardy veteran, had a powerful effect on all present. Nothing daunted, he marched up boldly in front of Santa Anna, and looked him sternly in the face, while Castrillon addressed "his excellency,"—"Sir, here are six prisoners I have taken alive; how shall I dispose of them?" Santa Anna looked at Castrillon fiercely, flew into a violent rage, and replied, "Have I not told you before how to dispose of them? Why do you bring them to me?" At the same time his brave officers plunged their swords into the bosoms of their defenceless prisoners. Colonel Crockett, seeing the

act of treachery, instantly sprang like a tiger at the ruffian chief, but before he could reach him a dozen swords were sheathed in his indomitable heart; and he fell, and died without a groan, a frown on his brow, and a smile of scorn and defiance on his lips. Castrillon rushed from the scene, apparently horror-struck, sought his quarters, and did not leave them for several days, and hardly spoke to Santa Anna after.

The conduct of Colonel Bowie was characteristic to the last. When the fort was carried he was sick in bed. He had also one of the murderous butcher knives which bears his name. Lying in bed he discharged his pistols and gun, and with each discharge brought down an enemy. So intimidated were the Mexicans by this act of desperate and cool bravery, that they dared not approach him, but shot him from the door; and as the cowards approached his bed, over the dead bodies of their companions, the dying Bowie, nerving himself for a last blow, plunged his knife into the heart of his nearest foe at the same instant that he expired.

The gallant Colonel Travis fought as if determined to verify his prediction, that he would make a victory more serious than a defeat to the enemy. He fell from the rampart, mortally wounded, into the fort; and his musket fell forward among the

foe, who were scaling the wall. After a few minutes he recovered sufficiently to sit up, when the Mexican officer who led that party attempted to cut his head off with his sabre. The dying hero, with a death grasp, drew his sword and plunged it into the body of his antagonist, and both together sank into the arms of death. General Cos, who had commanded this fortress while in the possession of the Mexicans, and from whom it was captured, on entering the fort after the battle, ordered the servant of Colonel Travis to point out the body of his master; he did so, when Cos drew his sword, waved it triumphantly over the corpse, and then mangled the face and limbs with the malignant feelings of a Cumanche savage. One woman, Mrs. Dickinson, and a negro of Col. Travis, were the only persons whose lives were spared. The bodies of the slain were then thrown into a mass in the centre of the Alamo, and burned. The loss of the Mexicans in storming the place was not less than eight hundred killed and mortally wounded, making their losses since the first assault more than fifteen hundred. This immense slaughter, by so small a number, can only be accounted for by the fact of the Texians having five or six guns to each man in the fort. Immediately after the capture Santa Anna sent Mrs. Dickinson and the servant to

General Houston, accompanied by a Mexican with a flag, offering the Texians peace and general amnesty, if they would lay down their arms, and submit to his government. General Houston's reply was, "True, sir, you have succeeded in killing some of our brave men, but the Texians are not yet conquered." He sent him a copy of the Declaration of Independence recently agreed on at New Washington.

After the capture of San Antonio, Santa Anna had made a feint on Gonzales, where General Houston was with a very inferior force, which induced the latter to fall back on the Colorado, under the belief that the whole Mexican army was marching to attack him. A similar feint was also made by the Mexican General on Bastrop, a town on the Colorado, north-east of San Antonio. Gonzales lies east of that place. Having, in both instances, effected his object, Santa Anna concentrated his forces, and marched directly for La Bahia, or Goliad, which is situated about ninety miles south-east of San Antonio, on the Colorado. The fort at Goliad is of great strength, and was defended by Colonel Fanning with a small force of volunteers. About the middle of March, orders were received from General Houston directing the blowing up and evacuation of the fort, and that Colonel Fanning

should concentrate with him on the Colorado. On the 18th of March the Mexicans were discovered, in considerable force, in the neighbourhood of Goliad, and through the day there was some skirmishing with the advance parties. On the 19th the fort was set on fire, and its wooden defences destroyed; but the wall was left entire, and Colonel Fanning took up his line of march. His force, at that time, was reduced to two hundred and sixty, rank and file. With this force and several field pieces he set out to cross an open country, and endeavour to effect a junction with General Houston. On the evening of the first day of their march, the enemy made their appearance in the rear, about three miles distant. Colonel Fanning halted, and opened his artillery on them, instead of hastening forward to avail himself of the shelter of a wood, some distance ahead. The enemy manifesting a disposition to cut him off from the woods, he again put his forces in motion, but it was now too late. He not only lost the shelter of the timber, which would have ensured his safety against the enemy's horse, but the assistance of his advanced guard, which was cut off from him by this manœuvre of the enemy. The absence of the advanced guard reduced his forces to two hundred and thirty-three, rank and file, to which the enemy

opposed five hundred cavalry and two hundred infantry. The action commenced about five o'clock, and continued until nearly dark. The enemy was repulsed with great loss in every charge, and never was able to penetrate nearer to Fanning's force than sixty-five or one hundred yards; and finally, about dark, drew off his forces to a secure distance, leaving only a few to succour the wounded, who were not molested. Fanning's loss was five killed and twelve wounded, two mortally. The enemy acknowledged the loss of one hundred and ninety-two killed, and a large number wounded. So soon as the Mexicans withdrew, Fanning commenced throwing up intrenchments, at which his men were employed during the whole night.

About sunrise on the 20th, the enemy again advanced on Fanning, and fired their cannon four times over him; a large reinforcement of Mexicans was plainly to be seen, three miles distant. At this moment a white flag, attended by a small party, was seen advancing from the enemy, which was met by a similar one from Fanning, under Major Wallace. The enemy demanded the surrender of Fanning and his forces, and promised, in the most sacred manner, that they should retain all their private property; that they might return, by

the first opportunity, as prisoners of war, to the United States, or remain until they were regularly exchanged; and that they should be treated in the most humane manner while retained in confinement. With these specious promises he was induced to trust to the honour of the butchers of the Alamo, and accept of the terms of capitulation.

As soon as the necessary arrangements could be made the prisoners were marched, under a strong guard, to Goliad, and huddled together, officers and men, into a church within the fort at Goliad. The enemy having succeeded in capturing other small parties, the number of prisoners amounted to four hundred, and were all crowded together in the church, and compelled to sit or lie constantly. The only accommodation afforded was a few benches for the officers. They were retained in this situation for three days, and during this period received only a small ration of raw beef, not exceeding half a pound each. On the fourth day they were marched out into the open air, and limits prescribed them, over which they were not to pass. For four days longer they were kept in this situation, during which they were allowed only two rations similar to the first; and, but for the pecan nuts purchased from the Mexican soldiers, and a small quantity of jerked beef procured

in the same manner, they must have suffered immensely. On the eighth day representations were made to the prisoners, that it would be necessary to remove them out of the fort, as they were about to drive in beeves to slaughter, in order to prepare rations for their removal to Matagorda, where they were to take shipping for New Orleans. They were accordingly marched out, in parties of one hundred each, and, in single file, were led along a high brush fence; when, at the distance of two hundred yards, they were ordered to face about, and the cocking of the guns gave the first intimation of the fate that awaited them. At the first fire nearly all fell mortally wounded. A few escaped by falling at the flash, and as soon as the firing ceased, they leaped up, and sprung over the fence, and succeeded in reaching the woods, where they eluded their pursuers. The Mexicans proceeded to despatch with their bayonets any who showed signs of life after the firing, and they then stripped and burnt the bodies. The authorities of Texas bestowed solemn obsequies upon their mutilated and blackened limbs, on the 4th of June, after their murderers had sank unto death on the plains of San Jacinto, under the appalling words, "Remember La Bahia!"

But this succession of barbarities, so far from

intimidating, served to rouse the energies of the oppressed. The vainglorious Spaniard, elated with his success, without adverting to the fact that he had never been victorious without having at least from five to ten of his mercenaries opposed to one of his foes, now ventured to cross the Colorado, believing that victory was perched upon his standard, and would not leave it until Texas should be subdued.

His track was marked by death and desolation. Fire, famine, and the sword were in his train, and neither sex nor age was received as a plea for mercy. The hoary head of the grandsire, the flaxen curls of the babe, and the dishevelled tresses of the affrighted mother, were alike stained with gore. Farm houses were consumed by fire, the crops destroyed in the ground; and the settlers fled in dismay, feeling that the worst of scourges had been let loose upon them. The plains were strewn with thousands of the unburied slaughtered; and the air was fetid with corruption and decay. The merciless tyrant saw all this, and his heart expanded with joy, as he moved on, like Attila, and beheld the terror and wretchedness of those he came to annihilate, rather than to scourge into subjection. But his was a temporary triumph. He crossed the Colorado full of hope of carrying

his demoniac intentions into execution, but shame, confusion, and defeat awaited his coming.

About the 18th of April the tyrant, with one division of his troops, marched in the direction of Lynch's ferry, on the San Jacinto, burning Harrisburgh as he passed down. The Texian forces under General Houston were ordered to be in readiness, and on the morning of the 19th they took up their line of march in pursuit of him, and found him encamped on the banks of the San Jacinto. About nine o'clock on the morning of the 21st the Mexicans were reinforced by five hundred choice troops, under command of General Cos, increasing their effective force to upward of fifteen hundred men, while the aggregate force of the Texians, for the field, numbered seven hundred and eighty-three. General Houston ordered the bridge on the only road communicating with the Brazos, distant from the encampment, to be destroyed, thus cutting off all possibility of escape. The Texian army was ordered to parade their respective commands, which they did with alacrity and spirit, and were anxious for the conflict; the disparity in numbers only seemed to increase their enthusiasm and confidence. Houston, having the enemy thus snugly hemmed in, and his little army drawn up in order of battle, addressed them, in

person, briefly, and concluded by saying, "Fellow soldiers, there is the enemy before you; do you wish to fight?" "We do!" was the universal response. "Well, then," he continued, "remember it is for liberty, or death! — Remember the Alamo! Remember Goliad!" The soldiers shouted, "We shall remember!"—"Then go ahead!" From General Houston's official account it appears that the war-cry was, "Remember the Alamo." The attack was furious, and lasted about eighteen minutes from the time of close action until the Texians were in possession of the enemy's camp. Our riflemen, not having the advantage of bayonets, used their pieces as clubs, breaking many of them at the breach. The rout commenced at half-past four o'clock, and continued until twilight. In the battle our loss was two killed and twenty-three wounded, six of whom mortally. The enemy's loss was six hundred and thirty killed, and seven hundred and thirty were taken prisoners, among whom were Generals Santa Anna and Cos, who were captured a day or two after the battle. About six hundred muskets and three hundred sabres were collected; several hundred mules and horses were taken, and near twelve hundred dollars in specie.

We learn, from other sources, that General Cos, when taken, was pale and greatly agitated; but

Almonte displayed, as he had during the fight, great coolness and courage. Santa Anna fled among the earliest who retreated. His horse bogged down in the prairie, near the Brassos timber; he then made for the timber on foot. His pursuers, in the eagerness of the chase, dashed into the same bog, and continued the pursuit on foot, following the trail of the fugitive, which was very plain on account of the recent rains, until they reached the timber, where it was lost. The pursuers then spread themselves, and searched the woods for a long time in vain, when it occurred to Arnold Hunter that the chase might, like a hard pressed bear, have taken a tree. The tree tops were then examined, when, lo! the game was discovered snugly ensconced in the forks of a large live oak. The captors did not know who the prisoner was until they reached the camp, when the Mexican soldiers exclaimed, "El General, El General Santa Anna!" When conducted to General Houston he offered to evacuate Texas, and acknowledge its independence, on condition that his life and liberty should be granted to him, and a safe escort to Mexico.

The enemy passed La Bahia and Bexar, blowing up the Alamo; spiking, and throwing the cannon in the river, in his retreat. The Cumanche Indians

commenced depredating in the rear of the Mexican army, as they advanced from Bexar upon the settlements. All their horses and mules, of which they had many, as well as much baggage, were taken by the Indians. At every step they met with trouble, and are hurrying with all possible despatch toward the interior.

The fate of poor Fanning, who was not killed in the indiscriminate massacre of his troops, has since been ascertained. He was condemned to be shot. When he found that was determined on, and was ordered out for execution, he handed his watch to an officer, as compensation to have him buried, deliberately tied a handkerchief over his eyes, begged them not to shoot him in the head, bared his breast, and requested to be shot there. He was shot in the head, and never buried!

Such are the monsters that freemen have had to contend with, to maintain their freedom; true, the struggle is not yet over, but nothing can impede the onward march, and Texas must take her stand among independent nations.

THE END.



*J. L. L.*



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