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ADVENTURES

OF

COL. GRACCHUS VANDERBOMB,

OF SLOUGHCREEK,

IN PURSUIT OF THE PRESIDENCY:

ALSO,

THE EXPLOITS OF

MR. NUMERIUS PLUTARCH KIPPS,

HIS PRIVATE SECRETARY.

BY J. B. JONES,

EX-EDITOR OF THE OFFICIAL JOURNAL.

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PREFACE.

To the Hon. ———

DEAR SIR:—

ALTHOUGH I have permission to inscribe your name in a formal dedication, I forbear to do it in this instance for obvious reasons. I append my own name, however, with a perfect resignation to what may follow. If I am not proof against ridicule, I was once, as you remember, quite accustomed to it. Yet I would suggest to the political beadles, if they be disposed to use the lash again, that one's skin grows tender during a long exemption from punishment.

PHILADELPHIA, *March*, 1852.

J. B. J.

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ADVENTURES
OF
COLONEL VANDERBOMB,
IN PURSUIT OF THE PRESIDENCY.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER.—THE PARENTS OF GRACCHUS.—NEGOTIATIONS PREVIOUS TO THEIR UNION.—FINAL SETTLEMENT OF THE CONDITIONS.—BIRTH OF GRACCHUS.—DIFFICULTY IN REGARD TO HIS EDUCATION.—NUMEBIUS PLUTARCH KIPPS.—GREAT DESIGNS FOR HIS PUPIL.

BEFORE we proceed to relate the adventures of the most eccentric individual our country has hitherto produced, the singularly renowned COLONEL GRACCHUS VANDERBOMB, the forbearance of the reader is asked for a few minutes, while a rapid sketch is given of his origin.

As if the fates had decreed a great statesman and patriot should be given to the republic, devoid of the sectional bias and local predilections which have made shipwreck of so many political aspirants, the subject of these memoirs was born exactly upon the line dividing the North from the South, and in after years had the felicity of being able to claim either of the grand divisions of the country as the place of his nativity.

The father of Gracchus had been one of the rich federalists of New York, extensively engaged in commerce. He had at first opposed the Act for the suppression of the slave trade, being the owner of several vessels then plying between the coast of Africa and the Capes of Virginia; but, finding that his opposition was unavailing, and that the principal advocates of the measure were his customers in the South, he relinquished his interests on the ocean, and became, subsequently, when the Constitution, providing for the representation of three-fifths of the slaves, was ratified, a zealous convert to the doctrine of abolition.

But the mother of Gracchus, not dissimilar in some respects to her renowned prototype of the ancient time, was the daughter of a Virginian belonging to the great democratical family of which Jefferson was the head; and a difference of opinion in regard to the policy of certain measures proposed by one or the other of the political parties, between her father and Mr. Vanderbomb, was near proving fatal to the suit and expectations of the latter. However, after written explanations on the part of the suitor, and something like a diplomatic proposition on the part of the parent, a compromise was effected; the happy fruits of which it will be our good fortune to exhibit to the world, in the sequel of this veracious history.

Among the conditions stipulated in the matrimonial agreement, was one that a plantation should be purchased, somewhere on the line separating the free states from those in which slavery existed, and that a mansion should be erected thereon, having one-half its dimensions on either side; and in this house, and on alternate days, in the northern and southern apartments of it, the parents of our hero were to pass a certain number of months every year.

Mr. Vanderbomb, however, had an estate in New York, which would require some portion of his time and personal

attention; and as it was to be apprehended that his side of the line might present the greatest temptations to his progeny to become citizens of the North, the considerate maternal grandfather of our Gracchus, to remove this obstacle to the union, purchased a like estate for his daughter in Southern Virginia, and required that the happy couple should spend just as many months on the margin of the briny waters of Sloughcreek* as they did at Furzehill, on the Hudson; and it was further agreed between the contracting parties (the fair daughter of the proud Virginian silently acquiescing), that, in the probable event of there being issue, the first, if a male, should have the appendage of "Sloughcreek" added to his name, in the same manner that "Roanoke" had been appended to John Randolph's; and, if a female, she was to be styled Flora Vanderbomb, of "Furzehill."

Of course the Virginian, being the best politician, won the day; and hence we have the pleasing task of preparing for posterity an account of the gigantic schemes and delectable exploits of Colonel Gracchus Vanderbomb, of Sloughcreek.

It being our original design to present the hero of this work to the reader only after he had attained to mature age, and indeed when he had passed the meridian of life, although just entering upon the threshold of his ambitious career, it would not be essential to the purpose, nor perhaps material to the reader, to chronicle in this place the various incidents in connexion with his existence from the date of his birth, which occurred on the line of separation between the North and the South, to the day upon which is to commence the regular narration of his adventures.

It may be remarked, nevertheless, that there was difficulty on both sides of the house about the manner and place of his education. His father, who was of Puritan descent, desired that he should be sent, when of proper age, to one of the New

* Pronounced by the natives *Sloocreek*.

England colleges; on the other side, the family of his mother were Episcopalians, and wished him to be entered at William and Mary, Williamsburg, Va., where so many Presidents had been educated. Princeton was named as a medium point; but it was rejected because it was under the supervisorship of the Presbyterians. It was agreed, at length, by way of compromise, that he should not be sent anywhere, but that a competent person might be employed to teach him everything he ought to know, just at the place where he was born. But in this negotiation the North proved victorious, and Mr. Vanderbomb, the elder, succeeded in employing a graduate of Cambridge in the capacity of private tutor.

Mr. Numerius Plutarch Kipps, the private teacher, was a genuine Yankee; and, in his youth, had the faculty not only to adapt himself to circumstances, and to the dispositions of those from whom he desired to receive benefits, but likewise to reap the greatest possible advantage from his servility. So well did he please young Master Gracchus, his mother, and his father, that it was contracted between the parties that he should be the constant companion, the Mæcenas, of his pupil through life, and ample provision was to be made for him, so long as he complied with the terms of the agreement. And Kipps was faithful to the end. He even made a noble sacrifice of his partialities for the doctrines and dogmas of the lineal descendants of the Pilgrims who landed at Plymouth Rock, and strove successfully to balance his principles and opinions evenly between the two great divisions of the Union. Inspired by the noble examples of patriotism and greatness in ancient history, he conceived, at an early day, the idea of training his pupil according to the wise precepts of the great model from whom he derived a portion of his name. He resolved that Gracchus should obtain the highest honours of the republic, and that he, like the first Plutarch, would enjoy the felicity of recording the great deeds of his protégé.

Under these circumstances, it must be admitted that Gracchus had no other alternative than to become a politician; and that his mind should be nicely balanced between the extremes of party, was not only natural, but inevitable. That he was ambitious, was mainly owing to the incentives of Plutarch; that he was strictly allied to neither of the great parties of the day, and yet could advocate and defend them both upon occasion, was the result of his parentage, and owing to the place of his birth. Hence, throughout his life, and up to the time when he is to be introduced to the reader in *propria persona*, and when both his parents had long since been buried, one in New York, the other in Virginia, he continued to follow the example of his father, residing alternately in the North, the South, and on the line of separation between them. And his faithful Mæcenas, Numerius Plutarch Kipps, was his constant attendant and adviser.



CHAPTER II.

THE HALFWAY HOUSE.—VILLAGE OF MIDWAY.—ITS INHABITANTS.—COLONEL GRACCHUS VANDERBOMB, OF SLOUGHCREEK.—MR. KIPPS.—PENNSYLVANIA ELECTION.—VANDERBOMB ELECTED TO THE LEGISLATURE OF NEW YORK.—MISS FLORA VANDERBOMB, OF FURZEHILL.—REV. MR. OLDSTYLE.—THE NEW YORK CENSOR NOMINATES VANDERBOMB FOR THE PRESIDENCY.—\$500 SENT THE EDITOR.—GRAVE DISCUSSIONS.—THE COLONEL DETERMINES TO RESIGN HIS SEAT IN THE NEW YORK LEGISLATURE.

COLONEL GRACCHUS VANDERBOMB, of Sloughcreek, and his ever-present Plutarch, were sojourning at the "Halfway House," the mansion on the line of separation between the northern and southern divisions of the Union. The house faced the east, and the great highway passed along in front of it. The line of demarkation struck the centre of the door,

and passed through the hall; on either side of which, above and below, were two rooms of precisely the same size. The great difference observable between the apartments north and south, was the remarkable one, that while the first were furnished with everything of domestic manufacture, the others contained nothing that was not imported. And these were under the care of negro slaves, while the attendants of the others were white domestics.

Since the purchase of the Halfway House estate by the father of the Colonel, quite a village had grown up on the premises, to the great enhancement of the value of the property. It was called Midway, and boasted its inn, post-office, blacksmith shop, and some half-dozen other shops, including those of a physician and lawyer, as well as a score of neat dwellings. And it had been so contrived by the proprietor, that, when new buildings were to be erected, the same number on either hand should be commenced and completed at the same time. Likewise, an exact equilibrium was to be maintained in the population. When a stranger came to the village, for the purpose of becoming an inhabitant of it, he was required to stay at the inn, which was situated on the line, like the Vanderbomb mansion, until another citizen could be found to balance his vote and influence. When a death occurred in the South, one of the inhabitants of the North was compelled to go on a journey, either to the east or the west, at his option, until he could find some one willing to supply the place of the deceased. If he failed of success, he was to remain in banishment. A birth in the North had to be compensated by a like accession on the other side, either in like manner or by proxy, viz. the infant of indigent parents at a distance being brought thither and adopted by those who had none of their own.

Gracchus and Plutarch were seated at the round table in the library, which was the south-west room on the first floor

of the capacious mansion. Before them were scattered books, pamphlets, and newspapers in profusion, which they seemed to be busily and comfortably consulting. It was a bright frosty morning in autumn, and a cheerful fire of hickory wood glowed before them.

Colonel Vanderbomb was now a portly gentleman of five-and-fifty. He was above the middle stature; his limbs large, and stomach protuberant. His nose was Roman, his features large, his cheeks were red from drinking good wine and brandy, and from good health; but his eyes, surmounted by a low forehead, were rather dull and prominent. His hair, originally dark, was now an iron gray. Altogether, there was something in his aspect to attract notice and even to command respect. His size, his neat and costly apparel, combined with the universally known fact of his wealth, his valour and patriotism, to say nothing of his eccentricity and generosity, secured him, wherever he appeared, the respectful attentions of the people. And, being accustomed from his earliest remembrance to hear political discussions, and to read political papers, it was natural that all his words and acts should be dictated by policy, and that his constant object was to gain popularity.

Mr. Numerius Plutarch Kipps was a tall, yellow, corpse-like old man, of unmitigated ugliness. In truth, he was so famous for his homeliness, that on more than one occasion he had received unsolicited premiums, such as pocket-knives and spectacle cases, from both acquaintances and strangers, who alleged that they had received them as presents, under the promise to confer them on any one they met with who might be still further removed from the standard of beauty than themselves. His face, long and flat, was a combination of wrinkles; his eyes, however, though large and gray, were not without intelligence and expression. His head was bald, a slight ring of yellow hair alone extending round from ear to

ear behind. His breast was bent in, his back rounded out, his limbs crooked, and his gait unsteady. And yet he was a scholar, and a forcible writer; and, presuming on the weakness and ignorance of the majority of the people, he had conceived the idea of advancing his pupil and patron to the head of the government.

“What can this mean, Kipps?” said the colonel, as he received from the hands of a black servant, who had been sent to the post-office, an unprecedented number of letters.

“It means, colonel, that the game has commenced, and these are some of the cards I have dealt you. See that you play your part well. *Totus mundus agit histrionem.*” And Kipps smiled in anticipation of the success of the scheme he had executed. Most of the letters were answers to those written by Kipps. He had requested his correspondents to direct their replies to the colonel himself, having intimated that he had written at the suggestion and in behalf of his patron.

“But, Mr. Numerius Plutarch,” said the colonel, deliberately breaking the seal of the first letter his eyes rested upon, which bore the Philadelphia post-mark, “you understand I am to play the game henceforth in my own way, and in accordance with my own ideas of propriety. That was the agreement. I was to be governed by your advice, and to follow your instructions, up to this particular point of time. I have done so, have I not?”

“*Tache sans tache.*”

“Well; if I have performed my task without spot or stain, I shall desire you to perform yours in the like manner. Hereafter I am determined to have my own way in everything that concerns myself and my fortunes; and I shall expect you to aid me in all my undertakings, and never to undertake anything for me. Your opinions I will always hear, and doubtless often follow your advice: but when it shall so happen that we cannot agree in what is the best policy, you will understand

that I am to act as I see proper, and you are to submit in silence. *Tacent, satis laudant.* And now, although just guilty myself, I would remark, that the frequent quotations from other languages, which you are wont to indulge in, are by no means more edifying, or forcible in their application, than expressions of the same meaning in our own tongue would be. Hereafter, on some great occasion, when I shall desire you to prepare one of my speeches for the press, you may have an opportunity of calling in requisition your mottoes and quotations to some purpose."

Kipps signified his acquiescence by several affirmative nods of the head.

"This letter," continued the colonel, running his eye down to the bottom of the page, "is from Mr. Heated Hurraw, with whom you know we had some business transactions. He owes me money, and is secured. But what does he say?" The colonel read the letter, from beginning to end, aloud, without understanding a word of it, while Plutarch smiled and winked with delight.

The writer said that the election having gone against them, their prospects were gloomy enough. The democratic candidate for governor was elected by eight or ten thousand majority, and this result was regarded by the party as a death-blow to General Tocs's chances for the Presidency, at least so far as Pennsylvania was concerned. But he begged the colonel to take courage. He doubted not, if the general should be unable to rally his forces, some other man, and as true a friend, could be had for their standard-bearer, and lead them to victory. He was still convinced the colonel's views, as given in Kipps's letter, were quite correct, and would ultimately prevail.

"Kipps!" said the colonel, rising up and confronting the chuckling Plutarch, his hands thrust into his breeches pockets, "Kipps! will you oblige me by rendering that epistle into something like understandable English?"

"*Pro hâc vice.* I beg pardon; but you know what habit is. The letter explains itself. It is in reply to mine."

"But it is addressed to me."

"True. Before the answer could be received, I ascertained by actual computation that my tutelary term would expire."

"But you have expressed sentiments for me, and no doubt committed me in such manner that I must either pursue your ideas or turn about and disavow them."

"Of course. That was the agreement. I was to direct everything up to the appointed time, and then you were to pursue your own course."

"Yes, and I will pursue my own course hereafter. What a fool I have been to let another do my thinking for me!"

"Let us first see, colonel, whether I have not thought right. You know I have no aspirations of my own, and that all my hopes are centred in your elevation."

"True, Kipps, I believe you there. But tell me what policy was there in pushing forward General Toes in Pennsylvania? How could he serve me?"

"As your hobby."

"As my hobby! Why, if he did carry me, would it not be throwing my chances to the d—l? But now, if it be as Hurraw says, am I not plunged in the ditch by the breaking down of my hobby, as you call him?"

"Not at all, colonel! Did Octavius lose by the fall of Decimus Brutus?"

"But how can I gain by the defeat of Toes? My name was not mentioned at all, one way or the other."

"True! and hence you escape participation in the odium of his defeat. If he had been successful, Hurraw would have attributed the victory mainly to your skilful strategy. Do you see now?"

"I believe I do perceive something in it. Kipps, that was a deep scheme of yours! It was something like Cicero's,

though, when he pledged himself for the fidelity of young Octavius. He could have no hope of success. But now, if Tocs be truly overthrown, it seems to me that I have merely escaped being involved in his ruin, and have not gained anything by the victory of Mr. Nanahcnb."

"You have gained, provided General Tocs be overthrown, one step towards the presidency. You will have one competitor the less in the field, he being *hors de combat*."

"Then, what good would it have done me, if Tocs had succeeded, or should yet succeed?"

"If you should be mainly instrumental in getting him the nomination, and in securing his ultimate success, you can't fail to be to him what Pompey was to Sylla, his successor."

"A good idea, Kipps! But I have ideas of my own. I will explain everything to you in good time. There is a crisis about to occur, which will bring men to the surface in the political world hitherto unseen and unknown. But what have we here?" he continued, turning over a ponderous letter with a broad seal, and superscribed "For the Hon. Gracchus Vanderbomb, of Sloughcreek." Mr. N. Plutarch Kipps, in his excessive excitement, was unable to keep his seat; and when the seal was broken, and the astonished colonel read an official notification of his election to the Senate of New York, from the district in which the estate of Furzehill was situated, and where he had spent the four months of his allotment of time immediately preceding the commencement of his present term at the Halfway House, the delighted Kipps could restrain his ecstasy no longer, and so he clapped his hands and gave three hearty cheers for his patron.

This boisterous outburst of applause was heard by Miss Flora Vanderbomb, of Furzehill, who was still sitting at the breakfast table in the northern library, with Mr. Oldstyle, the parish priest. Such unprecedented sounds caused them both to rise immediately, and to proceed at once to ascertain the

nature and object of them. When they appeared in the presence of the colonel and his Mæcenas, the expression of triumph had not yet faded from the sallow wrinkles of the latter, while the former continued to gaze in silent astonishment at the document still clutched in his hand.

Miss Flora, although only some five years the junior of her brother, had contrived very successfully to repel the rude approaches of the invidious besieger, Time. Not a decayed tooth was apparent in her mouth, nor a gray hair observable on her head. Whether or not she had practised any of the arts resorted to, on urgent occasions, by feminine ingenuity, to counteract the sad inroads of the destroyer of innocent beauty, is not a proper subject for investigation: but it may be stated, with perfect accuracy, that she presented a prepossessing figure, adorned with so many of the captivating appendages of wealth, such as satins and velvets of the brightest colours, laces of the finest texture, and jewels of exquisite brilliance, that the beholder was not likely to suppose she had already lived through a half-century. Her form, though thin, was tall and dignified, and her voice was as fine and soft as that of a young lady of five-and-twenty.

“Brother!” said she, “what is the matter? What startling news have you received?”

“Good news; good news!” said Kipps. “Mr. Oldstyle,” he continued, “in all nations, as we learn both in sacred and profane history, it has been the custom to utter cheers upon the announcement of good fortune.”

“But this may not be such good fortune,” said the colonel, placing the letter in the hands of his sister. “I shall regard it as exceeding ill luck, if I find that I am in any way committed in my principles by such a procedure. This, too, is your doing, Kipps! I now await with the utmost impatience an explanation of the whole affair. Tell me, first, if I am

pledged to advocate the execrable doctrines of the Freesoilers, who have doubtless elected me."

"No, colonel, you are not pledged to anything you do not approve. The politicians there often importuned me to prevail on you to be their representative. You had large estates, and they wanted your influence. I merely told them that I thought they had best elect you first, and then they would have a right to learn your opinions. And they have done so, colonel, relying upon your gratitude and generosity to repay the noble confidence thus reposed in you, by becoming henceforth a permanent citizen of the North."

"But, Kipps, there are no such things as gratitude and generosity in politics."

"Why, brother! how can you say so?" exclaimed Miss Flora. The Rev. Mr. Oldstyle said nothing, but lifted up both his hands in unison with the lady's astonishment.

"I say so, and I mean what I say," continued the colonel, increasing in warmth and redness. "There was no noble confidence in the business at all. It was a mere scheme to entrap me in the snares of the Abolitionists—the 'higher law' fanatics and fools, Mr. Oldstyle, who seem to be making considerable progress in the affections of my sister, sir!"

"My affections, Gracchus! Upon my word! I would thank you, my keen and penetrating brother, to name the man who has proposed—"

"Pooh, sister! I did not mean that any one was making love to you. In your affairs of that kind I never will meddle; but this is a matter of politics, about which you can know nothing. Go, Flora! return to your amusements or your devotions, and take the reverend gentleman along with you. This affair of the election must be discussed by Kipps and myself."

The tones of the colonel suddenly abated so much of their harshness, that when his sister and the parson retired, Mr. N.

Plutarch Kipps was emboldened both to justify his own agency in procuring the nomination of the colonel, and to rejoice that the electors had cast their votes for him. Although he still maintained that the colonel was unpledged, yet it was apparent to them both, inexperienced politicians as they were, that the great preponderance of the votes of the United States lay in the northern or free states.

The fact that the greatest number of the people dwelt on the northern side of the line of separation; had often occurred to the mind of Gracchus; and in his meditations he had never conceived the idea of relinquishing the chance of obtaining the support of that powerful section of the country. And hence it was, that, so soon as he reflected a moment on that point, his rising indignation was suppressed, and his tone was mollified.

He had been effectually thrown from his equilibrium by this unexpected move of Kipps, and for a moment all his predetermined rules of conduct were banished from his mind.

It must be confessed that neither the colonel nor his tutor Kipps knew as much of the history and politics of their own country as of those of ancient Rome. With the exception of a few months spent in the camp (another project of Mr. Numerius Plutarch Kipps), when the British threatened the capital; and again, at a more recent date, on the plains of Mexico, both of our aspiring politicians had spent their lives in the profound retirement of the closet. They possessed but a limited acquaintance with the real affairs of the world, either political or social. They had not hitherto even learned how to become extravagant, one of the easiest lessons of life; and the vast income of Vanderbomb had accumulated to such an extent, that he had become famous throughout the country as the possessor of an enormous amount of wealth. It was not strange, then, that the citizens of the vicinity of Furzehill, or those in the neighbourhood of Sloughcreek, should often indi-

cate a desire for the colonel to become their representative. Nor was it altogether unnatural, under the circumstances, for our hero and his erudite Kipps to arrive at a determination to rise to the highest honours in the state. Their books had taught them that men of less merit than Vanderbomb, far as he was below mediocrity in the qualifications requisite to administer the affairs of government, had reached the loftiest position in a mightier empire than ours; and they learned, moreover, that the purple had been purchased by Julian for a much less sum than our modern Gracchus possessed. Julius Cæsar had devoted nine years of his life to the preparations necessary to place him in an attitude to assume the reins of empire. Our Gracchus had been trained more than forty years by his Plutarch with a special view to the presidency.

The colonel resolved not to be precipitate, and this was a point gained by Kipps. They agreed that it would be the best policy to delay action in the premises, and await the judgment of the press, and an expression of the public sentiment.

Kipps had, without consulting the colonel, for his pupil had hitherto been entirely in his hands and altogether subject to his will, opened a correspondence with the proprietors of several newspapers, for the purpose, in the simplicity of his heart, of advocating the claims of his protégé for the presidency. He had stipulated to pay a certain sum for the publication of a certain number of articles, whether as communications or editorials, which should contribute to place the colonel's name before the country among the rest of the candidates for the chief honours of the republic.

The editor of one of those sheets, the New York Censor, learning something of the condition, and especially of the hallucination of the parties who sought to figure before the public in so prominent an attitude, was not slow in availing himself of such rare material to make sport for his readers. Hence

the election of the colonel to the Senate gave birth to the following article :

“SIGNS OF THE TIMES.—ANOTHER RICHMOND IN THE FIELD. We learn that for a considerable length of time past, the numerous friends of Colonel Gracchus Vanderbomb, of Sloughcreek, in the great states of Virginia, Pennsylvania, New York, and Ohio, have had it in contemplation to place him upon the presidential track, as a central candidate. It is well known that the colonel has very large estates lying in New York and Virginia ; and likewise *midway* between them, exactly upon the line separating the North and the South ; and, as it has been his custom to reside one-third of each year at each of these places, it may be presumed that, of all the candidates hitherto announced, none of them can have any pretensions to the superior local advantages possessed by the colonel. The colonel is neither a northern, a southern, nor yet a middle man ; but all three together. His personal interests may be compared to adamantine links, binding the whole union together. We go for the colonel. He has served his country in war, and possesses the civil qualifications to govern in peace.

“N. B. Since the above was written, we learn with astonishment that the people of ——— and ——— counties have elected the colonel to the State Senate. This was doubtless a paltry trick, gotten up by one of the rivals of the colonel for the presidency. If he accepts, of course he becomes a northern man, and his chances for southern support are utterly at an end. In our opinion the colonel is not the man to be caught with such chaff as this, when there are good ripe grains a little further along, which may be had for the picking of them up.”

When this was read aloud by the colonel, the visage of Kipps became elongated with surprise. This was more than he bargained for. The agreement was that the articles were

to be furnished or supervised by himself, or by some one to be appointed by him. He had intended to bring forward his candidate by degrees, in a series of classical essays: but here he found him dragged suddenly forward, and placed prominently before the public, without so much as a formal introduction, or a single preliminary commendation! It was too bad; and even the complacent Plutarch had well nigh lost his temper in the first ebullition of his feelings.

“The rude, ill-mannerly slave!” exclaimed Plutarch.

“Who, Kipps?” demanded the colonel, who seemed to be in high spirits.

“Why, the debased mercenary who indited that paragraph! What right had *he* to set you up as a candidate? Why did he not wait until he was directed to raise the flag? He supposes that his subscribers are the prætorian guards, who can make and unmake consuls or emperors by a single shout and a single action. No doubt he looks to be appointed quæstor, in the event of your elevation, as a reward for this nomination!”

“And I tell you, Kipps, if ever I do reach the head of affairs, this fellow shall not be far below me! He has removed the veil, and I am now in the field, fearless and free to acknowledge it to all men!”

“After all, it may be well to pass the Rubicon thus; and if it leads to fortune, this knave will have done a meritorious service!” was the softened response of Kipps.

“Call him not knave, Kipps, rather reward him for his boldness. Sit down, and write him a letter immediately. Say you are a friend of mine, not an adviser; thank him for placing my name in nomination; send him \$500, merely to defray any extra expense he may be at in fighting the battle for me; and then sign yourself Simpkins, Thompson, Jones, Smith, or some other common or unmeaning name.”

“I obey, colonel, as in duty bound,” said Plutarch, receiv-

ing the bank-note and taking up a pen. "And I am now convinced, mighty Gracchus, that you are destined to reach the seat of empire. If an editor of a metropolitan journal gives you the preference on account of your civil qualifications, your wealth, your military services, and your well-balanced local position, you need have nothing to fear from the great, unthinking multitude. The masses in this republic have become like those of Rome; they are willing to exalt the most available and profitable candidate, without scrutinizing too closely his merits and claims."

"But, Kipps, do you suppose my merits and claims would not bear the test of a close scrutiny?"

"By no means, Gracchus! I merely meant to assert that it is here as it was in Rome, subsequent to the Antonines, when the emperors were always named by a few influential leaders, and the nominations were almost invariably acquiesced in by the dependent and unreflecting masses of the people. The people themselves were never known to nominate an emperor, nor do they here ever name the one who shall be president. You are a fortunate man, Gracchus! In the canvass for the presidency, it is said he is the most fortunate against the purity of whose character the least can be alleged; and not the one in whose favour the greatest amount of good might be claimed. You will find the Julian and Napoleon system of war practised here in our political campaigns. The policy of *assault* is adopted by all parties. Your opponents, instead of praising their own man, will occupy their time in endeavouring to blacken your character; and your friends will be forced to retaliate in the same manner. But what can they say against you? Not a word! Your wise and lamented father, and my humble self, will have the credit of presenting you to the world wholly uncommitted on any of the great questions of the day; and so skilfully balanced in location, that you

cannot be denounced either as a Southern, a Northern, or even a Central man."

"True, Kipps, and I thank you for it. I must therefore resign my seat in the New York legislature. Why then did you have me nominated?"

"Merely to advance you a step on the political ladder, and to bring you in view of the public gaze."

"But I must step down, again."

"Still they will have seen you, Graochnus, and they will not forget you."

"Then the conjecture of the editor of the Censor, about the trick and the trap, was only a little embellishment of his own?"

"Purely ; and *per saltum* to strike the first blow for you on the crest of one of your competitors."

"Which one do you think he alluded to?"

"Doubtless he meant Mr. Nerub, Colonel Notneb, Mr. Romlif, or Mr. Retsbew : it is said to be the fashion to kill one's enemies by pretended acts of kindness."

"They will not kill me in that way, Kipps. I desire no favours from them. *Bellum internecinum!* Let them lay on ! But, Kipps, this election in New York bothers me a little. I must resign, that's certain. I must play for a greater stake than that. But I must decline the honour without compromising my position. Let us prepare a document which, while it shall decline the honour conferred upon me, will, at the same time, avoid giving offence to the voters of the North, and render satisfaction to all sections. When you have despatched your business with the Censor, do you try your hand at such a production, and in the mean time I will write one also. When done, we will determine which to send ; or perhaps we can make a third one from the two, embracing parts of both, and which will be better than either of them."

CHAPTER III.

DIFFICULTY IN DRAFTING A LETTER OF RESIGNATION.—MR. WAGWELL, THE ATTORNEY, CONSULTED.—VANDERBOMB IS ELECTED TO THE LEGISLATURE OF VIRGINIA.—VANDERBOMB RESOLVES TO OPEN THE PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN.—HE DETERMINES TO SET OUT ON HIS FIRST ELECTIONEERING EXPEDITION IN PURSUIT OF THE PRESIDENCY.

FOR several days both the Hon. Mr. Vanderbomb and his private secretary laboured incessantly to produce a letter of resignation, which might appear in print and stand the ordeal of criticism from all parties, and from all sections of the Union. Not the least difficulty was, whether or not the word "resignation" should be used at all. A resignation would presuppose that the colonel was a *bonâ fide* member of the legislative body; and being such by his own confession, or by inevitable inference, would be tantamount to an acknowledgment that he was a citizen of the state which had elected him. Kipps desired him to make such an admission, or to use such ambiguous terms as would enable him to claim citizenship in the North at a future period, if his interest should require it; and he endeavoured to convince him that the people of the North were not only more numerous, but more likely to support his pretensions than those of the South.

But the arguments of Kipps were in vain. The colonel was as firm as a rock, and decided that neither of the documents prepared would answer his purpose. They were destroyed, and others written which shared the same fate.

In the mean time the article in the Censor had attracted much attention, and the colonel had the felicity of seeing his name in all the papers from every direction which came to the village. The circumstance of his election, without being aware himself that he was a candidate, and not claiming citizenship in the state, was a remarkable fact, which was generally commented on by the political writers of the day. But, when taken in connexion with the announcement that he was to be put upon the track in the race for the presidency, it afforded an infinite fund for very grave consideration, and it was so considered accordingly. Of course, both the colonel and his innocent adviser regarded the voluminous comments and flattering speculations of the editors and their zealous correspondents as being all made in sober seriousness; and they became so much inflated with patriotism, and so exhilarated with the popular favour, that the difficulties in the way of making a harmless communication to the Governor of New York were multiplied.

Every inhabitant of the town was very naturally and very properly a friend and partisan of their landlord and patron. It was with a distinct knowledge of this fact—for the village had been illuminated in honour of the colonel for several evenings in succession, and all the citizens, both North and South, had united in huzzaing for the new candidate for the presidency—that it was decided to consult Mr. Wagwell, the lawyer, on the propriety of the phraseology which it was desirable should be used in the letter declining a seat in the New York legislature.

Mr. Wagwell's legal business, and it was quite lucrative, was pretty much monopolized by one client, and that was Vanderbomb. He had been brought to Midway from the vicinity of Sloughcreek, where he had long acted as the colonel's agent, and where he still made frequent visits in that capacity. He, too, had been solicited to persuade the colonel to take up his

permanent abode in Virginia, and to become one of the representatives of the county in which the Sloughcreek estate was situated. But, knowing that his principal would be inflexible in his determination not to commit himself to either section of the Union, a resolution which he had inherited, and in which he had been bred from his infancy, he had declined mentioning the subject to him. Nevertheless, when he learned what had occurred in New York, and perceived the drift of the articles in the papers, he took the responsibility of despatching letters to some of his friends at Sloughcreek, urgently requesting them to put the colonel in nomination at once, and to elect him, or else they might lose him for ever. He enclosed copies of the article in the Censor to his correspondents, and assured them that if the colonel should be elected in Virginia he would be certain to decline the honour in New York.

Accordingly the colonel was announced as a candidate, on the day previous to the election, and was, notwithstanding the short notice, elected triumphantly. When Mr. Wagwell entered the mansion, in obedience to the summons of the colonel, he bore in his pocket a letter to Gracchus, which had been enclosed in one to himself, announcing the result of the election in Tidewater county.

Mr. Oldstyle, the parson, and Miss Flora, of Furzehill, were both present at the consultation. In the generous exultation of the colonel and his faithful Kipps, they had been invited to the conference: and the reverend gentleman, at the first glance, perceived the drift of the newspaper articles. Yet he did not dare to undertake the hazardous experiment of undeceiving the infatuated brace of politicians. It was agreed, however, that Gracchus ought to decline the honour which had been conferred upon him, without solicitation, by the voters of Furzehill. In this there was no diversity of opinion. But the manner in which it should be done, was the difficulty.

Miss Flora was of opinion that a single line, and that a short one, would be sufficient.

The parson thought that a respectful and courteous communication, of moderate length, ought to be sent to the Governor.

"*Deum cole!*" said Plutarch, addressing Oldstyle, "we will preserve the state!"

"Right, Kipps!" said the colonel, "they cannot appreciate my position, else they would see the importance of having such a production written as would exalt me in the estimation of the millions of freemen who are now undoubtedly anxiously looking for it."

"Colonel," said Mr. Wagwell, who at once perceived that it was almost a hopeless case, and if checked too rudely, his fat client would certainly be classed with the "incurables," and in losing him he might himself be lost, "according to my appreciation of the matter, you possess now an opportunity of having your name indelibly inscribed on the cliffs of Fame. It often happens that public men, when they are desirous of communicating their views to the public, are at a loss for the means of doing so, without seeming to thrust themselves forward in an obtrusive attitude. Hence they create *pretexts* for addressing the public, and frequently write replies to imaginary letters, or prevail upon some friend to propound certain interrogatories, which have been dictated by themselves, and which they desire to answer in a public manner. But the effect of such compositions is generally equivocal, as the motive is apt to be suspected. In your case it is different. Every one must know that it is incumbent on you to respond in some way to the compliment which has been paid you."

"Is not that both good sense and in good taste?" asked the colonel, addressing his dignified sister and the austere parson.

"Undoubtedly, it is both," said Mr. Oldstyle; "and I hope Mr. Wagwell will be equally as happy in his opinion of the nature of the communication to be despatched."

“I see no difficulty in framing a document which will evince the pure and disinterested patriotism of the colonel, and at the same time enable him to decline the honour they have sought to confer upon him, with grace and dignity.”

“In politics, Mr. Wagwell,” said Gracchus, “I do not deem pure patriotism, or grace and dignity, so essential to the purpose as a certain sort of characteristic expressions, which shall win the applause of the multitude.”

“But are you not abandoning politics, brother, when you decline the election?” asked Flora.

“To your comprehension, doubtless, it may seem so, my poor, honest sister! but with us it is sometimes as it is with you, when you say no and mean yes!” This produced a general smile.

“What you say is quite correct, colonel,” continued Wagwell; “and there will be an ample margin for the exercise of your ingenious skill, in the way you indicate.”

“Besides, Wagwell, it must be done without committing me to either party, or either section.”

“Nothing could be easier, in my judgment, than to avoid even the shadow of an inference that you leaned either this, that, or the other way.”

“*Non obstante*, if you can devise a method of doing what you say, I shall hail you as another Daniel come to judgment,” said Plutarch.

“One sentence,” said Wagwell, “will suffice for that part of the document; as thus, for instance: *I must beg to decline this honour, as I have done similar ones from other sections of the country.*” Saying this, he placed in the hands of the colonel the letter received that morning from Virginia, and desired that it might be read immediately.

Gracchus broke the seal, and read as follows, his protuberant eyes dilating as he proceeded:

“Sloughereek, Tidewater Co., Va., Oct. —, 1851.

“DEAR COLONEL :

“The following are the official returns from the whole county :

Vanderbomb,	-	-	-	-	-	991
Fishey,	-	-	-	-	-	712

“Majority for Vanderbomb, 279. Huzza!

“Your firm friend and supporter,

“J. SMOKER.”

Unconsciously, Gracchus read it aloud, and the amazement was general. Without uttering a word, the colonel took up a pen, and making a slight calculation in figures on the margin of the letter, observed, “It is quite right—my majority is exactly 279.”

“Why, my brother,” exclaimed Flora, “I did not know you were a candidate down there, too!”

“Nor I either, kind sister of mine,” said the colonel, his self-possession and amiability now become impregnable. “But that the intelligent freemen of that time-honoured and patriotic county, have spontaneously elected me as their representative, is—or at least I think it is—one of the finest compliments ever paid a public man. And I must say (in confidence), that if it were not for other enterprises of greater magnitude which I am embarked in, I would accept the seat in the Assembly, and become irrevocably a citizen of the Old Dominion. But one must sacrifice his private preferences for the public good. It may be my mission to save the Union, as Manlius did the capitol of his country.”

“And what if you should meet with the same fate, brother, which was awarded him?” asked Flora, in tones of constrained sweetness.

“Why, meet it as he did. Let them throw me from the rock, or sink me in the ocean; I care not what becomes of my body, so my fame may live like that of Manlius!”

“And all I ask,” said Plutarch, catching the enthusiasm, “is the privilege of recording your acts of heroism; which may, in some slight measure, in future times, be attributed to the instructions you received in the closet.”

These speeches revealed to the auditors the fearful progress of the disease which had seized upon these inoffensive men; and they determined to watch over their welfare, and to protect them as much as possible from the injurious impositions they might be exposed to during the ensuing twelve months of political excitement. The presidential election was to transpire the next year, and they could look for no abatement of the political insanity of the two scholars until after that event.

“Now to business!” cried the colonel. “We must despatch matters with the utmost expedition. I have many things to execute. Julius Cæsar’s motto shall be mine. Action, action is the word! Let us surprise our competitors by the celerity of our movements in the field. I have an internal assurance that I was designed for great things, either in the civil or the military affairs of the world!”

“I have ever said so, and I know it,” remarked Kipps, with pride and satisfaction in his eyes and in his gestures.

“Wagwell,” said the colonel, “you came opportunely. You have indicated the proper manner of surmounting the difficulty which continually confronted us. I desire that you will furnish the paragraph extricating me from the dilemma, and one likewise, with the phraseology a little varied, to be inserted in the letter to the Governor of Virginia. Kipps will embody some happy examples from the conduct of the ancients, and supply a Latin quotation or two, and I will fill up all the interstices, and modify the whole to suit my ideas of propriety and policy, so as to leave the impression on the mind of the reader, without its having been expressed in so many words, that I aim at higher game, the presidency. Let it be done immediately, for to-morrow I go forth”——

“You are not going away, brother, surely, before the expiration of the four months!” exclaimed Flora, in real alarm.

“I shall go forth, sister, and traverse this great republic. From this day forward I change the manner of my life. The time has come for me to reap the fruits of my studies; and faithful Plutarch shall share the harvest!”

“But where will you go first, brother?”

“Just whichever way the horses may incline to turn their heads. I cannot go amiss. Wherever I turn, I find my country, and all the people are my brothers and sisters. And I shall have speeches ready for every section, class, and condition. I have, with the aid of Kipps, prepared a half-dozen speeches; some one or the other of them will suit any locality, any description of hearers.”

Every attempt to dissuade the colonel from putting in practice his rash resolution proved unavailing; and the balance of the day, and most of the night, were devoted to the despatch of business in the cabinet. At length, the two letters were completed, and placed in the post-office; and nothing remained but for the colonel and Kipps to take a little repose previous to their setting out in quest of the presidency.

CHAPTER IV.

COLONEL VANDERBOMB AND KIPPS DEPART BEFORE DAY.—CHANCE DIRECTS THEM TOWARDS THE SOUTH.—BY MISTAKE THEY HAVE A WHITE SERVANT WITH THEM.—THEY HALT FOR BREAKFAST AT THE WHITE COW INN.—THEY DRINK SWEET CIDER.—THE BABY'S MISADVENTURE.—POPULARITY HUNTING.—MRS. SPATTER.—HER COMPLAINTS AGAINST HER HUSBAND.—HER CALVES.—MR. SPATTER INTERROGATES THE COACHMAN.—OUR PARTY SUSPECTED AS ABOLITIONISTS.—THE NEIGHBOURHOOD ROUSED.—SNEH-PETS, THE PEDAGOGUE.—THE INVESTIGATION.—VANDERBOMB AND KIPPS SEIZED AND CONFINED IN A POTATO HOLE.—THE COACHMAN ESCAPES WITH THE CARRIAGE.—GRAVE DISCUSSIONS IN THE POTATO HOLE.—KIPPS IS TAKEN ILL.—HE IS CAUGHT IN A RAT-TRAP.—PERSECUTION.—MRS. SPATTER COMES TO THEIR RELIEF.—SHE HIDES THEM IN THE GARRET.—AN ACCIDENT BETRAYS THEM.

AT early dawn our adventurers were on the road. They had proceeded some ten miles before they discovered that they were travelling in a southern direction.

"Kipps," said the colonel, as they rode by a large tobacco field, in which there were some twenty slaves securing the luxuriant crop, "we have made a blunder; but I hope it is not really, as Talleyrand said, worse than a crime."

"What may it be?"

"We have White, our northern coachman, instead of Juba!"

"True, Gracchus! but you need not fear making sufficient impression. The speech you rehearsed last night will suffice. You did it in true Ciceronian style!"

"Nevertheless, being politicians, we must be politic. White, remember that you are not to know anything of our purposes."

“Yes, sir.”

“And you are to say nothing about us to the people we may meet with.”

“No, sir.”

The country they were passing through was well cultivated, and handsomely diversified with groves and fields. The crops were abundant, and the merry songs of the slaves, as they gathered the corn or cut the tobacco, attested their satisfaction with their lot.

When the sun was about an hour high, and poured its enlivening beams upon the beautiful face of the country, our travellers were cheered by its genial warmth, and expatiated freely upon the bounties with which their favoured country had been blessed.

At length, just when they had begun to feel the gnawings of hunger, and before the exuberance of their spirits could have time to feel the depression of a craving appetite, they perceived a neatly painted inn, on a slight eminence, but a few hundred paces before them; and when they came in front of it they halted, and requested the landlord to have the horses fed, and a warm breakfast prepared for themselves.

They were ushered into the bar-room, where they found a blazing fire, and several hearty young children playing about without shoes on. The hostess of the “White Cow”—but in truth the painting before the door had been blackened by time—attended the guests, while her good man cared for the horses. She was a buxom young woman of some five-and-twenty years, of large proportions, red cheeks, and hair of the same colour. Addressing the colonel, she desired to know if he would have anything to drink, while the eggs and ham were doing.

“No, madam, I thank you,” said the colonel, with extreme politeness. “It is not my habit to drink before dinner.”

“Oh, we drink nothing here but cider,” said she, persistingly; “and we find it best before breakfast. I am sure you must be chilled, riding so early.”

This was a beverage our adventurers had never tasted in their lives, and being so generously pressed, they departed from their rule and partook of it. They commended it, when the hostess said it was some of her own pressing, although in their hearts they deemed it, as it was, most execrable stuff. But they were “popularity hunting,” and were determined to make a favourable impression wherever they sojourned.

While the hostess was absent in the kitchen, our political adventurers were not idle. Each of them placed a child on his knee, having first dispelled their timidity by bestowing on them several small coins.

“How soon,” said Plutarch, “do we acquire a disposition to grasp at money! No wonder the evils of cupidity are so wide-spread and universal, since the passion for acquisition is one of the first to take root in the human breast, and is never extinguished but with life itself.”

“Don’t philosophize, Kipps,” said the colonel; “recollect the mission we are upon. Kiss the baby, play with it, and make it love you. It will tell its mamma, who will tell her husband how kind we were, and it will neither be forgotten nor without its effect when the hour arrives for men to choose their president.”

The colonel, by way of example, used all his arts to captivate the affections of the smart lad in breeches, but without vest and coat, who sat gazing at him on his knee.

Presently the little girl in the arms of Plutarch began to cry, and made so many efforts to escape that it was suffered to descend to the floor. It ran out to the kitchen, blubbing most distressfully. But when it reached its mother, instead of kind sympathy, it seemed to meet with very rough usage, for the hostess could be heard to spank it quite distinctly.

“What was the matter with the child, Kipps?” demanded the colonel, observing that the latter was in some confusion.

“I think it cannot be suffering with a strangury. It is too much neglected by the nurse.”

“Sis does that every day. Sometimes she gets in the trough where the pigs eat, and then jumps on pappy’s knee. Pappy don’t mind it though,” said the docile urchin, in the colonel’s lap.

When the hostess came in, followed by a large negro wench who bore the viands through to the breakfast room, her face was glowing excessively. Whether it was from the heat in the kitchen, or from the effects of the angry passion she had just given way to, the colonel could not understand; but he strove to reproduce the happy smile with which she had at first greeted him.

“Charming eggs! delightful ham!” he exclaimed aside to Plutarch, but loud enough to be heard by the hostess, when they sat at the table.

“And I think the coffee has a fine flavour,” said Plutarch; “at all events I will venture to drink it. The doctor forbade me the use of it, as being injurious to one of my sedentary habits; but now I am in active life, and I do not remember when I experienced such a voracious appetite!”

“Oh, if you had preferred tea,” said the hostess, “I could have got it for you like a flash. All the folks have to do when they come here, is to speak right out, and have it.”

“Give yourself no further trouble, madam,” said Gracchus; “we have an abundance of everything, and everything we have is good enough for princes. This is a great country! Overflowing with milk and honey, and every one as free as a lord. Such fields, and meadows, and forests! and such intelligent and contented people. Happy Union!”

“I beg your pardon, sir,” said the hostess, rubbing an eye with a corner of her apron; “but I’m sure my union might

be blissfuller, if Mr. Spatter, my husband, would stay at home more and mind his business, and let the tarnation politicians and grog-shops alone!"

"I should dislike very much, madam, to differ with you in opinion," said the colonel; "but in a free country like ours, where every man is a sovereign, it strikes me that each individual should bestow at least a portion of his thoughts on the great governmental questions of the day."

"But, bless your soul, sir, Mr. Spatter has no thoughts about it; it is all words, sir; and he belongs to every man's party who talks to him last."

"Then he is a politician," said Plutarch.

"He's nothing else! he talks nothing but politics, sometimes, for weeks together! Oh, if you only knew how sick I am of hearing him jabber about banks, and tariffs, and free soil, when he comes home from town o' Saturday nights, I know you would pity me. Why, he will talk himself asleep, and then talk in his sleep; and it's all about Tomliw and Tocs, and Nanahcub, and Romlif, and so on! It almost drives me mad!"

"Well, well, that will be over after the election," said the colonel, desiring to change the subject. "Nevertheless, madam, your premises here, do not seem to have been neglected. Everything is thrifty and abundant."

"If it were modest in me to speak the truth, I could say it was not owing to the care and industry of Mr. Spatter," said she, with a significant shake of her head.

"No doubt you do your part, madam."

"My part! Better say the whole of it! While Spatter's off to the court-house hearing them speechifying, here am I, left to do everything. To spin the wool, to dye the yarn, to make the children's clothes, to feed the chickens, to weed the garden, and stuff the sassages! There is nothing left for him to do but to set the niggers to work for him in the field!"

“There is one thing, however, madam, in which he must share the credit with you—in being one of the parents of these fine, large, hearty and intelligent children.”

“The children are well enough, sir,” said she, looking complacently at them; “but as to its being owing to him that they are what you say, I’m not so sure about it. They don’t take after their father much in anything. He don’t weigh as much as I do by eleven pounds, and he is not as tall by a half inch!”

“Mammy,” said one of the boys, “Ceely don’t take after you sometimes, for a while ago, when the gentleman——”

“Shut up, sir!” responded she, quickly, and at the same time bestowing such a blow on the boy’s face as to cause him to keep both hands on his mouth.

“Then, madam,” continued the colonel, “I have never seen finer stock than the specimens your husband was feeding in the barn-yard when we rode up to the porch.”

“They are fine enough, there’s no denying it; the horses, hogs, and sheep are of the best breed. But if I am not mistaken, nature has more hand in making them large, than my husband’s hands or brains either. You should see the cows. They are tended by me alone. They are gone to the pasture, now; but if you will walk into the orchard with me, after you are done eating, I’ll show you my calves.”

“With infinite pleasure, madam, the next time we pass this way,” said Gracchus, gravely. “But we are in something of a hurry to get on to the court-house this morning. If our man has breakfasted, we will now take our departure.”

“Oh, the driver? He began to eat when you did. I invited him in; but he said he’d rather breakfast by himself in another room.”

Meantime, while our adventurers had been fondling the children at the inn, Mr. Spatter had been interrogating White, the coachman, at the stable. Obedient to the injunction of

his master, he assumed to know nothing in relation to the persons and purposes of the travellers. This excited Spatter's curiosity the more, and made him resolve to unravel what he now deemed to be a very great mystery, even if it should be necessary for him to question the gentlemen themselves. Did not innkeepers have a right to know the names, destinations, and residences of their guests? And if there was no register kept in the bar-room of the White Cow, would it not be all the same if the gentlemen were civilly asked their names, &c.? And Spatter determined to put the question to them, provided he failed to elicit the information he desired from their man.

If, however, White knew nothing at all about the gentlemen whom he was conducting across the country, it was presumed by Mr. Spatter that he must know something about himself; and in this supposition he was by no means mistaken; nor did he find his man at all reluctant to converse on matters having no direct reference to the affairs of his employers.

"You are not a native of these parts, I should judge, from your language?" observed Spatter.

"Me? I rather guess not. I was born in Lowell, in the great state where the great Retsbew lives!"

"And you are a Retsbew man, I suppose?"

"Well, I reckon I ain't anything else!"

"And the gentlemen are from the Yankee state, too?"

"I didn't say so, that I recollect."

"You said you were from there."

"I did say I was born and cradled there, and I reckon I am of that breed. But folks don't always live where they are born. Some *few* of the New Englanders went to California; and I guess a slight sprinkle on 'em are in Illinoy, Indinny, Ioway, and prehaps some few are scattered through Missouri, and the rest of the slave states! They make sharp schoolmasters and temperance lecturers!"

"Yes, — 'em! and that's the way they got up the free

soil constitution in California, and breed abolition doctrines all over the country, and even in the South. See here, stranger," said Spatter, with emphasis, "before we go any further, just tell me honestly whether you are an abolitionist or not. If you are, I'll feed your horses, but you must get your breakfast somewhere else."

"An abolitionist? I despise the very name on 'em! I know which side my bread is buttered too well for that!" And he did.

"But you came from the abolition region!"

"That is true; but I'm not so green as to be meddling with concerns that don't concern me. When I'm at home, which is most of my time now in York state, and not far from Albany, I am in the hotbed of the abolitionists, but Mr. Navaled and Mr. Drawees never ask me for a sixpence to aid the cause. I don't like the niggers well enough to put the whip in their hands, and then starve while they do the driving!"

"That's patriotic, and spoken like a union constitutionalist!" said Spatter; "and I hope the gentlemen in the house are of that mind?"

"I can't say anything about their minds, as I told you before," responded White.

"I see there is a small box in the carriage," persisted Spatter, "which is marked 'documents.' Do you know what kind of documents they are?"

"The lid is nailed on the box," was White's laconic reply.

"But it could be taken off, and put back again, if all is right."

"Right or wrong, this is a free country, and nobody must trouble the lid of any package in my care."

"Very well; they are calling you to the house. I smell the meat, and suppose your breakfast is ready."

When White answered the call, the excited host lost no time in having several horses mounted by as many of his negroes,

which he despatched in several directions to summon the neighbours to the inn, to investigate the nature of the business which had brought thither the two mysterious travellers. When Spatter whispered to his slaves that he thought his guests were abolitionists and negro-stealers, incredible as it may seem, it is, nevertheless, a well-attested fact, that the slaves evinced an earnest horror and detestation of the men and of their supposed calling; and none would more readily have become the instruments of their punishment. While one set of propagandists preached freedom to the bondman, another set equally as plausible, and certainly with equal justice, filled the minds of the negroes with tales of suffering and degradation endured by those who were enticed away from their masters, and placed reliance upon the sympathy and assistance of the people of the North. Yet there was scarcely a planter in the vicinity who had not lost one or more slaves, and hence the summons of Spatter was responded to without delay; and by the time Gracchus and Plutarch had finished their breakfast, there were at least twenty men assembled in the bar-room.

After a short consultation, it was decided that before they proceeded to any violent measures, they were to endeavour to learn from the travellers themselves some more specific intelligence of the nature of their mission. And to this end a man with bushy red hair, by the name of Snehpets, who had been the parish schoolmaster, and a genuine pedagogue, was chosen to conduct the examination. Snehpets himself had been originally from the North; but he had married an old maid "with five or six negroes," and was now a furious pro-slavery advocate. The selection seemed the more appropriate, too, from the fact that there was reason to suppose, when the pedagogue first arrived in the county, it was in the character of a mercenary agent of the abolitionists, and it was deemed a good stroke of policy, as one of the company remarked aside, thus to "set a thief to catch a thief!"

When our adventurers proceeded from the breakfast room to the bar-room, they were momentarily startled upon confronting such a numerous company. But hardly a minute elapsed before the colonel supposed they had learned his name and consequence, and were come to pay their respects to their future president.

Both Gracohus and Plutarch bowed to the company. They did not seem to return the salutation; but this omission was easily attributable to their embarrassment in the presence of such great men.

"Gentlemen," said Snephets, addressing our adventurers, and holding a paper in his hand upon which he had written several interrogatories, "I have been appointed by the company here present, to question you on several points, in which they feel interested, and we all hope your answers will be quite satisfactory."

"Sir," said the colonel, with a majestic motion of the hand, "you may be assured that any reasonable demand from so respectable a body of my fellow-citizens as I see assembled before me on this occasion, impromptu and unexpected as it may be, will merit and receive from me a frank and honest reply."

"First, then," said the pedagogue, "we want to know your views on the Union?"

"It was founded in wisdom," replied the colonel, "and cemented by the blood of freemen. May it remain an eternal bond of freedom, and continue an example to the world, that when the shackles of tyrants are rent asunder, men, by becoming free and equal, will be at the same time more intelligent, prosperous, and happy!"

At the conclusion of this reply, the pedagogue leaned forward and wrote under the interrogatory the word "*Ambiguous.*"

“Next, sir,” continued Snehpets, “what is your opinion of the Constitution?”

“The ligament which binds the Union together! When it is severed, anarchy and ruin must ensue. That there are, however, different interpretations of the meaning of certain sections of the instrument, is unavoidable in the multiplicity of interests which must ever exist in so extensive a confederacy——”

“Now we are coming to the point,” said the pedagogue, winking significantly to his neighbours. “Tell us which side you take in the controversy?”

“I take that side which is approved by the voice of the majority of the patriotic people.”

“*Vox populi vox Dei,*” said Plutarch.

“Silence, Kipps!” said the colonel; “perhaps the gentlemen don’t understand your Latin.”

“Some of us have heard Latin before, and French, too,” said the pedagogue, with a knowing expression. He then wrote the following words under the question: “*He leaves it to the northern majority to decide the meaning!*”

“The next question, sir,” continued Snehpets, “is, what is your opinion of the Compromise?”

“I am in favour of that or any other great measure which shall restore peace and harmony to the country, and reconcile conflicting interests.”

The pedagogue wrote down the word “*Non-committal.*”

“Next, what is your opinion of Freesoilism?”

“That is a question I have always treated with silent contempt.”

The pedagogue, with a flushed face, wrote down, “*Treats our question with silent contempt!*”

“Then what do you think of the Higher Law of Mr. Drawees?”

“I think that the laws of God and the laws of our country

are not inconsistent with each other, if properly considered. I do not think such men as Washington and Franklin would be likely to sanction anything at variance with the behests of the Just One above; hence in matters of religion I consult my bible, and in matters of politics, the constitution, and the measures best adapted for the benefit of the country."

The pedagogue again wrote down the word "*Non-committal*."

"One more question, sir. Are you, or are you not, an abolitionist?"

"*Coram non judice!*" exclaimed Plutarch, who, as well as Gracchus, now perceived that they were the subjects of suspicion, and were undergoing a species of trial before ignorant men, who were utterly unacquainted with their importance and pretensions.

"Landlord!" said the colonel, turning to that functionary, "bring me my bill. I will stay here no longer, since the gentleman has both mistaken his calling, and conceived an erroneous impression of the individual whom he addresses!"

"No, you don't!" cried several, at once. "You are not going to be let off in this manner!"

"Have you not come here to entice away our slaves?" demanded the pedagogue.

"Gentlemen!" said Numerius Plutarch, "this is Col——"

"Stop, Kipps!" said the colonel, placing his hand on the mouth of his fellow captive. "Not a word—mind, not a word! I have a great idea, which will make this matter turn to our good. Look and listen, but say not a word."

"Will you answer the question?" demanded Snehpets.

"I must decline it," replied the colonel, without emotion.

"Then you are our prisoners!" cried several, and at the same time laying hold of our unresisting adventurers.

White, who was standing at the door, whip in hand; waiting for his master to come forth and resume his journey, no sooner

saw him seized by the company, than he ran to the carriage and put whip to the horses. A great tumult ensued; some shouted after him to stop; others pursued; and several drew forth pistols, which had been concealed about their persons, and fired at him. But all to no purpose; he was soon beyond the reach of harm, and flying in the direction of the neutral ground of Midway.

“Gentlemen, you can use your pleasure with us,” said Gracchus, with a beneficent smile; “we are in your power, and have not the slightest disposition to make any resistance!”

“But be careful what you do!” said Plutarch; “recollect there are such things as courts in the land, and that the strong arm of the law—”

“Be silent, Kipps!” said the colonel. “I beg, gentlemen, that you will proceed to do with us just whatever may seem to be right and proper in your estimation.”

“That feller don’t seem to be much scared,” said a blacksmith, whose face and hands betokened his trade.

“Gentlemen,” said the pedagogue, “let us retire into the next room and deliberate on the case. Let us see if it be Judge Lynch, or Judge Law shall dispose of them. Lock the door!”

When Gracchus and Plutarch were alone, the latter began to evince palpable symptoms of trepidation, and cast round his eyes to measure the distance from the windows to the ground.

“I am forcibly reminded of the fate of Helvius Cinna,” said he, “whom the enraged people of Rome seized and slew, when stirred up by Antony, after the fall of Cæsar; and I have a disposition to make my escape, if such a thing be practicable.”

“Don’t be alarmed, Kipps. Cinna was a poor poet, and yet he was immortalized by being mistaken for another person, and being slain when innocent. When one suffers unjustly, he is sure to be recompensed for it.”

"Fame, and immortality," said Plutarch, "are much to be desired, but yet I am not quite convinced they would be sufficient compensation for the loss of life. It seems to me that the policy of Octavius Cæsar, who was always ill and out of the way in moments of peril, was preferable to that of his uncle. His fame is equally enduring, and his reign was much longer."

"The Gracchi," said the colonel, "were brave; and since my respected parents saw proper to bestow upon me their name, I will at least strive to emulate their courage."

"But I trust," said Kipps, "you are not destined to come to a similar end!"

By this time the party in the next room had arrived at a decision. The door opened, and they again confronted their prisoners; Snehpets, the pedagogue, being still the leader.

"Well, gentlemen," said the colonel, still with a complacent smile, "I presume you are now prepared to announce your verdict?"

"We have decided, sir," said the pedagogue, with hesitation and embarrassment, for his egotistical impudence was rebuked by the dignified indifference of the colonel, "that you be detained prisoners in this inn until the commonwealth's attorney is consulted; then, if he advises it, you must be removed to the county jail, and be confined there until the day of trial. Such is the vote of a majority of the neighbours present."

"I bow to the decision, gentlemen," said the colonel, suiting the action to the word; "for I agree with you that the majority should rule. And I beg you will remember, when I am again at liberty, and when you must acknowledge that I merited no punishment, that I cheerfully submitted to the will of the majority."

"But," said Snehpets, "it is likewise decided, that while you remain at the inn, you must be confined under this floor."

At these words, Mr. Spatter stepped forward and raised a sort of hatch or trap-door near the hearth.

"And must we descend into that pit?" asked the colonel, retreating a step from the dark chasm.

"Such is the voice of a majority," replied the pedagogue.

"Then we submit. Come, Kipps!"

"There are no steps, by means of which to descend," replied Kipps.

"It is not deep," said Spatter; "I go down it often. You have only to hold on with your arms, and ease yourselves down softly."

"I will lead the way," said the colonel, still preserving his equanimity; but being awkward at such feats, he tumbled in more expeditiously than his instructions warranted.

"Are you hurt, colonel?" asked Kipps, endeavouring to distinguish his companion in the gloom below.

"No. There is straw here. Come, Kipps!" was heard in sepulchral sounds. Plutarch proceeded with much reluctance to follow his leader; and the moment his head disappeared beneath the surface of the floor, the door was closed upon them and barred securely above.

"Kipps, give me your hand," said the colonel, when the light was shut out from above.

"Here it is," said Kipps.

"Where?"

"No wonder you can't find it! It is as dark as the blackness of night. Here it is."

"I have it. Why, man, you tremble! Remember that the darkest night is followed by the brightest dawn."

"If I live to see the day, again, I will remember it."

"Kipps, you have often mentioned the conduct of Clodius, to exemplify the necessity of a man descending from the high position to which he may have been born, and becoming one of the equals of the common mass, to attain a political object."

“But,” replied Kipps, “history nowhere shows that Clodius ever descended into such a hole as this—a potato hole, I believe.”

“No matter,” continued the colonel. “But history does tell, that Clodius, a noble by birth, renounced his station to become a tribune of the people. You remember his subsequent conflicts with the senatorial party; and that in one of these collisions, a tribune of the party hostile to Clodius, chanced to be slain. The person of a tribune being sacred, it was feared the popular fury would be directed against Clodius; but he, to counteract the advantage of his enemies, and to balance the sympathies of the people, proposed to put *Numerius*, a tribune on his side, to death, and let it be inferred that Cicero’s party had killed him.”

“Yes, but,” responded Kipps, withdrawing his hand from the colonel’s, “*Numerius* did not agree to the proposition of his friend and leader. It was too much for one friend to ask of another, and so he made his escape. I should like to do the same thing, now!”

“Nay, nay, Kipps, never think that I would sacrifice you in the same way for my benefit, or to produce a greater outburst of indignation against my enemies. All I ask is, that you will suffer patiently *with* me, not *for* me. I would not have you undergo any deprivation, on my account, which I am not willing to bear myself.”

“*Gracchus*,” said Plutarch, “I will cheerfully bear anything that is reasonable, even if it exceeds the bounds of moderation, for your sake, and for the sake of the cause.”

“I know it, Kipps,” said the colonel; “and I have determined to reward you for it, when all our difficulties shall have been surmounted, and victory perches upon our banner.”

“But now,” replied Plutarch, “when the ensigns have disappeared on the Janiculum, and we are encompassed by the enemy, it is not befitting that we should be occupied in the distribution of rewards which have yet to be achieved.”

“But, Kipps,” continued the colonel, “methinks this is a fitting place and time for reflection, and for resolving deliberately upon what we shall do when we regain our liberty; seeing we are shut up from the annoying distractions of the world, we may meditate profoundly upon the chances of the future. We can do no other business——”

“Gracchus, with your permission, I would observe that the beverage which we were prevailed on by the obliging hostess to partake of, has so disordered my stomach that——” Here he paused in his speech.

“Kipps, if it should act as an emetic, I pray you will turn your face in an opposite direction; if as a cathartic, let us call to the good hostess to grant you a short respite from confinement on your parole.”

By this time Plutarch discovered several diminutive rays of light struggling through the foundation wall of the house; and in groping his way in different directions to explore the dimensions of the prison, his ears were saluted by the motions and cries of many rats. He ascertained that the cellar extended the whole length of the house; but that it was damp and cold everywhere else than at the place where they had descended. There they could feel the heat of the fire above, and find an abundance of dry straw to stand or sit on. It was not long before Plutarch obtained relief without calling in requisition the aid of the hostess.

Being at length somewhat accustomed to the darkness, they were rejoiced to find that the pupils of their eyes had so much dilated that they could distinguish the dim outlines of each other's form, and of other objects around them.

“Bend down, Kipps,” said the colonel, “and see if there be potatoes or apples under our feet.”

“And if they be the latter, or even the former, Gracchus, I must be excused from partaking of them; for I still feel the remains of a very disagreeable commotion in my stomach

and bowels." In stooping down, the head of Kipps came in contact with the breast of his companion, which, in his endeavours to regain his equilibrium, caused him to stumble backward in the straw, and finally to be seated where there was no chair. But when he came in contact with the earth, a clinking sound was heard under him, and he uttered an exclamation indicating that he suffered great pain.

"What is it, Kipps?" demanded the colonel, stooping over him.

"I fear I am in the jaws of some beast of prey!" replied Kipps, endeavouring to support himself on his heels and his hands, with his face upwards, while his body described an arch.

"There is no beast here, man. I see nothing under you," said the colonel.

"Believe me, Gracchus, there is some monster under me; and it is at this moment endeavouring to fix its teeth in my flesh."

"Kipps, I fear you have gone mad," said the colonel.

"By no means, Gracchus. I could give you specimens of argument to prove the contrary, were I in a less painful situation."

"Perhaps it is a rat."

"No; its jaws are too large and powerful. I beseech you, Gracchus, to oblige me by passing your foot under my posteriors, and by endeavouring to detach from my person the animal's teeth, which become more and more uncomfortably tenacious."

"I will do so, Kipps, even at the hazard of being involved in your calamity."

"No; upon consideration I do not ask it of you, Gracchus. Let me suffer."

"Never!" cried the colonel; "I will either relieve my friend or share his fate."

“Nobly spoken!” ejaculated Plutarch.

It was a steel rat-trap, which the colonel removed without difficulty; and it was ascertained that the perforations it had made were not serious, the part being in a measure protected by the skirts of Plutarch’s coat.

This incident not being attended with any serious consequences, it was soon forgotten by the politicians; and they sought to make themselves as comfortable as possible in their dreary place of confinement. They separated the dry straw from the potatoes and apples (both being kept there), and adjusting it immediately under the hearth, where the heat from the fire above was quite perceptible, they sat down together in patient resignation to their lot.

“And now, Gracchus,” said Plutarch, “I propose to learn from you why you have permitted yourself to be thus incarcerated, in this dismal dungeon, when one word of mine would have converted the rage of the populace into plaudits?”

“Are you quite sure no one can hear us from above?” asked Gracchus, looking up and around. “Walls have ears, you know, and these people may be listening.”

“And if they are, I am sure they will hear no treason. But there is no one in the room above. I heard them retire and lock the door. Below there are no auditors but the rats, several of which I see at this moment staring at us as intruders. Begone, I say!” Saying this, Plutarch hurled a large potato at them, and they scampered away.

“Kipps,” continued the colonel, in a low, cautious tone, “the course I pursued was not premeditated. When we set out from home, it was my fixed determination, so soon as we arrived at the court-house of this county, to take decided ground on the southern side of the great questions of the day. My policy, henceforth, is to please everybody, and to reap the greatest amount of popularity in the shortest possible time.”

“But you changed your determination without having apprised me of your purpose.”

“I did not. Hear me patiently, and you will see. We were too near the line when I was so unexpectedly interrogated, and being doubtful of what might be the effect of declarations of a decided character in this vicinity, I resolved to keep as near the line of separation between the opposing sides of the great questions, as we were to the geographical line. But when I saw that the people were so enthusiastically in favour of the southern side, and were disposed to go to extremities with those whom they supposed to be the advocates of a different policy, I formed the resolution to throw myself at once into their scale, and to reap the benefit of their unbounded favour.”

“Gracchus, it occurs to me that I might propound the question to you which you did to me not long since, whether you have not lost your senses. If this loathsome den be the unbounded favour of the citizens into whose scale you have thrown yourself, I trust we may never have occasion to taste of their displeasure.”

“I desire you will hear me patiently to the end,” continued the colonel. “Do you not perceive this proceeding will create a vast excitement in the country, and that we will be visited by the civil authorities, and recognised by some of our friends? Will it not be in all the papers? Do you not suppose, even by this time, that White has carried the news to Wagwell, and that all Midway is up in arms? And when the deluded populace here shall learn that they have thrust into a dungeon the distinguished Colonel Gracchus Vanderbomb, of Sloughcreek, the owner of a hundred negro slaves, under the supposition that he was an abolitionist, and was seeking to entice away their negroes; I say, when they shall have learned this, as they must within the next twenty-four hours, what, think you, will be the extent of the popular outburst in my favour?”

“Gracchus!” exclaimed Plutarch, “thou art a great genius, and thou wilt be the master of the American world, as Cæsar was of the Roman world. I see it all; it breaks upon my vision like a flood of light. I am compensated for the annoyance occasioned me by that detestable beverage, and the pain arising from the spring, and pressure of the iron incisors. But when the reaction is complete, and when, enfranchised, your words shall be laws to the multitude which will crowd the inn to do you honour, I will have one boon to crave of you.”

“Name it, Kipps.”

“That the pedagogue, with the superabundance of fiery hair, and a mere nut-shell of brains, be doomed to drink a quart of the execrable cider, and then be confined in this place two whole days.”

“I will mark his actions, Kipps; and unless I see some signs of penitence plainly depicted in his face, and hear him declare that he will vote for me, I will have him punished as you desire. And, Kipps, when the news shall spread over the North, and be the leading subject of all the editors of every party, my popularity will run like wildfire! They will say, this is the man for us—a martyr to his principles, and a victim of southern outrage.”

“But, Gracchus,” said Plutarch, “will they not hear likewise that it was all a mistake, and that the southern people, to make amends for the outrage, resolved to support you for the presidency?”

“No. They must not learn it, Kipps. You must write a circumstantial account of the transaction for the Censor, omitting everything which transpires subsequently to our liberation.”

“And yet,” continued Plutarch, “all the facts and proceedings will be in the southern papers.”

“I know it, Kipps; but no matter. The first account, which you shall furnish, will have two or three days the start

of the other ; and when the people have committed themselves in my favour, they will adhere to me for the sake of consistency. And, besides, my next excursion shall be north of the line. I will, for the present, let what has occurred work for me in the South ; and it will do more for the cause than a tour of a thousand miles and a hundred speeches. I must keep my interests balanced on both sides ; and to do this, my presence will be demanded next in the North."

From the time our adventurers had been seated on the straw, they had been almost incessantly annoyed by a species of itching and burning, on their ankles, wrists, and necks, which became more and more intolerable as the conversation progressed, until, finally, they were unable to bear it any longer in silence.

"Kipps, what the d——l do you suppose it is that makes me itch and burn so?" demanded the colonel, rising precipitately, and rubbing the parts affected with great violence.

"Really, I should be happy to inform you ; but in this gloom I find it impossible to discern any objects of diminutive size. My wrists seem to be much irritated, but I can perceive nothing on them to produce the very disagreeable sensation I experience."

Just then they heard some one stepping across the floor above, and the next moment the hatch was raised a few inches, and they recognised the voice of the hostess calling them.

"Gentlemen!" said she, "get out, quickly. They are all at the barn, now, plucking the feathers from the geese, and they have sent off to town for a barrel of tar. They wanted my bolsters ; but I told them I would die first ! And as for Mr. Spatter, I told him if he touched a feather of my bed, he should never lay in it again, as long as he lived. The brutes ! to serve honest gentlemen so ! But get out and follow me—there is no time to be lost."

“And whither would you lead us, good dame?” asked the colonel.

“To a dark closet in the garret, where they won’t find you. I’ll say you got out of a window, and escaped to the woods.”

“No!” said the colonel; “we will remain. But, for your satisfaction, madam, and whose kindness I shall reward, I will assure you that we are not guilty of any offence demanding punishment.”

“Gracchus,” said Plutarch, “it strikes me we had better be governed by this gentle and heroic lady’s advice. Although we can readily cleanse our characters from the foul imputations of our persecutors, I have read, somewhere, that it is by no means an easy task to divest oneself of a suit of tar and feathers.”

“It will make our success the more complete, Kipps, the more we suffer indignity.”

“But, sir, permit me to say that the operation proposed, if executed, may imperil our lives. I think we have already done enough for character and popularity, and that it is a duty we owe not only to ourselves, but to the country, to save our bodies and lives. Remember that the weakest acts of Cicero’s life were just before his death. Twice he put to sea, and might have escaped; but instead of doing so he steered for his villa, near Capua, the very place of all others where his enemies were most likely to search for him. And there he lingered, like a silly idiot, stroking his beard in indecision until his head was stricken off. Now, here is the place where they will come in quest of you, and you hesitate to escape while it is yet in your power.”

“I will not imitate Cicero in his end, for your sake, Kipps; but I am so bulky that I doubt whether I can get up.”

“Give me your hand; I am as strong as a horse!” said Mrs. Spatter. The result proved that she did not overrate her abilities; for by her assistance both the prisoners were

soon released from their dark dungeon. No sooner were they lifted up into the room, than they perceived the nature of the tormentors which had afflicted them below, and their first moments were spent in endeavouring to rid themselves of them.

“Never mind the fleas, gentlemen,” said the hostess. “They are nothing. I have been down there before now, and know what they are. The last time I got up the potatoes, I thought if the Bloomer trousers were fit for anything in the world, it was to go into such holes as that. But never mind the fleas, so you get rid of the tar and feathers. Take a mug of cider, I have here in the bar, to restore your spirits; and then let us be off up stairs.”

“Madam, pray excuse me!” said Plutarch; “it does not agree with my stomach, as you may be assured the next time you descend into the subterranean region where we were lately confined.”

“But, madam,” said the colonel, “if you can let us have a bottle of brandy, we shall be much indebted to you; although, at the same time, you shall not be unrequited,” and as the colonel said this he placed in her hand a double eagle.

“There is but one bottle in the bar,” said Mrs. Spatter, staring in astonishment at the ponderous coin; “and that is hid where Spatter can’t find it. You shall have it; and if you can think of anything else in the house you would like to have, it is yours. Here is the brandy,” said she, producing it; “but now let us make haste, for I hear them coming.”

They proceeded without more delay up stairs, and by means of a ladder our adventurers ascended into the place selected by the hostess for their temporary security. Bidding them be very quiet, Mrs. Spatter withdrew, taking with her the ladder.

“This,” whispered the colonel, “is almost as dark a place of concealment as the other.”

“But it is infinitely dryer, and more comfortable every

way," said Plutarch. "Here we shall have neither fleas, rats, nor traps—Gracchus! I am bitten, snake bitten, I believe!" cried he, in alarm, and springing to the side of his companion.

"Snake bitten, Kipps? Impossible! What should snakes be doing up here?"

"I tell you a serpent seized my finger, when I thrust my hand out to find something to sit on. But I do not yet experience any of the effects of the venom."

"If it should be so, Kipps," replied the colonel, "I have, fortunately, one of the best remedies in the world in this bottle. Drink of it copiously." Kipps did so; but the moment after he had swallowed down an enormous quantity of the medicine, the snake proved to be nothing more than a hen, which left its nest and flew down into the room below, cackling vociferously; and the moment after it flapped out of a window, and continued its cries in the yard, until Mrs. Spatter finally silenced it by a blow upon the head with a broom handle.

"Kipps," said Vanderbomb, "that is the last of the hen; I heard its expiring note under the death-blow, doubtless, of our generous preserver. So much for the supposed serpent. I presume you are quite well now."

"I feel rather more than relieved," replied Kipps, and with rather more energy of voice than might be consistent with their plan of concealment. "I fear, Gracchus, that I have acted with too much precipitation, and have swallowed too large a potation, under your prescription and entreaty."

"Well, only keep quiet, and I will answer for the result."

"But, nevertheless, that is not so easy of accomplishment. There is such a combustion in the brain, that, really, I am hardly conscious whether I am speaking or not. Whether it be solely the process of ratiocination going on in my cranium, or whether my thoughts find expression by means of the tongue, is now a matter of some uncertainty with me. At all

events, noble Gracchus, you must believe me when I assert that whatever I may say or do, will be without any volition on my part, and must be attributed to the potent spirits which seem, for the time being, to exercise a complete mastery over me."

"If you believe me, Kipps, you are giving an incessant expression to your thoughts, and your utterance is bolder and louder than may comport with our safety."

"Gracchus," said Kipps, "I am exceedingly sorry for it; but I know of no remedy. It seems to me I am whispering as softly as a woman, and yet you say my tones are loud."

"Both loud and whining, Kipps."

"Then I deserve to be commiserated. But, Gracchus, do you not think there is some virtue in woman?"

"Do you allude to Mrs. Spatter?"

"She is one of womankind."

"Kipps, doubtless there is some virtue in Mrs. Spatter; but I will not undertake to define it. She certainly has a disposition to accommodate us, for which we should be thankful. And yet, were she my wife, I might not relish her habitual depreciation of her husband."

"You should marry, Gracchus, before it be too late for you to leave posterity. Pompey was fifty when he married Cæsar's daughter, and Cæsar himself, then, was only five-and-forty. Zenobia married merely for posterity; and Julian, the apostate, did the same. We must have posterity, Gracchus; else how can our noble achievements be perpetuated?"

"Why don't *you* marry, Kipps?"

"Whom shall I marry?"

"You may have Flora, my sister."

"When you arrive at the head of affairs, you may have the authority to bestow her hand on whom you will. But until then, I think she will favour the pretensions of the parson. Once, when I named the necessity of marriage to her, she

exhibited an indignant frown, and departed abruptly from my presence."

"She is too haughty, I fear, Kipps; and might prove to be another Xantippe. Besides, she is too old for posterity, if there be veracity in the family record, which I am sometimes inclined to doubt, when I survey her. Women are full of artifice, Kipps; they are mere artificial flowers. Were you ever in love with a woman, Kipps?"

"I have felt an ardent affection for Portia, Zenobia, and Eusebia; but they, you know, were dead before I lived. And I must confess that since I have taken a draught of the spirits, bestowed by this good hostess, I realize something of a glowing disposition to reward one of the sex by bestowing on her my heart and my hand."

"Kipps," said Vanderbomb, "you speak too loudly—you are becoming even boisterous, and I hear loud voices below. Do you not distinguish the incessant cough of Mrs. Spatter, in the yard? It is a signal for you to be quiet. Let us remove a few paces farther from this opening. Tread lightly, for the planks are loose."

But, in stepping aside from the orifice through which they had ascended, Plutarch staggered, and was caught by Vanderbomb, just when they had reached the ends of several planks which did not quite extend to the last joist at the end of the building; and their combined weight caused the opposite ends to rise, and they were precipitated into the room below with a startling crash. It happened, however, that our adventurers were saved from injury by falling on a bed that chanced to be immediately under them, which sufficed to break the fall, but was itself crushed under their weight, and added to the noise by the falling of its timbers upon the uncarpeted floor.

"Kipps!" said Vanderbomb, rising from the bed, "you are drunk! Now we are lost!"

Kipps, still sitting on the bed, looked round in astonishment.

“Gracchus!” said he, “is it thus to be inebriated? I know not where I am, or how I came hither; but I feel an irrepresible inclination to sleep; and by your leave, since I am placed on a luxuriant couch, I will indulge for a few minutes.” Saying this, he deliberately reclined at full length, and closed his eyes.

The next moment the door was burst open, and a body of men, preceded by Mrs. Spatter, who brandished her broom, and disputed the way inch by inch, entered the room.

“Bid those noisy people retire; they disturb me,” said Plutarch, gazing at the intruders.



CHAPTER V.

VANDEBOMB AND KIPPS DRAGGED TO THE BARN-YARD TO BE TARRED AND FEATHERED.—KIPPS DECIDEDLY DRUNK.—DR. JALAP AND MR. WAGWELL ARRIVE.—THEY ARE DELIVERED.—KIPPS IS ROUSED BY A BLOW, WHICH HE RETORTS ON SNEHPETS.—SNEHPETS SENTENCED.—VANDEBOMB RETURNS HOME.—GREAT EXCITEMENT AT MIDWAY.—MISS FLORA INFECTED.—KIPPS IS TREATED BY THE DOCTOR.—HE RISES AND APPEARS IN THE LIBRARY.

IN spite of the opposition of Mrs. Spatter, who succeeded, however, by a well-directed blow, in sending Mr. Spatter down stairs, and of the half-uttered remonstrances of Plutarch, our adventurers were seized and conducted to the barn-yard, where everything was in readiness to perform the humiliating operation of conferring upon them a covering of tar and feathers.

“Have you anything to say why the sentence of the people

here present should not be executed?" demanded Mr. Sneh-pets, the pedagogue.

"Is it the will of a majority?" asked Vanderbomb.

"It is," replied the other.

"Then I submit. In this free country the majority must govern."

But still the pedagogue hesitated. There had been a large accession to the company while our adventurers were in confinement, and some of them were gentlemen of intelligence and humanity. As they gazed at the colonel, they were struck with his genteel appearance, and several of them demanded a more careful examination into the evidences of his guilt, before becoming participators in the very serious punishment proposed to be administered.

Poor Kipps was now perhaps the least concerned spectator present. So stupid had he become, that he was no longer able to stand, and was obliged to be propped against the fence in a sitting posture. Occasionally, he grumbled and growled, but his half-enunciated words were without connexion.

During the pause which ensued upon the protest and interposition of the gentlemen referred to, the barouche of the colonel dashed up to the scene, the horses smoking, and the driver (Juba) cracking his whip with great vigour and animation. Mr. Wagwell, the lawyer, and Dr. Jalap, from Midway, descended from the carriage and ran briskly to the colonel, whose hands they cordially grasped, and at the same time bowed to several of the company present, to whom they were well known.

"Gentlemen, gentlemen," exclaimed Mr. Wagwell, "what is the meaning of this? Why do I behold my best friend thus stripped, and his arms pinioned? Restore him to liberty immediately. You know I am a lawyer; and I tell you that what you have already done, to say nothing of what you had

it in contemplation to perpetrate, may subject you all to a severe penalty!"

"Doctor, if *you* are his friend, I'm afraid we have been mistaken," said the pedagogue, who had been one of the doctor's patients, and still owed him money.

"Mistaken!" cried the doctor; "it is the worst mistake that ever men were guilty of! Why, this is Colonel Vanderbomb, of Sloughcreek, who has been elected representative of Tidewater county, Virginia; he owns a plantation in the South, and has now upon it more than a hundred slaves! He to be mistaken for an abolitionist! Why, he is spoken of for the presidency!"

This speech produced a tremendous effect. Vociferous apologies were uttered by all those who a moment before were eager to treat the colonel with the utmost indignity.

"Gentlemen," said Vanderbomb, radiant with smiles, "I desire now to address you a few moments;" and mounting upon a stump in the yard, he poured forth a flood of eloquence, having scarcely the slightest reference to the recent occurrence. He exalted the patriotism and virtue of the people, and impressed upon them the necessity of always submitting cheerfully to the will of the majority; and slightly hinted at the fact that he had been upon the eve of testing, practically, the sincerity of his doctrine. He spoke at length upon the nature of the government, and its beautiful operation, wherein the people were made the masters, who could reward or punish any individual as he might deserve. And in an emphatic allusion to the remark of Dr. Jalap, that he had been proposed for the presidency, he inculcated the doctrine that it was an office which no one was at liberty to decline, however averse he might be to occupy such a responsible position, when called upon to assume its duties by the voice of the people.

He was frequently interrupted by the rapturous applause of the company, among whom both Mr. Wagwell and Dr. Jalap

mingled industriously, and availed themselves of the opportunity of whispering something about a species of *monomania* which the colonel and his secretary laboured under. This, as may be presumed, added still greater enthusiasm to the cheers and plaudits of the people, and Vanderbomb proceeded to address them with renewed zeal and eloquence.

Meantime, Numerius Plutarch, who sat unobserved a few paces distant, without the circle of listeners around the colonel, closed his eyes and fell into an uneasy slumber. Sometimes his head inclined to the right, and then to the left, but more frequently it nodded down in front. It was while thus nodding and bowing that he attracted the attention of a pet lamb, of the masculine gender, who, supposing himself to be challenged to a personal combat, drew back a few paces, and then springing forward with all his force, bestowed such a blow upon the bald head of the slumberer, that he fell down prostrate upon the ground. He was stunned for the moment; and the blow had not only the effect of fully awakening him, but it seemed to have likewise sobered him considerably. He rose up, and the first one his eyes rested upon happened to be Snephets, the pedagogue; he throttled him, exclaiming "Villain! how dare you lay violent hands on Numerius Plutarch Kipps! I'll teach you the difference between Latin and French! You a teacher of American youth! and the presumptuous interrogator of Col. Gracchus Vanderbomb, of Sloughcreek! *Ame de boue!* There's French for you, wretch!"

Snephets was rescued from the clutches of Plutarch, by the colonel, himself, who endeavoured in vain to convince his secretary that the blow he had received had been administered by the lamb. But the poor pedagogue was doomed to a worse fate still. When it was learned that the idea of bestowing a coat of tar and feathers on the colonel originated with him, the popular fury, which, like the thunderbolt, must spend its force somewhere, turned in his direction, and it was almost

unanimously voted that Snehpets should have a crest of the tar and feathers he had prepared for the colonel, to surmount the exuberancy of his red hair: and it was likewise decreed that he should leave the neighbourhood, and take with him his negroes to the North. Expostulation did not avail him; he was forced to submit. And the only consolation he had, if consolation it might be called, was the repetition of Vanderbomb's maxim, that it was necessary to yield to the will of the majority.

Finally, just when the carriage, in which were seated our adventurers and their rescuers, was leaving the scene of so many unlooked-for occurrences, poor Spatter, the innkeeper, was seen to rush from his own door, and run across the fields, closely pursued by his wife, who attributed the whole mischance to him; and as she abused him with her tongue, her arguments were every now and then enforced by the unerring application of the broom-handle.

Vanderbomb had been easily persuaded to suffer his friends to conduct him back to Midway. They assured him—as he had already anticipated—that the news of the occurrences of that day would do him more good in the South, than the convincing arguments of a hundred speeches; and that if something were not done on the other side of the line, to balance his growing popularity, a fatal preponderance might be the consequence, which would destroy the advantage of his central position, and the wise equilibrium he had hitherto maintained. They likewise suggested that the precarious condition of Plutarch's health, who now complained of pain in the head, required some repose, and perhaps some medical treatment, before it would be safe for him to make another sally. The colonel admitted that he should not think of moving in any direction without being attended by his secretary.

White, the coachman, had informed all the inhabitants of Midway—all, excepting one, the imperious Miss Flora Van-

derbomb, of Furzehill—of the occurrence at the inn; and the village had been thrown into a state of unusual excitement, upon learning the perilous condition of their munificent patron. It was proposed by Mr. Dubiety Doubletongue, the keeper of the Midway Inn, that the men of Midway should go in a body to rescue the colonel, and punish his captors; and this motion was seconded by Mr. Saponaceous Bristle, the village barber; but, upon the interposition of Mr. Oldstyle, the parson, who assured them that Mr. Wagwell and Dr. Jalap would be sufficient to prevent further injury, and would release and bring back the captives in a few hours, the expedition was given up. The guns and swords and pistols which had been brandished in the street, were reluctantly taken into the houses again. Nevertheless, the excitement was not allayed; and nothing else was thought of or spoken about during the day, but the indignity which had been offered to the colonel.

Towards evening, a messenger who had been despatched down the road, returned at full gallop with the joyful tidings that Gracchus and Plutarch, accompanied by the doctor and Mr. Wagwell, were approaching the village. As quick as thought it was resolved that the whole town, north and south, should be illuminated; and by the time the carriage entered the place, candles were gleaming from every window.

The population turned out en masse, and surrounded the colonel when he alighted at his door, and hailed his deliverance with deafening shouts. Vanderbomb thanked the good people warmly, and said if it were not for the hunger he felt—not having eaten anything since morning—he would make them a speech; but he hoped they would excuse him on that occasion; and he promised to speak to them at length on some other day during the approaching canvass.

“What does all this mean, brother?” demanded Miss Flora, meeting Gracchus in the hall, whither she had been attracted by the obstreperous huzzas.

“It means, fortunate sister of mine,” said the elated Vanderbomb, “that I have achieved a great victory to-day; and that the time is not distant when my stately sister will be called upon to do the honours of the presidential mansion, at Washington.”

“Can it be possible that such a thing will ever take place?” she asked of the parson, her brother having passed on to the *salle à manger*, without pausing to hear the question.

“Colonel Vanderbomb, madam, is eligible,” replied the parson, evasively; “and if the people see proper to cast their votes for him—and such a thing is by no means impossible—it would be natural, indeed it would be necessary, for you to occupy the exalted position he named.”

“Indeed! and you really think so?”

“Certainly, madam.”

The parson was not aware of the injury his words were likely to inflict on the weak mind of the vain woman; nor that the idea of greatness, which, as if it were contagious in the family of the Vanderbombs, was henceforth to fill the imagination of the lady, might be fatal to his hopes of winning her hand and fortune.

Dr. Jalap declared that Numerius was ill, and that it was necessary for him to be put to bed and leeches. This was stoutly denied by the secretary, who insisted that he was quite recovered, and had a ravenous appetite for supper. It was compromised, through the interference of the colonel, by Kipps agreeing to suffer the doctor to take charge of him after supper; and by the doctor consenting that he should have as much to eat as he desired.

When Plutarch surrendered himself into the doctor's hands, it was found that there was a smart contusion on the crown of his head, and that a few leeches might be of service in allaying or preventing inflammation. This was submitted to; but no sooner had the doctor departed from the house, than

the indomitable secretary rose from his bed, his head decorated with a huge turban of bloody bandages and wet napkins, and presented himself in the library, where Vanderbomb and his now infected sister were engaged in earnest conversation.

“Who’s that! Who are you! Defend us, heaven!” exclaimed Miss Flora, hysterically, not recognising the risen patient at first; and when she did recognise him, and perceived that he was not more than half dressed, she was dreadfully shocked, and instantly made her escape from an opposite door.

“Kipps!” said Vanderbomb, “you should not thrust yourself so unceremoniously in the presence of my sister, in your shirt and drawers, covered only by a loose gown.”

“Gracchus, pardon me; and beg the lady’s pardon for me. In the first place, I did not suppose she was likely to be met with in your library; and in the next place, I was not aware of being deficient in my costume. Such trifles could find no place in my mind, which was pregnant with more important matters. I now perceive, truly,” said he, holding out his leg, “that my gown is wanting in length.”

“I fear, Kipps, you have shocked my sister so much that she will not be in a humour to listen to your suit.”

“I beg you will not again refer to that idle suggestion of mine in the cockloft. But let us to business. The doctor left a cathartic for me to swallow, which I threw out of the window. I have had a dose too much of that kind to-day; it was horrible stuff! I came to write an account of the proceedings at the inn; it must be done to-night, and mailed in the morning.”

“Here it is, Kipps,” said Vanderbomb, complacently; “I wrote it myself, while the doctor was drawing blood from you. You have only to copy it, as I do not wish my chirography to be known by the publishers, and address it to the Censor. Look over it, Kipps.”

Kipps did as he was told; and as he progressed, he made

many nods of approbation; but when he drew towards the conclusion, which described the scene in the barn-yard, he shook his head, and put down the sheet.

“What’s the matter with it, Kipps?” demanded Vanderbomb.

“Gracchus,” said the faithful secretary, “in matters of this nature, it is true one need not be critically correct; a little dissimulation may be pardoned in a candidate; and in the minor details it is not to be expected, and is unnecessary, that all things should be set down in the order they occurred. Throughout the narrative I observe with gratitude you have omitted many incidents which, although they shall be noted down in my diary, would have done no good whatever to the cause; but here, near the conclusion of your account, I find matters of grave concern, which I have no remembrance of having taken place. Is there not a probability that some of those you mention as being present, may make a counter statement?”

“And if they do, Kipps, it will be a false statement, and they shall be personally accountable to me for it. The reason you cannot recollect what is there described, and which really took place as I have stated, is obvious enough; you were drunk at the time.”

“Gracchus! never, I pray you, under any circumstances whatever, induce me to swallow a like potato. Let me die, first!”

The colonel having satisfied his secretary that everything he had written was strictly true, the latter set to work, and succeeded, before retiring to his chamber, in transcribing the rather voluminous and circumstantial report of the occurrences of the day.

CHAPTER VI.

EXTRAVAGANT COMMENTS OF THE PRESS.—INDIGNATION MEETING.—VANDERBOMB AND KIPPS MAKE A SECOND EXCURSION.—THEY GO NORTH, AND HAVE JUBA BY MISTAKE FOR THEIR COACHMAN.—THEY MEET WITH SNEHPETS.—THEY STOP AT PENNVILLE.—JUBA IS COMPELLED TO SIT WITH HIS MASTER.—VANDERBOMB ADDRESSES THE FREESOILERS.—VANDERBOMB AND KIPPS SEIZED AND BOUND.

THE Censor, as might have been expected, did not omit a single word in the account. On the contrary, the editor threw in (by way of parenthesis) sundry embellishments of his own, and in addition he poured forth a full column of indignant editorial. The whole affair being a rich treat for readers of all classes, the substance of the shocking transactions at the Southern inn was copied into hundreds of journals. About the same time Vanderbomb's letters to the Governors of New York and Virginia, appeared in all the papers, accompanied very generally with remarks from the editors, which both the colonel and his secretary, as well as Miss Flora herself, conceived to be nothing more nor less than serious commendations, and a striking evidence that the subject of them was rapidly attaining a distinction and popularity throughout the country, which was to result in placing him at the head of the government.

Vanderbomb subscribed for some five-and-twenty papers, published in different sections of the Union; some were Democratic, as many Whig, and the remainder equally divided

between the pro-slavery and abolition advocates, in the South and the North. When all these journals were read at the Halfway mansion (and not one escaped perusal there), they were sent over to the Midway Inn, for the benefit of travellers, and to the barber shop of Mr. Saponaceous Bristle, for the edification of his patrons on both sides.

An indignation meeting was convened at the instance of Mr. Dubiety Doubletongue, over which Mr. Bristle presided. Mr. Wagwell wrote the resolutions, and after being amended and modified by Vanderbomb (who did not attend the meeting), they were unanimously adopted. Mr. Wagwell likewise made a great speech on the occasion, which was taken down in shorthand by Numerius Plutarch, and subsequently printed in the Censor.

Miss Flora, of Furzehill, became more and more infected with lofty aspirations, as she daily read the extravagant notices of the press, all more or less glorifying her bother; and she compelled the Rev. Mr. Oldstyle, at the hazard of her displeasure, to throw off his mask of neutrality and non-interference. He was required to acquiesce in all the projects of ambition originating at Halfway Mansion, or else to be banished from its doors. And both the lawyer and the doctor were convinced that it would be a fruitless task for them to undertake to convince Vanderbomb that his name was likely to be made a jest and a by-word throughout the land, and that he would be doomed in the end to a bitter disappointment.

After a delay of many weeks, during which time our adventurers in quest of the presidency were incessantly employed in studying the aspects and probabilities of the times, and furnishing themselves with every conceivable species of political material, they again resolved to go forth on their important mission.

On the morning of their departure, they arose betimes, and set out on the highway towards the North, at an early hour,

and long before the cock had uttered his first salutation to the morning.

When it was quite light, and after they had proceeded between fifteen and twenty miles, it was remarked, for the first time, that instead of White, their northern coachman, they now had Juba with them. White had concerted this little arrangement with the negro, not relishing the perils of such sallies; for on the former occasion a pistol-ball had perforated his hat, in his flying retreat; and now, as usual, he had no previous intimation which direction the carriage was to take; knowing that as the vehicle emerged from the gate, and not before, the coachman would learn whether he was to turn to the right or the left.

"Juba," said the colonel, "I intended that White should accompany us."

"You did, massa? and White said it was black! ha! ha!"

"But no matter; I am not to be deterred by trifles. Do you think any one can entice you to run away from your master, Juba?"

"I tink nobody can do sich a ting!"

"But you must be prudent, Juba. I know it would be useless to attempt to restrict your speech among strangers; but you must be careful of what you say, and do nothing but mind your own business."

"Lor, massa, jess lebc me alone to gib any 'quirin medlar his answer! I know my place too well to be encaptured by udder folks' fly-traps!"

"Gracchus," said Numerius Plutarch, who had been for some time reflecting on the occurrences of their first sally, "I cannot imagine how the people at the southern inn happened to suspect we were abolitionists, unless White disobeyed his instructions, and uttered some words which gave birth to their conjectures."

"No matter, Kipps, how it occurred, since it redounded to

our advantage. I say it was a fortunate occurrence, and I shall be satisfied if our present adventure may find so lucky a termination."

"Pardon me, Gracchus, when I say that all of the details of that proceeding were not of such a satisfactory nature. I think I shall never be able to forget the taste of that execrable cider, and of the extremity it reduced me to, in the subterranean vault; nor the stunning blow which that ignoramus of a Snehpets dealt me upon the head."

"Kipps, I tell you, positively, it was not the pedagogue who struck you. Will you never believe it was the he-lamb?"

"What provocation had I given the animal to treat me so rudely? It must have been taught such tricks by the *scelerat*, who is better qualified to teach monkeys and goats such grovelling practices than the youth of the country lessons of wisdom."

The day being several hours advanced, and the cravings of hunger felt by the whole party, they drew up at the road-side, where a bright stream of spring water gurgled at their feet, and partook of a rich repast which had been ordered by Miss Flora to be put in the carriage, so that they need not be under the necessity of breakfasting at an inn the first day.

While they were engaged in this pleasant exercise, a stranger, mounted on a fine horse, who seemed to be travelling in the same direction, overtook them, and having saluted them respectfully, and inquired the time of day, was kindly invited by the colonel, who saw in him one of the voters of the country, to share their tempting meal.

But no sooner had the stranger dismounted, than he seemed to start back, and would have declined the invitation if he could have fabricated an excuse for doing so. It was no other person than the veritable pedagogue himself; but he was so completely disguised that our party could not recognise him;

and soon becoming satisfied of that fact, he hesitated no longer to eat and drink with them.

Snehpets, who had long been a widower, and without children, when forced to decamp from the neighbourhood of the White Cow, speedily disposed of all his negroes to a southern trader for as large a price in cash as he could obtain. This accomplished, he had his hair shaved from his head, disencumbering himself of the tar and feathers, and substituted in the place of his red integument a coal-black wig of ample dimensions. He had likewise purchased a fine suit of clothes, so much at variance with the coarse attire he wore on the former occasion, that it was not to be supposed any one not long and familiarly acquainted with his voice and features could recognise him.

“As we seem to be going in the same direction,” said Vanderbomb, when they were ready to set out again, “I hope it will not be disagreeable to you to hold a friendly conversation with us on the way.”

“I am very willing to do so, and shall, without question, be both edified and well entertained,” replied the pedagogue. “I see you have a vast number of newspapers and other documents with you, and presume you must be posted up in all the news that is stirring.”

“In regard to the news of the day, sir,” continued Vanderbomb, “if it be of a political nature, I believe I am prepared to answer any interrogatory you may be pleased to propound.”

Here there was a pause. It could not but strike both the colonel and his secretary, that the voice of the stranger had sounded very much like that of the pedagogue; and the occurrence at the inn being brought fresh to their minds, as well as to the remembrance of Snehpets himself, by the remark just made by the colonel, was doubtless a sufficient reason for the hesitation and silence that ensued.

But the pedagogue, not to evince any sympathy with their

meditations, and to divert them from a too rigid scrutiny of his features, since they seemed always to turn instinctively towards him when he spoke, averted his face, and, concealing his voice as much as possible, asked their opinion of the chances of the respective candidates for the presidency and vice presidency. Among the names mentioned in connexion with the latter office, he included that of Vanderbomb, of Sloughcreek.

"I did not know, before," said the colonel, "that the name you mentioned last had been included among the candidates for the vice presidency. I have seen a score of journals edited by men of all parties, and some of no party, being called neutral (and which last seemed to have more to say of politics and of political men than the others), which speak of Colonel Gracchus Vanderbomb, of Sloughcreek, as a prominent candidate for the presidency."

"It was my mistake, sir," continued Snehpets; "I remember, now, it is as you say. I saw by the papers, where I rested last night, that it was the presidency he aspired to."

"Pardon me, sir; not aspired to; but rather the office which a majority of his countrymen seem to be determined to bestow upon him, as a reward both for his military services and his civil qualifications."

"I did not know he had been a soldier."

"It will soon be known, sir; he served, sir, in two wars. He fought the British at Bladensburgh, and the Mexicans in the recent war. I say it will soon be known, sir, that when victory perched on our banners, it was the result of his strategy and resolution; and when we met defeat, it was because his counsels did not prevail."

"Is there to be a book published containing this information?"

"Very soon, sir," said Plutarch; "I have had the pleasure of seeing the manuscript; and understand that the moment a

respectable publisher can be had to undertake its publication, it will be given to the world."

"I should think a book of that kind would sell," said Snehpets, "and that there would be no difficulty in finding a publisher."

"The difficulty is this," said the colonel; "they fear to be charged with taking sides, and losing the custom of those of opposite politics; or of being assailed by papers hostile to the pretensions of Vanderbomb."

"May I ask, sir," continued the pedagogue, "whether you are a partisan of Col. Vanderbomb's?"

"For certain reasons, which pardon me if I cannot name them at this time," said Vanderbomb, in embarrassment, "I would prefer to decline answering the question. Any other question I will answer with pleasure."

"I have no hesitation on my part," said Snehpets, "to declare my sentiments in regard to him. I am opposed to him root and branch."

"Root, sir," said Plutarch, "in botany, signifies that part of a plant which fixes itself in the earth; and branch, the shoot of a tree or other plant. Do you suppose that Col. Vanderbomb of Sloughcreek is a vegetable?"

"I did not say so."

"Then are you not a *Blanc-bec*?"

"A what? That's Latin, ain't it?"

"No, it's French. And if you don't know either Latin or French, or the one from the other, how can you know which of the candidates will make the best president?"

"But what is *Blanc-bec*?" demanded Snehpets.

"In vulgar parlance," said Plutarch, "which I never indulge in only on particular occasions, and this is one of them, it means '*Green-horn*.'"

"Do you mean to insult me, sir?" demanded Snehpets, at the same time raising his whip.

“Stop, Juba!” cried Plutarch, rising.

“Be still, Kipps!” cried Vanderbomb, placing his hand on the shoulder of his irritated secretary. “The gentleman has a right to prefer whom he pleases. If we attempt to frighten and beat the men who will not vote for me in preference to all others, it will be a hopeless undertaking. Kipps, I am angry with you. You are not to interfere in such matters at all; I am to dictate the policy of the campaign.”

“True, Gracchus,” said Plutarch, in complete submission; “I will not offend again. But this fellow’s eyes and voice reminded me of the impertinent pedagogue so forcibly, I lost my temper.”

“Oh! do I behold the veritable Col. Vanderbomb himself? And his trusty and learned secretary, who made so free with Mrs. Spatter’s milk pan in the cellar, and was afterwards punished by the young ram? That exploit shall be in print, if I ever meet with a newspaper reporter.”

“And pray, what may be your name?” demanded the colonel.

“Mr. Snephets, at your service. And I am indebted to you for my new coat of hair;” saying which, he lifted his wig, and exposed his bald head.

“It strikes me you were also indebted to me for a crest of tar and feathers.”

“Yes, sir; and all of which indebtedness I will endeavour to repay, the first good opportunity.”

“No opportunity so good as the present, sir. Dismount. I have pistols, and you shall have choice of them. Stop, Juba!” But before Juba could obey the command of his master, the pedagogue had put whip to his horse, and was galloping off at a furious rate.

Our adventurers continued on the road without again pausing, and without incident worthy of note, until about four o’clock in the afternoon, when, the horses being jaded, as they

were fat, and unaccustomed to such long drives, it was determined that they would stay at the inn of a village, just in sight before them, until the next day.

When they drew up at the Penn Hotel, the broad porch, and the pavement in front of the house, were filled with people, who seemed to scrutinize them closely.

"Kipps!" said Vanderbomb, "I shall have to address these people: no doubt they have heard of my approach, and will expect me to make a speech."

"No, Gracchus!" said Plutarch; "if they had known you, before this their shouts would have rent the sky. I suspect some other matter has brought them hither; and, if I mistake not, some of them have guns, and others clubs, instruments of offence or defence."

"Kipps, if any of them know who we are, of course we cannot deny our names; but if they are unenlightened, do not inform them. Yet if their conversation should be upon political affairs, you might intimate that I should be happy to address them from the porch after tea."

There was no cheering, no boisterous salutations, when our party descended from the carriage; but the people, black and white, and nearly one-half of them were of the sable hue, continued to stare, and uttered their comments in low tones. The colonel bowed slightly on either hand, and followed the host into the house, desiring a warm supper for himself and friend.

"Yes, sir," said Mr. Paul Parley; "but won't the other gentleman want something, too?"

"What other gentleman?" asked the colonel.

"The one who drove the carriage."

"Juba! Oh, yes; he will want the best the house can afford."

"Be seated, gentlemen, and everything shall be ready in a trice. I would offer something to drink, but this is a temperance hotel. We have nothing but sweet cider."

"Nothing but what?" asked Plutarch, who had not been attending strictly to what was said.

"Sweet cider, sir."

"*Jam satis!*—My friend, the taste of it gives me the cholera; the smell itself is poison, and the mention of it affects my stomach."

"*Chacun à son gout!* We compel no one to drink it. But if you have any of the cholera symptoms, we are allowed, in such cases, to furnish our guests with brandy."

"My dear sir, I have a very great respect for you, seeing you know French; but believe me, I am strictly temperate in my habits, and feel quite well at this moment."

"Brandy is held almost in as great aversion by my friend," said the colonel, "as sweet cider. He will take nothing but a glass of wine with me after dinner, and that we carry with us."

The stroke of a bell announced that supper was ready, and the host conducted our travellers to the next room, where they found Juba standing in great embarrassment near the table, holding, it seemed, a dispute with Mrs. Parley. There were three plates, and three chairs, and, just in front, the smoking repast.

"Be seated, gentlemen," said Paul, "and fill your plates, while Mrs. Parley fills your cups."

The colonel and his secretary obeyed with alacrity, as everything before them seemed to be clean and tempting.

"Sit down, sir," continued the host, placing one hand on the back of the unoccupied chair, and the other familiarly on the shoulder of Juba, who evinced a disposition to draw back.

Both Vanderbomb and Kipps put down their tea and looked up in astonishment.

"Sit down, sir!" persisted the host; "we keep but one table, and we regard all the guests who come to our house as equals, without respect to colour."

that I am a politician, and would willingly harangue them, if they desire it."

"Pause, Gracchus!" cried Plutarch, when Paul had withdrawn to announce to the people that his guest was some great man in disguise, and would make a speech to them after supper.

"Why should I pause, Kipps!"

"Do not eat the mushrooms, which I see on your plate!"

"Why not, Kipps?"

"Remember the fate of Jovian! A great emperor, and the successor of Julian, had scarcely been enveloped in the purple, when, for the want of some true friend with the boldness to say forbear, he sacrificed his life for the momentary indulgence of his appetite. He partook of what he supposed to be genuine mushrooms, at his supper, and the next morning was found dead in his bed."

"I will not eat them, Kipps; but I shall never know whether or not I am indebted to you for my life. No matter, the motive is sufficient."

The host returned, and announced that the people were extremely anxious to hear the stranger speak. "But," said Paul, "they would like to know who you are, first."

"All in good time," replied Vanderbomb; "I will satisfy them; but in my own way."

It was now dark without; but at the request of the colonel (who defrayed the expense), lights were furnished in abundance, and a table, with pen, ink, and paper, supplied for the secretary.

The company were assembled in the street, in front of the porch, and called upon the stranger repeatedly to speak. When their impatience had been sufficiently taxed, and when a substantial chair had been stationed in the proper place, the colonel made his appearance amid some slight applause, a habit which had been contracted by the people on former

"No, sar!" said Juba: "*Me* set down dar, and eat wid my massa! I'd choke fust! Go way, white man!"

"No one is your master but the great and good one in heaven," said Mr. Parley.

"Juba, sit down and eat," said his master.

"Ma—ma—massa! I—I—cou—cou—couldn't d—do it! I—I'd choke, sa—sar!" replied the terrified Juba, his teeth rattling, his eyes almost entirely white, and great drops of perspiration falling from his face.

"Do as I bid you, Juba, just to oblige the lady and gentleman."

"Juba," said Plutarch, "remember who it was from whom your name is derived, and who perhaps was your ancestor. The great Juba, King of Numidia, contended in a fair field with Julius Cæsar. He had fine cities, and gorgeous palaces; and when overcome, rather than be taken to Rome in triumph, he ordered a splendid entertainment, and, at the close of it, fell by his own sword. So, if you must expire, eat before you die, as he did."

Juba cast a look of agony at the speaker, and then sat down on the extreme edge of the chair. The commiserating landlady filled his plate, poured out his tea, and utterly overwhelmed him with kind and encouraging expressions. Poor Juba filled his mouth, but his masticators refused to perform their duty, and his cheeks became so much distended, that it was evident he must suffocate if he attempted to swallow their contents. He made the effort, however, and in his struggles, the chair, upon the edge of which only he had been sitting, slipped from under him, and he fell prostrate on the floor, while the contents of his mouth, bursting out with a loud explosion, were discharged upon the garments of Paul and his meek helpmate. Still, they did not wholly lose their temper, but muttered something as to the effect of the poor creature's habits, and attributed his perturbation to the fear of being punished by his master.

“Juba, did I ever punish you in my life?” asked the colonel.

“No, bless de Lord!” said Juba, who could not be induced to resume his seat. “Massa,” he continued, “Juba’s been hurt more in dis room dan he ebber war before!” No doubt the poor fellow spoke the truth, for his tears flowed freely to attest his sincerity.

“That is enough,” said the parleying Paul; “go into the kitchen, and help yourself. Gentlemen,” said he, in a low tone, “I owe you an explanation, and an apology. You must know that I am no abolitionist, nor a freesoiler, nor a higher-law man, nor even a Quaker; but I must please my customers, or shut up shop. This village is made up of fanatics and fools, with here and there a rogue, and not a few traitors to their country; and hearing that you were from the South, and in search of runaway slaves, they had assembled about my premises to raise a disturbance with you. They insisted that I should make your driver sit at the same table with you, and hoped an uproar would occur in this room; but being defeated in that expectation by your frank deportment, those who were set to watch your conduct have retired to the bar-room. If I can serve you in any way which will not injure my business, you may rely upon my doing it. I cannot say more now; and I trust to your discretion not to let it be known that I have said so much.”

“How did you know we were coming hither?” asked the colonel.

“A gentleman who arrived an hour before you did, and who is now a guest at the inn, informed the people of it.”

“Did he tell our names?”

“No, sir; he said he did not know them.”

“I thank you kindly, landlord, for your confidence; and rely upon it, you shall lose nothing by it. You would do me a great favour to tell the people, if they be still about the inn,

occasions, and which they indulged in this instance, perhaps, unconsciously.

“Gentlemen, and fellow citizens,” said Vandérbomb, “although as yet a stranger to you, I appear in your presence with perfect freedom; a freeman on free soil. [Good! cried several voices. He’s a freesoiler! But tell us your name or your object, one or the other, and then we’ll be quiet.] Gentlemen, I will take you at your word, and if I tell you either the one or the other, you promise to hear me patiently to the end? [Yes, we promise. Go on!] Permit me first, gentlemen, to tell you an anecdote. There was once a traveller in the land of steady habits [or of the striped pig, cried one], and sometimes known as the Yankee land, where it is said the people have a full share of curiosity, and generally contrive to find out the names of strangers, where they come from, where they are going to, and what’s their business. [He’s hitting at us.] Well, gentlemen, this traveller had but one leg of flesh and bone, the other was of wood; and he had been so much annoyed by the inquiries of the different landlords, as to what had caused the loss of his leg, that he resolved to devise some plan by which he could be rid of their importunities, and he was most successful. When he was asked the question again, he stipulated with the landlord that he would answer it, provided he promised to ask no more questions. I promise, said the landlord; now tell me how you lost your leg. *It was bitten off!* said the traveller. [That’s not so bad. Three cheers for the speaker, cried one, and they were given heartily.] I will merely add that the landlord offered to entertain him and his horse free of charge, provided he would let him ask one more question; but the traveller was inexorable, and held him to the agreement. Now, gentlemen, when I have answered your question, I must hold you to your agreement. I am, then, a candidate before the people, and hope to receive your votes. [For what office? which party do you belong to?

cried many.] Gentlemen, remember the agreement? [Good! he has us there!] You will find out who I am, and what office it is my partial countrymen have named me for, before you can vote for me. But now, hear my speech."

Here Vanderbomb motioned the innkeeper to hand him a pitcher, in which, instead of water, there was a pint of good brandy. Taking but a mouthful, the colonel proceeded: "Now, gentlemen, I propose to give you my views on some of the great questions of the day; and first of all on the subject of disunion. What! shall this fair fabric, the work of so many enlightened heads and noble hearts, be dissolved, to gratify a few theorists and haughty abstractionists in the South? [He's right! Huzza! Three times three for the stranger! cried several.] No, gentlemen, I trust not! And it shall never be while there is one spark of patriotism remaining in the land, or one valiant arm willing to draw a sword! Sever the Union, and the glory of Washington and his illustrious successors in the presidential chair, would be for ever dimmed. Who would wish to preside over the mere fragment of a union? What great man of the nation would undergo the fatigues, and sacrifices, and scandals of a campaign, if it was to be the president of merely an insignificant portion of the states? Who would desire to be a member of the cabinet of a fragmentary government? Who would consider it an honour to be a member of any congress which should not represent the whole nation, north and south, east and west? Away, then, I say, with the idea of secession! It is impracticable and ridiculous! What man, I ask, who aspires to be president, and who has a shadow of the remotest chance of success, has dared even to intimate his approbation of such a treasonable scheme, under any circumstances, and in any contingency whatever? Not one! On the contrary, gentlemen, permit me to say, that the great men of the day (I mean those who aspire to the chief magistracy) are the bul-

warks of the Union. They are all in favour of preserving it; and if one of their motives should be the hope of presiding over all the states, still we should be slow to condemn a grain of selfishness found in a bushel of patriotism. Think of the destruction such men could work, if they were to throw their weight into the opposite scale. Has not one of them, the great RETSBEW himself, intimated plainly, that if he had cast his influence upon the side of one of the sections, it would have predominated over the other, and a separation have been inevitable? Now, Mr. Retsbew is a Northern man, and when he saw his own people about to get the advantage of their opponents, he stepped out of his ranks and temporarily aided the South; and the great Ciceronian statesman of the South-west, when the danger seemed to proceed from the South, plunged into the ranks of the North, and did service there until the crisis was passed. General Sac succeeded for a time in convincing both sections that they were right; that there was no real and substantial difference between them; and, if elected, he proposed to reconcile their differences in a manner satisfactory to all sides. General Tocs was ready to preserve the Union, without even the ingenuity of an argument, if large masses of his countrymen would only call him to the head of affairs. Mr. Nanahcub proposed to republish the Constitution, and to appeal to every man who loved his country to read it carefully, and then act according to his convictions of right and duty. Mr. Sallad suggested that if the states, the members of the firm, had become dissatisfied with the articles of copartnership, that the instrument should be destroyed, and a new one be drawn up and signed by all the parties willing to be partners hereafter. This proposition, gentlemen, of Mr. Sallad, may be palatable in the end. Mr. Romlif has issued orders for the laws to be executed; and, finally, your humble servant would propose such laws as would obviate every difficulty!

“But the greatest security for the Union, gentlemen, and the surest guarantee you can have, will be the elevation to the presidency of an individual whose private interests lean neither to one side nor the other; one who is, from birth, from education, and from interest, just as much inclined to the North as to the South. I will not now intimate where such a man may be found; if there be such a man, he must of necessity soon be known to you. [We don't understand you, cried several; you are getting dull. Give us something spicy, like the man with the wooden leg.] Then, gentlemen, I have nothing more to say for the Union, if you prefer any other topic.”

“What have you to say in regard to *our* rights?” asked a large, oily-faced negro, standing immediately in front of Vanderbomb.

“I say, that whatever they may be as defined by the laws, they should be freely accorded you, and thankfully enjoyed.”

“That won't do!” said the negro. “We require to be acknowledged as your equals in every respect. Do you think it right that any portion of the human race should be the slaves of the other portion?”

“I do not regard it as a matter of right, but as a matter of necessity. Some must be served, and some must serve. The law sanctions it.”

“Will you read a portion of the Declaration of Independence for us? You will there see we are all born equals.”

“No, we won't see that. Give me the book,” continued Vanderbomb, addressing Plutarch, who had many volumes piled on the table before him. “The declaration says this,” he continued, reading: “*We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, &c.*”

“That is the same thing!” said the negro, triumphantly, who had been taught to argue on that point with acuteness; and who was, besides, a preacher.

“Admit it,” said the colonel; “and if they were born or created equal, it cannot be maintained that they have remained so ever since. You may have done so for one, and others may have done the same; and you are now exempt from involuntary servitude. I rejoice at it; and I would not have you suppose that I am standing here the advocate of slavery. Far from it, fellow citizens——”

“Stop! I’m not done with you,” continued the negro.

“You impudent scoundrel! how dare you interrupt him?” cried Plutarch. This produced a commotion in the crowd, and Vanderbomb came near being precipitated from the chair.

“Be silent, sir?” he exclaimed to his indignant secretary. “Leave me to manage my own business. Gentlemen, I am not here to raise a tumult, or to give offence to any man.”

“Then answer my questions,” said the negro.

“First, then,” continued Vanderbomb, “let me understand by what right you ask them. Are you a qualified voter by the laws of the state?”

“No!” growled the negro.

“Then you have no right to question me, and I will not reply to you. My speech is for the voters.”

This heightened the confusion that had still prevailed. Most of the whites present were abolitionists of the worst sort; men who not only believed, or professed to believe that the negroes should all be unconditionally emancipated, and enjoy all the rights of white citizens, but were, at the same time, the theoretical, if not the practical, advocates of amalgamation.

Just then Mr. Snehpets, the pedagogue, was lifted up in the arms of several burly runaway slaves, and, pointing to Vanderbomb, declared to the assembly that he was the owner of a hundred slaves in Virginia, and was then in search of runaways, whom he intended to kidnap, and take to the South!

This inflamed the fury of the crowd to such an extent, that they laid violent hands on both of our adventurers: and, had

it not been for the earnest remonstrances of Mr. Paul Parley, the keeper of the inn, who professed to be as much an abolitionist as any one present, it is probable they would both have sustained serious personal injury, in the first angry ebullition of the mob. Nevertheless, he could not prevent them from binding the hands of the captives, and leading them off to a neighbouring forest, where the fugitive slaves were in the habit of concealing themselves when pursued by the officers of the United States. As they walked in the midst of the hooting mob, Vanderbomb took occasion to whisper to Kipps, to be silent, and to submit to everything required of him.



CHAPTER VII.

THE PRISONERS CONFINED IN AN OLD HOUSE IN A FOREST.—PAUL BAMBOOZLES THE NEGRO JAILOR.—KIPPS'S HEART ALMOST FAILS HIM.—VANDERBOMB GLORIES IN PERSECUTION.—THEY ARE COMFORTED BY SPIRITS.—THEY REFUSE TO ESCAPE.—THE BLACK PARSON IS BEATEN BY JUBA.—JUBA ESCAPES, AND TAKES A LETTER FROM THE CAPTIVES TO MISS FLORA VANDERBOMB.—GIGANTIC SPECULATION OF VANDERBOMB.—HE CONFESSES [CONFIDENTIALLY] THAT HE IS A DEMAGOGUE.

THE prisoners were conducted through the darkness to the woods a mile from the village, and confined in a dilapidated house that had been built previously to the Revolution. What were once cultivated fields in the immediate vicinity of the ancient building, was now a wild wood, dense with undergrowth of bushes and brambles, and almost impenetrable even to the initiated, who with difficulty could traverse the faintly marked paths. Forest trees stood thickly in the yard, and near the door of the house, indicating that the place had not been

inhabited for many years, or could have only served as a hiding place for fugitives from justice. It was now the resort of fugitive slaves, and the treasonable plotters against the laws of the United States.

The house was built of stone, and from its ample dimensions and numerous spacious apartments, now partially in ruins, had once, in all probability, been the habitation of an opulent family. Some said the reason why it had been deserted, was that murders had been committed in it; others, that it was haunted, and consequently no one could dwell there in peace: but most probably the true reason was to be found in the sterility of the soil, and the malaria of an extensive swamp in the neighbourhood.

The prisoners were confined in one of the upper rooms, which had no furniture in it. There were dry leaves in one corner for a bed, and several empty boxes for table and chairs. A few smouldering billets of wood glared dimly on the hearth; but the inconsiderable heat they afforded, was more than counterbalanced by the smoke, which, failing to find egress through the choked-up chimney, floated through the chamber, and escaped at the sashless windows.

It had been the intention to confine the captives in the damp cellar under the house; but, at the suggestion of Paul Parley, that they might escape by digging the earth away from the side (the stone walls having fallen down in several places), they were led to the chamber above described.

Paul accompanied the captives to their room, and, pretending to exult in their fate, withdrew with the rest, and saw the key turned in the door. But when he had descended to the yard, and waited till the most furious of the negroes and abolitionists had departed for the village, where they spent the greater portion of their time in idleness, and in pilfering from the citizens, he turned to the jailor, a tall, intelligent runaway, whom he had befriended on many occasions, and who was permitted to

have regular access to the larder of the Penn Hotel, and remarked that he might as well ask the lodgers for the amount of his bill before leaving them.

"You hab der fine horses and carriage, Mr. Paul, and dat's 'fficient for you," said the fugitive.

"I suppose it is, Mr. Johnson. But then you know it can do no harm to be sure of the money, when one can get it. Besides, I must have some talk with these men, and tell them, you know, I had no hand in this business." Saying this, Paul winked significantly at the stalwart negro, who stood in doubt, holding an iron lamp in his hand.

"Why mus' you tell 'em dat?"

"Because the old Penn must be kept up. If they lug me in this business, I shall be rooted out from amongst you, and then when this, that, and the other little thing is wanted down here at the old castle, there will be no Paul from whom to get it. Do you understand? The officers can never know where to find Mr. Samuel Johnson, and his friends in the swamp; but they know exactly where they can lay their hands on Mr. Paul Parley."

"Do you think the sheriffs and 'turneys will be arter us?"

"As sure as you live and hope to be saved. These are great folks, I tell you, and their friends will soon be stirring after them."

"But dey must find before dey kin ketch, and ketch before they hang, ha! ha!"

"You know when a big reward, say \$5000, or such a matter, is offered, anybody can be found."

"Dat's true! Some of de niggers demselves will turn state's ebdivence for de filthy money."

"Then you are convinced?"

"I 'bieve I is."

"Give me the lamp and the key," he said, extending his hands.

“’Spose you let ’em git away? My Lord! dey’d drown me in de swamp!” said Mr. Johnson, drawing back.

“If I let them out, you know my house will be turned to ashes before morning.”

“Dat’s true agin! I’d do it myself. Here, Mr. Paul, I’ll trust you. You’re de friend ob de coloured people.”

“Now, Sam,” continued Paul, in familiar tones, “I want you and two or three others to watch my house until I get home, and not let the other stranger get away. Go, now, and watch till I come.”

“Why, Mr. Paul, dat genleman is de friend ob us!”

“No, he aint; it is a trap. When I come, I’ll tell you all about him. I know him well enough. He’s the enemy of these people we have here; but, beware of him! He’s no friend of yours.”

“Well, well! White man is mighty unsartin! Nobody nebber knows who’s who, and what he’s arter. I’ll go.” And he lost no time in obeying the instructions of his cunning adviser.

Mr. Paul, seeing he had now nothing but a number of miserable women and children to deal with, went boldly up stairs, and entered the apartment where our adventurers were confined.

While Paul was in conversation with Mr. Samuel Johnson below, there was a scene enacted above which demands a place in the personal memoirs of our principal characters. For some minutes the musing political aspirant promenaded the room with a stately step, with his hands tied behind him. Numerius Plutarch sat, a woful picture, on an empty box, which had been turned with the bottom upwards, and gave indubitable evidences of having served as a dining-table on frequent occasions. Ever and anon the colonel, still preserving a dignified silence, disdaining to stoop to so servile an employment, would kick some fresh billets of wood into the

fireplace, not heeding the fact that the accumulation of smoke was even more disagreeable than the increasing coldness.

"Gracchus," at length remarked Plutarch, "thus it is to be ambitious; and for his ambition Cæsar fell. When it is crowned with success, its toils and sufferings are compensated; but when it fails, its victims are miserable creatures indeed!"

"But have we failed, Kipps?"

"We are miserable."

"Pooh! this is what I want. It is exactly what I desire. What is it? It is *persecution*, the very greatest element of success, and the most glorious qualification for ultimate triumph in a republic. What was it made Julius Cæsar triumph, but the persecutions of Pompey and Cato?"

"But Cæsar was never thrust into prison with his hands tied behind him."

"He would have been, Kipps, if he had lived in my day. For his legions of soldiers, let us substitute legions of spirits. Kipps, put your hand in my pocket, and draw forth a bottle."

"How can I, Gracchus, seeing that I am bound?"

"Try, nevertheless, for I am thirsty."

Back to back they stood, and after many ineffectual endeavours, by dint of perseverance the bottle was extracted, and held by the neck in the hand of Plutarch.

"Be careful, Kipps, and see that you don't let it fall," said the colonel, gazing wistfully at the treasure. "Endeavour to place it on its bottom on the box."

"Gracchus, I fear I cannot do it without the risk of losing my perpendicularity; and if I fall on it, it may afflict me worse than the steel-trap did."

"Stop, Kipps!" cried Vanderbomb, watching his motions, and fearing the prize would be lost. "Give it to me, I can do better than that." And turning his back, he succeeded in taking possession of the bottle, and finally placed it on the box. His next care was to draw the cork, which was not easy of

accomplishment. After studying the case, however, very minutely, the old adage that necessity is the mother of invention, was again exemplified. He made Kipps sit on the box and hold the bottle between his knees, while he bent down and pulled out the cork with his teeth. This being done, he found no difficulty in drinking what he wanted; he then prevailed on Kipps to swallow a draught, alleging the necessity of the case, and the peculiar circumstances in which they were placed. Plutarch yielded reluctantly, and after profound deliberation. But when he had managed to swallow a mouthful, which was the stipulated quantity he was to imbibe, he found it impossible, from the prostrate condition into which his relaxed body had sunk beside the box, to rise sufficiently to replace the bottle upright on its base again.

“Don’t let it fall, Kipps!” said the colonel, perceiving the situation of affairs; “hold it firmly between your teeth, for if you relinquish it the contents will be lost.”

Poor Plutarch could do nothing more than make ugly grimaces; he endeavoured to speak, but it was impossible to utter a word. His face grew almost as red as the lurid light thrown out from the fireplace through the clouds of smoke. His limbs trembled, and tears ran down his cheeks, while the brandy trickled from his chin.

“Drink it, Kipps!” exclaimed the colonel; “and when the preponderance of weight is at the base, it will right itself, and you will be relieved.”

There was no time for hesitation, and Plutarch caught at the plan of escape. The reasoning of Vanderbomb was correct; and as soon as a few more draughts of the brandy were swallowed, the bottle resumed its erect position.

“You feel better now, Kipps?” asked the colonel.

“I do; but it was a terrible ordeal.”

“Mind, Kipps; it was the majesty of mind that extricated you, just as it will enable us to endure this persecution, and

to triumph over all obstacles. I feel quite as comfortable here as I would at the inn." And whether it was attributable to the majesty of mind, or to the potency of brandy, our adventurers now certainly bore their confinement with more equanimity than they had done a few minutes before.

Paul Parley just then made his appearance, and the first thing he did was to unbind the captives. He told them that before morning he would contrive to let them escape. "But," he added, "you must give me your pledge never to divulge to judge or jury the part I took in your liberation, else I shall be assassinated."

"Escape! don't speak of it, my friend," replied Vanderbomb, rubbing his enfranchised hands with delight. "We are comfortable enough where we are, and quite contented to remain during the pleasure of our keepers. Just furnish us enough to eat and drink, and make this pungent vapour ascend the chimney, and we shall prosper most admirably. Take this." Vanderbomb placed in his hand several double eagles.

Paul stared in amazement. He was one of those rational, matter of fact innkeepers, who looked for a natural effect to every cause. In this instance he found his keen wits completely at fault, and his first impulse was to designate our adventurer as a natural fool. But the heavy coin restrained him.

"Oh," said he, "I see the cause of your merriment now," pointing to the bottle.

"Will you not take some?" asked the colonel. "I have no glasses to offer."

"The night is chilly," said Paul, "and I will have to walk a mile. It will serve as a remedy against the cold. In the daytime I should be compelled to decline. But, gentlemen," he continued, after returning the bottle to the box, with the preponderance of weight now decidedly at the base; "you do not intend to remain here, when a means of escape can be provided?"

"I think we might retreat with honour——" began Plutarch, turning to the colonel.

"I think differently!" responded Vanderbomb, imperiously. "Instead of retreating, I intend to triumph. If our host will furnish us with a candle, and some pens, ink, and paper—and add a couple of chairs or stools—I shall deem his accommodations cheaply purchased with the coins I have parted with."

"Certainly!" said Paul; "you shall have everything I can procure for you, if you really intend remaining in this place."

"We do really intend to remain," said Vanderbomb.

"Host," said Plutarch, "I hope you do not suppose our lives to be menaced. I am willing to suffer anything short of death with my friend. I have agreed to that—but not to die. That would be going too far."

"If you have much money about your persons, and it should be known, I could not answer for the negroes."

"I have my pistols," said the colonel, "and will answer for our safety. Do you supply us with the articles I have named, and I will hazard the rest that may follow. One thing I had forgotten," he added, after a pause; "send Juba to me, if he can find access to us."

"Juba," said Paul, "is now up the road with the carriage and horses, waiting my return to the inn. It was agreed that when I returned and delivered the key to the negro Johnson, Juba was to bring you a ladder and conduct you to the carriage."

"I countermand the order," said Vanderbomb.

"And Juba must obey orders!" said Plutarch, with a motion of the hand, and a lively expression of face, showing that he was becoming zealous enough in the cause, under the influence of his potation.

"Tell Juba to return with the carriage to the stable; but to mount one of the horses, and call here (without the ladder) for a letter, with which, when it is thrown to him from the

window, he is to lose no time in returning to my sister Flora. That is all, Mr. Paul; and you may now leave us: I see my friend here saved his papers in the tumult, and I have a pencil, which will suffice to write the note Juba is to take."

Paul instinctively bowed and withdrew, not without, however, some misgivings as to the sanity of the strangers.

Plutarch had filled his hat and pockets with the notes of the proceedings and the speech at the Penn Hotel, before rising from the table, which had soon been overthrown in the mêlée that ensued when violent hands were laid upon the colonel; and now, from the force of habit, and impressed with the importance of his duties, he was arranging them carefully on the box before him.

When Gracchus and Plutarch were borne away from the village, the sable parson, instead of participating directly in the act of violence, proceeded to the kitchen of the inn, to have an interview with the then enfranchised Juba.

"You are now free! Thank God for it!" was the black parson's salutation.

"Where's massa?" demanded Juba.

"Your master is in heaven."

"You hab not killed massa, hab you? Ef you hab, ebery free nigger in de world will be hung!"

"The white man you call your master, is not injured, and will suffer no personal injury, unless he assaults the inoffensive people. But I say you have no master but God above. You are free!"

"See here, big nigger!" said Juba, with dilated eyes, and a significant shake of the head; "I don't comprehend what you say. I allars war free—freer dan you, 'spite all your ab'lition d—— nonsense!"

"Brother!" said the parson, "do not use profane language; but get you gone to the woods, fall down on your knees, and

thank your heavenly Father that your bonds have been rent asunder, and that you are disenthralled."

"Don't broder me! I'm not on a par wid any d——n free nigger, yet! Go off 'bout your business, 'fore I lose my temper, and you lose your grinning teeth!"

"And will you still belong to the white man?"

"I don't b'long to no man! My Massa b'longs to me. He feeds me, clothes me, pays de doctors and nusses me when sick, and I lub him. Do de abolitionists do dese tings for you all?"

"Brother, I say you must not return to servitude. Think well, before you return to your master."

"Am I free, sure nuff?" asked Juba, his eyes winking quickly with a bright idea, and observing that no one but themselves were in the kitchen.

"As free as any human being to do as you please."

"Den, ef I hab my liberty, I choose to go back to my massa."

"That we will prevent."

"How?"

"By force, if kind words won't answer."

"Den, ef dat's de game, I'll begin de play!" Saying this, Juba, by a well-directed blow, prostrated the black parson, and pommelled him so effectually that he was soon as devoid of animation, under the unexpected operation of Juba's freedom, as if the breath had entirely departed from his body. Juba, when he perceived the bloody condition of his unresisting victim, ceased his exercise, and became fearful that he might be past recovery. He took him up bodily, and casting him in a ditch at the bottom of the yard, fled to the stable, where he found an opportunity to confer briefly with Paul, who stepped aside from the procession in charge of the captives, which was just passing, and concerted the means for their escape with Juba.

Juba, contrary to the express command of his master, did

take a ladder with him to the dilapidated house ; but it was solely for the purpose of delivering into his master's hands the several articles which he had desired Paul to furnish him with. Paul, seeing that the gentlemen had gold, and were not niggardly with it, was not inclined to precipitate their departure from the neighbourhood ; hence he had warned Juba against insisting on his master's escape, with the assurance that he would be quite safe until relief should come from his home. He then had joined the party in his bar-room, where he found Mr. Samuel Johnson, to whom he delivered the key, after a sufficient delay, and said that the kidnappers *had no money*, and he should keep the carriage and horses until his bill was paid. This was a wise precaution against what might have been the effects of the rising cupidity of the lawless and desperate gang of free negroes and abolitionists, among whom his lot was cast.

Plutarch was writing, at the dictation of Gracchus, a note to Miss Flora, which, instead of perils and privations, merely announced that they were detained in durance by ignorant people, who innocently supposed they were kidnappers, or fugitive-hunters, and who, when they should be undeceived, would become his warmest friends and most zealous and attached supporters. He (Gracchus) enjoyed fine spirits, and had no fears of sustaining personal injury. He was suffering persecution, with a conviction that there would speedily be a glorious reaction in his favour. The epistle concluded by desiring that his attorney, Mr. Wagwell, might repair to his rescue, bringing with him the notification of his election to the Senate of New York.

Just as the letter was finished, they heard a slight rustling at the window, and the moment after the voice of Juba.

“Massa ! massa !” said he, in a low tone, “I’s come.”

“How did you climb up there ?” demanded the colonel, as he beheld the sooty face of his servant at the window.

“I have de ladder, massa.”

“You rascal, you! did I not forbid the use of a ladder?”

“De Lōrd knows, massa, Juba nebber heerd you.”

“But I told Mr. Paul not to send it hither. Begone, with this letter to your mistress, and take the ladder with you.”

“Gracchus,” said Plutarch, “permit me to suggest that if it were suffered to remain, it would at least be a means of escape, in the event of our being overpowered by assailants from the door.”

“I want it taken away, Kipps, to prevent an assault from the window.”

“I did not think of that, Gracchus. You deserve a mural crown!”

“Here, massa, I hab dese tings for you,” said Juba, placing a basket of sundry articles on the floor. “Oh, massa!” cried the faithful servant, looking round with horror at the dreary aspect of the room.

“Well, Juba, why are you not gone?”

“Massa—ef you would only get out, and——”

“Get away! begone!” cried the colonel, “or I’ll——”

Juba vanished from the window, and lost no time in obeying his instructions in every particular; and before the dawn of day he had entered the peaceful village of Midway.

“Now, Kipps,” said Vanderbomb, “we are in cabinet council, and we have the whole night before us to discuss the future, as well as to prepare skilful reports of recent occurrences for both the southern and northern papers. As I see that your hand is not quite steady, we will postpone the dispatches till a later hour of the night.”

“As thou wilt, Gracchus,” replied his secretary. “I confess to a numbness of the hands, occasioned by the cords those unhallowed imps of——”

“Stop, stop, Kipps! do not denounce what was in reality

a fortunate event. I am not quite sure the deep-potation may not have had some share in affecting your nerves."

"You know, Gracchus, I drank it for your benefit, and not of my own choice."

"True, Kipps; and I thank you for it. You served me well in that achievement. But let us think of more important matters. It has occurred to me, since it was mentioned by this Snehpets, the pedagogue——"

"Gracchus! pardon my interruption," cried Numerius Plutarch; "but there is one boon just come to my mind, which I shall ask, when you possess all power."

"It is granted, Kipps; what is it?"

"To have this same Snehpets taken up, and condemned, for the rest of his life, to read Mr. Notneb's speech on the Ashburton treaty; and if he should finish it before he expires, then to peruse, next, Mr. Nerub's several definitions of his position, in regard to the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia; and if he should survive that, then make him decide what was the meaning of the author. If he decides wrong—according to the avowal of Mr. Nerub himself—then let him be sent to Cuba to propagate the doctrines of Mr. Drawees, without the pale of your protection."

"When I am invested with the power to pronounce so dreadful a sentence, Kipps, the boon you ask shall be granted. But, in the mean time, let us reflect calmly on the best means of obtaining that power. What the fellow said in regard to the vice presidency has made some impression on my mind, although I do not consider myself under any obligations to him for the idea which now agitates my brain. But, should it prove to be impossible for me to attain to the presidency directly, a contingency which there may be no reason to apprehend; yet, I say, if such a thing should occur as a disappointment in being elevated to the chair of the chief executive, then it might be well to secure the next position; and I must have trusty

friends at the Convention, nay at both conventions, for both parties will have an eye to availability, who shall have authority to speak for me. They must say I would be willing to accept a nomination from either party, and that, *sub rosa*, I belong to either, and both of the parties. If I cannot be first on either ticket, let me be, if possible, second; and if that cannot be, why then, you know I intend to run in defiance of all parties.

“But the vice presidents are what the last Cæsars were to the Augustus, the next in the order of succession; and of late it is beginning to be with us as it often was in Rome; Cæsar becomes Augustus, and Augustus food for the worms. If I should be Cæsar and Tocs Augustus, I might have the benefit of his influence with the army——”

“With the army, Gracchus?” cried Plutarch, holding up both hands in astonishment.

“Yes, the army; what have you to say against that?”

“It was by means of the legions that the first Roman Cæsars intimidated the senate, and made themselves perpetual masters of the empire.”

“I know it. The American Cæsars must do the same thing. Do you think, after spending two-thirds of my life in toilsome and painful preparations to reach the presidency, I shall be willing, like the simple Sylla, to surrender the reins of government at the end of four, or even eight years?”

“*Honeste audax!* I honour you, Gracchus! Instead of being a master, I know you will be a kind parent to the people. But can you accomplish that which no man has hitherto dared to attempt?”

“It is because no one has dared, that it has not been accomplished. It was reserved for me. But I will not be king, in name. You remember, after the expiration of the Tarquins, how many centuries it was before the Romans could be reconciled to the name of king, even after they had emperors and

absolute masters. It will be so here; the expulsion of the Guelphs has left an ineradicable aversion to the royal title. But, you know, Kipps, that republics are more prone to wars of conquest than any other species of government, and that when we next draw the sword it will not, probably, be returned to the scabbard for many generations. The temple of Janus will be closed no more. Now, I shall pursue a different plan from that adopted by the presidents who have preceded me. If war should not accrue in the natural course of events, I will make occasion for one; and when I am censured for it, I will take the field myself, for the constitution makes me commander in chief both of the army and navy. The *right sort* of men shall be enlisted, such as have been commanded by princes and kings in other countries; and I will win their affection, and make them subservient to my will. They will proclaim me Imperator, and declare me president for life or for a long term of years, and compel Congress to ratify the act. But, Kipps, I will not be a tyrant; I will be just and merciful."

"I know you will, Gracchus," said Numerius, who now glorified in the aspirations of his pupil.

"You shall be my prime minister, Kipps."

"And, Gracchus, we shall wield the destinies of the greatest empire that ever existed in the world; and I shall find time to record, for the benefit of posterity, and for the perpetuity of your fame, the wise acts of your illustrious reign."

"Kipps!" continued Vanderbomb, applying the bottle to his mouth, "who would be president for only four or eight short years? Where are the honours paid to an ex-president? Better die in harness, sword in hand, with the purple for a shroud, than live to look back with regret to what one has been!"

"The only man, Gracchus," continued Kipps, reverting to his hatred of the pedagogue, "whom I desire to see punished,

is Snephets; and when you are paramount, I shall remind you of it. For that act of justice, I shall forgive you for overthrowing the liberties of the people."

"It shall be done, Kipps. Kipps! I am now a demagogue, I confess it to you, who are my second self. But I am like all other demagogues, if they were to open their hearts, as I do, and utter the truth. Manlius, the Gracchi, Marius, Cæsar, all who professed to be the greatest friends of the people, and who pretended to be the peculiar advocates of the interests of the poor, were demagogues, and all aspired to be masters of the state, and sovereigns of the universe. I am no better, Kipps, than they were; and yet it may be questioned if some of my competitors for the presidency be not as bad as I am."

"Gracchus," said Numerius, solemnly, "from the history of all nations, I learn that human nature is the same at all times, and in all places; and, *Homo homini dæmon!* But some are too timid to achieve great exploits. Such was the case with Cicero; and, Gracchus, as you have confided to me your whole heart, so will I to thee; I must confess that as it was with Cicero, so it is with me. Cato was an enigma; yet it cannot be denied he was ambitious. He wanted the nerve to carve his way to fame with the sword, and then it seems he resolved to become famous by waging a wordy war against the use of the sword. Fool! he fell by his own sword at last!"

CHAPTER VIII.

PAUL VISITS THEM IN THE MORNING.—SNEPHETS ROBBED AND IMPRISONED.—ARRIVAL OF WAGWELL AND OLDSTYLE.—AT LAST THE CAPTIVES GROW IMPATIENT.—THEY GET THE NEWSPAPERS AND ARE COMFORTED.—THE PEOPLE RUSH TO THEIR RESCUE.—SNEPHETS ESCAPES.—THE CAPTIVES CONDUCTED IN TRIUMPH TO THE INN.—VANDERBOMB MAKES A GREAT SPEECH.—HE RETURNS HOME IN TRIUMPH.

THE joyful victims of persecution continued their cabinet consultations until a late hour in the night, when they prepared their despatches for the journals in the different sections of the country. That the accounts they furnished of the transactions, in which they were the principal actors, were widely different in tenor and substance, was necessary from the peculiarity of sentiment and opinion entertained respectively in the North and the South, and from the objects to be subserved.

Their letters were delivered to Paul, in the morning, who visited them betimes, and found them both snoring on the bed of leaves, and the bottle on the box quite empty. Paul was the postmaster of the village, and promised to see that the documents were duly transmitted to their several destinations.

“Now, gentlemen,” said he, “I have some news. You recollect that the cause of the assault on you was the communication made to the people by the other traveller. His name is Snephets. Letters came last night to the secretary of the abolition organization, informing him that this same Snephets

was once an agent of the Navaled gang of negro runners, to operate on the line; but, being tempted to marry a woman who had some half-dozen slaves, he gave up his school, and lived upon the income from the hire of his negroes. Becoming a widower, and incurring the hatred of his neighbours, from some cause, he was driven away; and, that he might not return to the North empty-handed, he sold his slaves to a Texas trader, and had the proceeds of the sale with him."

"If that pedagogue be punished," said Plutarch, "I shall be compensated for all my sufferings."

"Kipps," said Vanderbomb, "I hope he will not be punished yet, for two reasons. The first is, that there may be no rival victims of persecution; and, secondly, I desire that his chastisement may be reserved for the time coming that you wot of."

"It is past hoping for, now," said Paul. "He rose this morning at the break of day, and departed on his journey. When he was passing through the northern part of these woods, he was met by six runaways, and relieved of his burden of gold. They tied his hands behind him, and are now on their way hither with their prisoner."

"Now I am a happy man!" cried Plutarch. "When I confront the vile pedagogue who dared to teach the rising generation, without himself being first instructed, I will exult in the just retribution which has at length overtaken him!"

"You will not see him, unless you look out of the window, and behold him as he passes; for he is to be confined in the dungeon under the house."

Just then the party of robbers were heard coming through the thicket near the house; and a moment after they were seen conducting Snehpets, both gagged and bound. His hat had been knocked off in the struggle, carrying his wig with it, and he now presented a most ludicrous appearance.

"Come, thou ignorant impostor! Welcome to thy appro-

priate abode!" cried Kipps, menacing the prisoner with his fists.

"Be silent, Kipps," said the colonel.

"Gentlemen, here is your breakfast," said Paul, preparing to depart. "Snehpets must not see me here. Perhaps I can now procure your liberation. They do not care much about keeping you, as they suppose you have no money; and since they have discovered the treachery of Snehpets, public opinion begins to run in your favour."

"Paul! Mr. Paul Parley!" said Vanderbomb, in great excitement, "I beg you will not precipitate that inevitable current. We must not be released yet. The time has not come. Tell them we are their enemies; at all events, insist that they should await the production of further proofs of our innocence. They will be forthcoming soon. But upon the veracity of a gentleman and a statesman, I pledge you, and them through you, that it is not my purpose to prosecute any one who has been *particeps criminis* in these proceedings against me. I cannot explain myself more fully at present; suffice it, that instead of being injured, I regard their conduct as one of the most fortunate occurrences of my life; and if we were now set at liberty, it would be one of the greatest misfortunes."

Paul, gazing in amazement at Vanderbomb, promised to accommodate him, and departed.

"Gracchus," said Plutarch, looking at the fresh bottle of brandy, which Paul had left, "I have an inclination to indulge moderately, merely for the sake of the sentiment I wish to pronounce."

"Help yourself, Kipps, and let me hear the toast." Vanderbomb doubtless supposed it would refer to his own fortunes, but he was in error.

"Then," said the secretary, "Here's perdition to all impertinent pedagogues!"

About noon Mr. Wagwell and Mr. Oldstyle arrived at the inn from Midway. They soon informed themselves fully of what had transpired, and the condition of the captives. They then represented to Paul the nature of the malady which had seized upon the intellects of our adventurers, and consulted as to the best means of extricating them from the clutches of the fugitives and their abettors, and of prevailing on them to return to the Halfway Mansion. They exhibited to Paul, and several of the most respectable citizens, indubitable evidences of Vanderbomb's entire innocence of the charge made by Snehpets. They produced the official notice of his election to the Senate of New York; and they submitted for their perusal several newspapers, which spoke in high terms of praise of the colonel's motives for declining a seat in the legislature.

Knowing that the colonel would not consent to return home without supposing he had accomplished something to advance him nearer his great object, it was determined to contrive some means of satisfying him that he had achieved a great triumph.

That their preparations might be perfect, it was decided that the captives should remain where they were, in ignorance of their fate, until the next day; but in the mean time everything necessary for their comfort was supplied. Paul even ran a broom up the chimney and extricated the rubbish which had intercepted the smoke, and the eyes and lungs of the prisoners were no longer punished.

When these arrangements for their comfort had been completed, and they were left alone to contemplate the improved appearance of their room, Vanderbomb remarked, in a desponding tone, that he was apprehensive the persecution of them would be so moderated, that if it became known, he might lose one-half the benefit he expected to derive from his sufferings.

"Paul is an honest man," said Plutarch, "and puts the gold you gave him to a good use."

"To a bad use, rather. What do presidential candidates

want with honest men? Creatures versed in duplicity and dissimulation, are the instruments they require. If they were honest themselves, then honest men might serve them, supposing a majority of the people to be both honest and well informed, which is not a supposable thing. Spatter, the host of the White Cow, would have answered my purpose better."

"He was a little skipping fool," said Plutarch, "and I trust his wife served him as she did the cackling hen. She was the best qualified to answer your purpose. But, in the midst of all these creature comforts, Gracchus," continued Plutarch, "one convenience has been omitted; and my sufferings in consequence, must be suppressed in the narrative of our persecutions."

"What is that, Kipps?"

"The means of occasional egress. It would be a great relief to me if I could take a short walk once or twice a day under yonder silent and majestic tree."

"You would run away?"

"Gracchus, it is an additional pain to me to think you suppose me capable of abandoning you in your captivity."

"I don't suppose it, Kipps. It was a *lapsus linguæ*. And to prove it, with these cords I will let you down gently from the window, and hoist you in again when you desire it."

This was done to the entire satisfaction of Plutarch, who expressed his gratitude in becoming terms to his patron. He went further, and proposed to reciprocate the service, which was declined by the colonel, who said there was no occasion to trust his bulky weight to the slender cords and the feeble arms of his secretary.

Time wore on, and our captives began to think their messenger might have been intercepted. Even the colonel himself, so patient under his sufferings, had fixed a limit to his incarceration; and when the time arrived that should have brought him deliverance, his steps grew less stately and deli-

berately measured, and he began to cast impatient glances out of the window, in the direction of the village. Numerius groaned when he thought of the many accidents Juba was liable to meet with on the way, and the probability of being abandoned to their fate.

This impatience and uneasy anxiety had been deliberately calculated upon by Wagwell and the parson, who hoped it might contribute to disgust their infatuated friends with the search for the presidency; and motives of humanity alone had induced them to consent that Paul might administer to the bodily comforts of the prisoners. Paul was sent twice or thrice in the course of the day, and once on the night succeeding the day of their arrival, to listen to and report the tenor of their conversation. But it was always the same thing, the unvarying topic of the presidency. They complained of the neglect of their friends; but never for a moment abandoned their great idea of reaching the hoped-for ascendancy in the government.

Finding that nothing could be gained by protracting the term of their confinement, it was resolved that they should be released the next day at noon. The time, however, which they had fixed upon was anticipated. True to his promise, Paul had sent off the letters intrusted to his care; and the next morning's mail brought many of the copies of the papers, to the editors of which the communications had been addressed. Displayed in startling capitals was the announcement of the capture of our adventurers, followed by minute and circumstantial accounts of the occurrences of the memorable night on which they were taken. Even the speech of Gracchus was reported in full. Several columns were filled with the diverting details; which Plutarch had indited in sober seriousness, or at least in serious earnestness. The Censor excelled them all in voluminousness and boldness of comment. It denounced the whole village, and assailed the entire community in which

such a flagrant outrage had been committed. It hailed Colonel GRACCHUS VANDERBOMB, of Sloughcreek, as a victim of persecution and oppression, and intimated that one of his rival aspirants for the presidency might have had some agency in the diabolical transactions. It did not point directly at Mr. Nanaheub, but from the location of the occurrence, and the fact that that gentleman was likely to be most affected by the progress of the illustrious colonel in the direction he was travelling, it might easily be inferred he was alluded to. It appealed to the actors in the disgraceful proceeding, and called upon them to make amends by an instant and unanimous avowal of their determination to advocate the colonel's pretensions.

Wagwell and Oldstyle repaired with the papers to the dilapidated mansion, and were received with evident marks of satisfaction. Vanderbomb immediately sat down and perused the comments of the editors, while his lip curled triumphantly. When he had read them all, he selected the Censor, and the journal controlled by Mr. Hurraw, and placing the rest in his pockets, said, "Distribute these among the good people, and post up notices in the town that I will appear and address them at noon precisely."

"You can speak to them immediately," said Wagwell, "for they are all assembled at the inn."

"But I will not," replied Gracchus. "Let it work for an hour or so before I appear; let them think of the treatment I have received, and of the opinions of the press."

"At least, you will accompany us to the inn?" asked Mr. Oldstyle.

"No. I will be there at the time appointed. You may tell the people that I do not intend to blame them, and that everything is forgiven. Return to them, and leave me to my own reflections."

Before the hour had arrived for Vanderbomb to make his

appearance at the inn, it was proposed by Paul, and unanimously agreed to, that the entire population of the village should turn out and conduct the colonel in triumph back to his lodgings. As accessions of people were continually pouring in from the country, the number assembled at the inn at the time of the starting of the procession towards the old mansion in the forest amounted to several hundreds. But few negroes were now to be seen. As soon as it was ascertained that the tide of public sympathy had turned in favour of the captives, every fugitive and free negro who had been openly committed in acts of violence, vanished in the swamp. The abolitionists and fanatics themselves, when they learned that the colonel was a gentleman of distinction and wealth, and had actually been elected to the Senate from a district in New York decidedly opposed to the Fugitive Slave Act of Congress, most sincerely regretted the step which had been taken, and they now manifested a real purpose to compensate the colonel for his sufferings, by the hearty plaudits they intended to bestow upon him.

When the party arrived in the vicinity of the prison, they began to cheer and shout most vociferously.

“Kipps, are they friends or enemies?” asked the colonel, who had not anticipated anything of the kind.

“How should I know, Gracchus?” responded Plutarch, looking out of the window, and endeavouring to distinguish the visitors through the trees and bushes. “He’s gone! Behold how he flies!” cried Plutarch, as he beheld Snehpets—who had succeeded in getting out of the cellar, and who had, likewise, been startled by the sound—darting with most astonishing rapidity through the brambles, his closely shaven head still without covering.

“Who was that, Kipps?” demanded Vanderbomb.

“It was Snehpets, the execrable pedagogue. He has escaped, Gracchus; but his shaven head is exposed to the wea-

ther, as if in just retribution for the blow which he had the temerity to bestow on mine."

"Kipps, how often shall I tell you it was the ram-lamb, and not Snehpets, that prostrated you on the occasion referred to so frequently?"

"I forget your asseverations, but I can never forget that pedant's impudence. Not to know Latin from French, and to pretend to be a teacher!"

By this time the multitude from the village arrived in front of the house, and, by a concerted signal, uttered simultaneously three deafening cheers for Col. Vanderbomb, of Sloughcreek, and as many for his learned secretary, Numerius Plutarch Kipps.

When the colonel gazed from the window at the dense mass below, and saw that they were unanimous in their efforts to do him honour, and were probably ready to unite in any political demonstration in his behalf, he felt that the hour of his enfranchisement was come, when he might depart from his prison walls without regret, and without a stain upon his character.

"You see, Kipps," said he, "the result of my stratagem."

"It is genius, Gracchus; and as such I bow to it," replied the secretary, bowing accordingly.

"I might have annihilated my enemies," continued Vanderbomb, "and that would have been an end of them; but it was far better to convert them into friends. This achievement alone, Kipps, will make me famous hereafter." Prophetic vision!

The door was unlocked, and the crowd rushing in, the captives were unceremoniously conducted from their odious place of confinement, and borne in triumph to the inn on the shoulders of their friends. Shouts and plaudits were the vociferous accompaniments of their triumphant entry into the village.

No sooner was the colonel placed upon the porch of the inn, whence he had been so rudely dragged away to prison, than

he mounted a chair, and motioned with his hand for the people to be silent that he might address them. Plutarch seized his writing implements, and sat down at a small table in readiness to take notes.

“Gentlemen,” said the colonel, “I merely desire on this occasion to return you my heartfelt thanks for the great honour you have done me. I now behold exemplified and illustrated the wisdom and virtue of the ‘sober second thought of the people.’ Believe me, this demonstration is a thousand times more gratifying, than if no suffering, no persecution had preceded it.” Here he was interrupted by the most boisterous cheers. “Persecution, fellow citizens,” he continued, “never yet injured permanently an innocent and meritorious individual. He has only to bear it with a calm, philosophic breast, and time will vindicate his cause. Where now are my persecutors? Where are the vile instruments of the aspiring tricksters, the political wire-workers, who, too insignificant to become presidents themselves, are always striving to set up candidates of their own, who may be converted into their puppets; where, I ask, are now the instruments of my enemies? Not one is to be found in this vast assemblage of freemen! You are all my friends!” Here there was an affirmative response, resembling a thunderclap. “Gentlemen,” said he, “I have intimated that I have enemies, who throw every obstacle in my path, and who incite their creatures to persecute me in every conceivable manner. In the South I am imprisoned for being an abolitionist; in the North, for being a proslavery advocate. This is done at the instigation of one who would, if he dared, aspire to the presidency himself, but who is now engaged in the business of setting up another, who will be subservient to him.”

“Who is he? Name him!” cried the people.

“I cannot name him,” said Vanderbomb.

“Can it be Mr. Nanahcub?” asked Mr. Wagwell.

“No,” said Vanderbomb, “I can acquit that gentleman; and I am glad of an opportunity to do so, since others have attributed it to him.”

“It cannot be Mr. Yalc,” said Wagwell.

“Not Yalc!” cried a number of voices.

“It matters not, fellow citizens,” said Gracchus, “who it was, since his endeavours proved to be unavailing. Gentlemen, before we part, perhaps to meet no more before the election, I desire to say to you that I am in favour of the restoration of the tariff of '42, a glorious measure, advocated with such patriotic consistency by the great statesman of Quincy, and the illustrious Yalc of the west, who brought to its support their respective friends in Congress, and overwhelmed the feeble opposition of the friends of Mr. Relyt. Thus was the tariff of '42 achieved, as you may see by consulting the veracious newspapers of the day. Let us adhere to the tariff of '42, and down with Relyt!”

“Down with Relyt! Up with the tariff of '42!” responded the people.

“But, after all, fellow citizens,” continued Vanderbomb, “if it should be impossible to obtain the whole of that glorious measure of '42, still, I say, let us all unite in one mighty effort to get protection upon Iron!” This was followed by a tremendous outburst of applause.

“Gentlemen! I have a word to say in relation to the slaughter of our brothers in Cuba. I denounce it! Our citizens were taken upon the high sea, and cruelly slaughtered without the benefit of clergy, or even of a trial by jury! What was that but the renewal of the right of search? Shall that odious measure be revived? In spite of its tacit concession by Mr. Relyt, did not Mr. Retsbew, boldly, and of his own accord, for ever demolish Great Britain's pretensions to such a right? Read the protocols of the Treaty of Washington. The whole country has rung with praises of Mr. Retsbew and denunci-

ations of Mr. Relyt! And shall we forget such glorious achievements, and neglect to protect our brothers, when their rights are invaded, and their lives sacrificed upon the altar of Absolutism? Where, now, is the great Retsbew, to vindicate the honour of our flag?"

"Shame! Shame!" cried the people.

"Shall we bend the knee to Spain, and be shot in the back?" continued Vanderbomb, with great animation. "The blood of our brothers, which cries aloud for vengeance, will not be unheeded. Spain! the sister of ebon Africa! Why every schoolboy knows her history. Hamilcar, the African, said to have been a sooty negro, subjugated the nation with a mere handful of brave soldiers! Let the tide of conquest and annexation roll on, fellow citizens, until the stars and stripes wave over the universe!" Tremendous cheers again. "And now," he continued, "I have to announce to you a measure which I promise to advocate. I see before me men of moderate means, and some of no means at all, if I may judge from their garments. I have a plan for enriching you all, without impoverishing anybody."

"Let us hear it!" cried many voices. "Some of us are very poor men," said one individual in the crowd, who exhibited a coat out at the elbows.

"Then let me ask, to whom do the uncounted millions of fertile and uncultivated acres in the far Western States and Territories belong?"

"To the public!" was the reply.

"And what is the public?" he asked.

"The people!" was the response.

"True, the people. Then why should any of the lords of such vast possessions be starving here? I can tell you. It is the work of the demagogues. Rise up in your might, and place in power such men as will obey your just behests! I would have those fertile lands equally divided among the

people. Each of you, then, might be the proprietor of a thousand acres!" Immense applause, and irrepressible sensation followed this announcement. When the tumult subsided, it was quickly followed by a still louder uproar, and the prolonged enthusiastic shouts having satisfied the colonel that he had reached a climax, he descended from the chair, with many apologies for having detained his friends much longer than he had intended doing when he commenced his remarks.

Both Mr. Wagwell and the parson stepped forward, and, shaking the colonel's hand most cordially, congratulated him upon the manner in which he had acquitted himself, and assured him that the whole population of that section of the country were now irrevocably committed in his favour.

"I perceive it!" said Vanderbomb; "and there is no necessity for tarrying here any longer. The field is a large one, the harvest is ripe, and the labourers are few."

"True, sir," said Wagwell, "there is much to be done, both in the field and at home. Many letters have been received from various quarters, which remain unopened on your table in the library."

"Why were they not sent off by an express courier after me?"

"Your sister feared the messenger might not be able to find you. You remember there was no precise route fixed upon for your sally; and it would be an awkward business for any of your letters to fall into the hands of the enemy."

"True. My sister is discreet. I will return at once, and open the despatches myself."

An hour afterwards the party were on the road to Midway. As they passed out of the village, the coachman being White this time, they found a number of the fugitive slaves standing by the wayside, ready to receive them. Upon learning that Vanderbomb was a member elect of the New York legislature, and was besides a man of wealth, they determined to ask his

pardon for what had been done, and to crave a little pecuniary assistance. Their leader was the black preacher, who stepped forward and delivered an humble address, while the rest stood back with their hats off. As for himself, the preacher bore undoubted evidences of having been sufficiently punished by Juba; and the miserable appearance of the rest, indicated that they had made but a sorry exchange in abandoning their masters for the sake of a nominal freedom. They were now merely beggars, in the eyes of the colonel, and he threw them some small coins, without deeming it advisable to make them a speech. They had no vote, even in the North.

CHAPTER IX.

VANDERBOMB ARRIVES AT MIDWAY.—MISS FLORA GIVES HIM A WARM RECEPTION.—EXPERIMENTS OF WAGWELL, DR. JALAP, AND OLDSTYLE.—IMMENSE LABOURS IN THE CABINET.—THE COLONEL ASSAILED IN THE CLARION NEWSPAPER.—HE CHALLENGES THE EDITOR.—WAGWELL AND DR. JALAP ARE HIS SECONDS.—THE MEETING.—VANDERBOMB FALLS, BUT IS VICTORIOUS.—MISS FLORA'S HYSTERICIS.—THE COLONEL TAKEN HOME AND PUT TO BED.

WHEN Col. Vanderbomb descended at the door of the Halfway Mansion, he was met and embraced by his sister. Flora had read the accounts of his adventures in the North, and was rejoiced beyond measure to see him return in good health, and unscathed, from the perils which had encompassed him. She was, besides, as mad as himself on the subject of the presidency. During his absence she had employed her time and expended her money, in making transparencies and glittering banners. Upon these she had inscribed various devices and mottoes, furnished in part by Mr. Doubletongue, the innkeeper, and Mr. Saponaceous Bristle, the barber, who were in constant consultation with her; men whom she had never before deigned to notice. Ambition, though prone to mount, is, nevertheless, a great leveller sometimes, as was exemplified not only in the familiar interviews of Miss Vanderbomb with Doubletongue and Bristle, and in the fair cheek of the beautiful duchess offered to the butcher in England, but likewise in the extreme condescensions of most of the great men in the

field for the presidency. No individual could be too insignificant to have from them a prompt reply to any interrogatories he might be pleased to propound; a reply carefully and skillfully drawn, and intended for publication; and thus many an obscure individual might have his name linked with that of a man of undying fame.

Truly our adventurers found, upon the table in the library, a mass of letters and papers, which threatened to engross their attention for many days.

Sometime before Vanderbomb had set out on his second sally, there had been a consultation between the Rev. Mr. Oldstyle, Mr. Wagwell, and Dr. Jalap, as to what should be done to keep the colonel and his secretary at home. They seemed to be unanimous in the belief that both were monomaniacs on the subject of the presidency; and that Miss Flora was fast becoming one. They had no power to restrain them by force, for they were sane on other subjects; and they did not dare to expostulate with them, or venture an assurance that they were embarking in a hopeless undertaking. It was, therefore, agreed that they would find as much employment as possible for them in the library; and in pursuance of this scheme they despatched letters to their friends in various directions, requesting them to address voluminous interrogatories to the colonel, and to solicit full replies. They hoped that in attempting to please all parties, and the different sections of the country, our adventurers would require a great deal of time to frame such compositions as would suffice to steer them safely through the complicated maze of prejudice and passion.

They had likewise another little scheme, which was executed by way of an experiment. This was a paragraph prepared by them for one of the papers, which told the plain truth in regard to the colonel's merits, and ridiculed his absurd pretensions. This had been inserted in the paper, and was lying on the table with the rest.

However, by far the greatest number of the journals teemed with articles which were calculated to encourage the colonel to persevere in his course. A large space in their columns was occupied with the adventures and speeches of Vanderbomb; and even less credulous and less aspiring men, being made the subject of such extensive comments, might have had their heads turned, in a greater or less degree, towards the chair of state. If it was an aberration of intellect in Vanderbomb to suppose he might be elevated to the presidency, he was by no means the only one in that most unfortunate predicament; nor were his prospects less flattering than those of many others who strove to vault as loftily as himself.

After receiving the visits of all the inhabitants of the village and the neighbourhood, which required several days, the colonel and his secretary shut themselves up in the cabinet, to despatch the work awaiting them there.

Like other great geniuses, Vanderbomb read the news, and dictated to his secretary at the same time. Nearly every letter of inquiry contained the question whether he was a Whig or a Democrat. "Kipps, write as follows," said he. "I am in favour of the desirable measures of both parties, and would not reject a good proposition because it originated with the party to which I might be averse. It is a juncture when patriotic considerations of duty override all obligations of mere party; yet the support of the party to which you belong would be received with pleasure, and gratefully acknowledged. But you must agree with me that the preservation of the Union is a paramount consideration to that of the mere triumph of party. How will that do, Kipps?"

"It will answer as well for the whig as for the democratic interrogators," said Plutarch.

"I designed it should be so; and you will embody the substance of it, but vary the language, in all my replies. When you reply to Northern letters on the subject of the Union, state

unequivocally that I am an advocate of its preservation under the Constitution. In answer to the Southern letters, say I am for maintaining the compromises of the Constitution as they were subscribed to by Washington, Jefferson, Madison, &c."

"Gracchus," said his secretary, "would it not be as well to leave out the name of Jefferson——"

"By no means, sir. In a letter for the South, it *must* be retained, or the letter might as well not be written."

"I obey. But I thought I would suggest to you the fact that Jefferson did not sign the Constitution; and that he was absent from the country when it was adopted."

"Ha, is that so? Now I recollect, he was in France. No matter, his name must and shall be there. Strike out 'subscribed,' and insert 'sanctioned and maintained' in its place."

"It shall be done. Yet you must be aware that Jefferson was the author of the proviso, adopted in 1787, which was the origin of the Tomliw proviso and which gave birth to the free soil doctrines of the present day, as has been acknowledged by the Nerubs, Niddigs, Notnebs, and Drawees, of the abolition party. Not much is said now by the leaders in the South in praise of Jefferson; and in a few years it is predicted the mass of the Southern voters will execrate him."

"How many years, Kipps, will it be before the people become enlightened on that subject?"

"Some ten or twelve, I suppose."

"Then let his name stand. If the people continue to praise him half that length of time, it will answer my purpose. He is the god of their idolatry now, and I won't turn my back upon him. You can say I am in favour of the resolutions of '98—the Northern people don't know what they were, while they are popular in the South. Say I am opposed to the principles involved in the famous Proclamation of General Jackson—the people in the North are ignorant of them, too."

"Permit me to intimate, however," said Plutarch, "that

this might bring you in collision with Mr. Nanahcub; for it is understood he supported the general's views——”

“He did, did he? Then I oppose them, Kipps, more decidedly than ever. It will ruin him in the South, because they will say it neutralizes his liberal and comprehensive sentiments now, and it is too late in the day to aid his cause in the North. The old lion is dead, and nearly forgotten. But the acts of living men, however remote, rise up in judgment against them. You know Nanahcub is charged with having been a federalist some forty years ago. He will have enough to do to combat that tradition, instead of wasting time and ammunition on me for denouncing the Proclamation, so odious then and now to the hot-bloods of the South.”

A long pause ensued, during which Vanderbomb's eyes ran over the article which had been prepared by Mr. Wagwell, the paper containing it having hitherto escaped his notice.

“THE PRESIDENCY.—We perceive there is a new candidate in the field, in the person of a Colonel Gracchus Vanderbomb, of Sloughcreek.—And who is this Vanderbomb, do you suppose, reader? We learn from a reliable source that he is merely a crack-brained militia colonel. He served, it is said, as a lieutenant, when a young man, a few weeks during the war of 1812, and was the first to run away at the battle of Bladensburgh. In the war with Mexico, he was a major, having equipped at his own expense, two companies which did good service. But he never led them in battle. He was always sick when there was fighting to do. And now he aspires to be the President of these United States! He has wealth, and a confused knowledge of ancient history, which was taught him in his youth by a sort of bibliomaniac, named Numerius Plutarch Kipps, who still attends him, and encourages him in his silly pretensions. *Par nobile fratrum!* They live a portion of their time on the line between the North and the South, and affect to be strictly impartial between the two

divisions of the country, which is to make Vanderbomb an *available* candidate. He was elected, by way of a joke, both in New York and Virginia, to the Legislature; and to avoid giving offence to either state, he declined his election in both of them. Other jokes which have been played on him, both North and South, have been spread before the public in the newspapers for the entertainment of their readers; and yet this most ridiculous pair of monomaniacs not only believe the editors are serious in what they say in commendation of them, but really believe that the principal numscull of them may, and will be, elected to the presidency. Vanderbomb is in politics what Don Quixote was in knight errantry, and Kipps is his Sancho Panza."

"Kipps," said the colonel, "do I resemble the Knight of the Rueful countenance in any particular?"

"Do I resemble Sancho Panza?" screamed the furious secretary, rising suddenly and pacing the floor.

"Be calm, Kipps," said Vanderbomb; "this is a mere nothing to what we will get by-and-bye. It is, though, an evidence that we are making some progress with the people, when the adverse presses begin to calumniate us. Such abuse as this is a mere bagatelle. They don't attack my principles, nor censure any acts of mine in a civil capacity. What, then, can such an assault amount to?"

"Why, he says you failed to stand by your country when it was in danger," replied Plutarch.

"Never mind that, Kipps!" said the colonel smiling; "that matter can be easily disposed of. I am glad he imputed cowardice to me, because I intend that he shall be a witness to the contrary. You understand me? But, as you value my friendship, not a word, not a hint of my purpose to any one! We might be balked in our determination, when, perhaps, the presidency itself may depend upon its execution. My only fear is, that the fellow did not write it himself, and will get

some one to take the responsibility who won't fight. I doubt if any of the candidates would meet me; and it is probable one of them wrote it. At all events I shall demand a meeting of the editor; and if he declines, on any grounds whatever, I will at least bestow upon him some sort of chastisement. If his instigator and principal should grant me the pleasure of a meeting, Kipps, then it would devolve on you to meet the editor."

"No, sir!" said Kipps; "that would be to make me a Sancho Panza, in reality."

"Not so, either," rejoined the colonel; "for Panza was really a coward, and avoided such encounters as much as possible."

"I'll fight with my pen, Gracchus, any number of antagonists that may see proper to assail me. That is a nobler and more effectual mode of settling difficulties than any other, unless they be difficulties with other nations; then the arbitrement of war becomes necessary."

"And what is a single combat but war on a small scale? When I see a man in favour of involving his country in war, and yet opposed to duelling, I have my doubts about his courage. A man who would have his country's honour defended, and yet will not defend his own, cannot be a true man."

"Gracchus, I will admit to you that I should shrink from an engagement with deadly weapons, either in platoons or single-handed. But with instruments less fatal, you have seen me contend valiantly enough. Remember Snehpets, who had the audacity to strike a sleeping man——"

"I repeat, Kipps, you were drunk, and the blow was dealt by a ram-lamb," said the colonel, while he penned a challenge to Mr. Pellet, editor of the Clarion, a newspaper published in a neighbouring village. Just when he had finished it, Mr. Wagwell entered the library, doubtless to see how his scheme worked.

“Wagwell,” said Vanderbomb, with a complacent smile, “you have come very opportunely, and just when I was upon the eve of sending for you. I have a favour to ask at your hands, which I trust you can grant without doing offence to any conscientious scruples.”

“I shall be happy, colonel, to serve you,” said Wagwell, not at all suspecting the nature of the service about to be required of him.

“You must know, Wagwell,” continued the colonel, “if you be not already aware of it, that the conduct of public characters, and particularly of formidable candidates for the highest office in the gift of the people, is always liable to misconstruction. That is to be expected, and cannot be fully guarded against; but we are likewise exposed to the assaults of calumniators, and however averse we may be to condescend to notice our slanderers, it is necessary, nevertheless, sometimes to make an example of our vilest traducers, so that it may not be supposed that every one can assail us with impunity.”

“Surely, colonel,” said the attorney, with well-affected surprise, “no one has dared to assail you!”

“One has dared, and, to prevent others from following his example, it is my intention to chastise him. Behold the article I refer to,” continued the colonel, handing the paper to Wagwell, who perused it with many marks of astonishment and indignation; as if he had never seen it before.

“It is the imputation of cowardice, alone, which makes me determined to chastise the villanous author. I cannot pay any attention to the mere vilification of the newspapers, which is an unerring symptom of growing popularity, and which, indeed, is generally rather flattering to the vanity of the subject of it than painful to his feelings or injurious to his cause. But when a consnmmate defamer, like this Pellet, ventures to assert that I am deficient in personal courage, I am convinced that it will acquire for me a large accession of

friends, particularly in the South, to prove upon his own body the falsehood of the charge. Now, Wagwell, you are my friend, are you not?"

"Most undoubtedly, colonel!"

"Then without hesitation you will admit that the author of the infamous lies contained in that article, deserves a terrible punishment?"

Wagwell was constrained to admit it, though not without some trepidation, when he considered that he was himself the author. But he saw at once that the experiment had failed, and that it would be a hopeless task to undertake to ridicule or reason the colonel out of the path he was resolved to pursue.

"Wagwell," continued the colonel, placing the challenge in his hand, "as you are my friend, you will, of course, manage this affair for me with discretion and promptitude. I desire you will proceed with expedition, as I have a great deal of work to do. Let it take place at the earliest possible moment. See Jalap, and prevail on him to be one of the party."

Mr. Wagwell retired with the brief note in his hand, and soon found Dr. Jalap, who was waiting to hear what effect had been produced on the mind of Vanderbomb by the perusal of the concerted attack in the Clarion. The confederates were rather alarmed than amused with the serious turn the affair had taken; and as Vanderbomb would not brook delay, they were at some loss as to the course they should pursue.

"Have a retraxit inserted," said Jalap. "It won't do to have a meeting. Men labouring under such hallucinations, often have steady nerves and become dangerous."

"But, Jalap," said the attorney, "Pellet, I fear, will not submit to the humiliation of publishing a formal withdrawal of the charge. We ventured too far in our eagerness to arrest the career of the colonel. If Pellet gives our names as the authors, *we* will be held to an accountability."

"Then have a meeting, and make them fire powder only."

“It is the only way. I will ride over and see Pellet. Perhaps he can be won over to the colonel’s support, after an exchange of shots, and that would mend all.”

While Wagwell was negotiating very successfully and satisfactorily with Pellet, Vanderbomb was calmly and deliberately dictating to his secretary his replies to the many letters of inquiry and invitation lying on his table. The thought that an end might be suddenly put to all his hopes of political preferment, never occurred to him once. He regarded the approaching duel as one of the fortunate events destined to accelerate his pace towards the high prize before him. It was in vain that Plutarch urged him to make his will. He merely replied that his will was made; that is, it was his will that his antagonist should either fall, or apologize, and advocate his pretensions to the presidency.

Kipps accompanied the colonel to the place of rendezvous. The doctor and Wagwell preceded them, to settle some little matters hitherto forgotten, with the second of Pellet.

The place appointed for the meeting was precisely on the line, and some ten miles east of Midway. But the parties had set out at such an early hour, that they were all assembled on the ground and ready for action before it was quite light.

“I might have slept a half-hour longer,” observed the colonel to Dr. Jalap. “I told Wagwell, when he roused me, it was too early.” And truly Vanderbomb did sleep soundly, up to the moment when he was called upon by Wagwell.

The distance was measured, and the principals placed in their positions; but the friends of Pellet suggesting that it was not yet light enough, it was proposed to delay giving the word for ten minutes.

“Kipps,” said the colonel, “if I am to stand here idle, in this damp atmosphere, for ten minutes more, I shall ask the privilege of warming myself within, with some brandy. Bring the bottle, Kipps.”

To this proposition there was some objection by the friend of Pellet. He said it would be taking advantage of his principal, whose nerves were exposed to all the influences of the atmosphere, and he had not provided any artificial means to counteract them.

"Kipps," said the colonel, "throw the bottle in the bushes. No, not so, either! Tender it first to Mr. Pellet." Mr. Pellet bowed and drank. "Now bring it to me. Your very good health, sir!" said the colonel, as he was in the habit of doing on most occasions, and forgetting the peculiar circumstances of the case. Kipps declined drinking on this occasion, but the rest of the company aided the colonel in emptying the bottle.

The principals were stationed in the middle of a narrow road, which ran across the country to a mill, and which was not much travelled. There was a dense growth of tall bushes on either side, which contributed to prolong the darkness. At the expiration of the ten minutes agreed upon, however, the friend of Pellet announced that they were ready to proceed, although it was still so dark and misty that merely the outlines of the forms of the principals could be distinguished at the distance of thirty feet, the space between them.

When asked by Wagwell if he desired a longer delay, the colonel replied in the negative, loudly and decisively, and added that any sort of exercise was preferable to being idle in such a dismal place.

"If I might be listened to," said Plutarch, interposing, "I would propose that it be postponed to some other day. The colonel has unwittingly drunk to the good health of his antagonist; and if he were to happen, unfortunately, to slay him, he would be called a cruel monster by all the writers in the land."

"Be silent, Kipps! Proceed, Wagwell," said the colonel. Both fired at the word. At the discharge, both parties were

hidden for a moment by the smoke that enveloped them. Just then a tremendous rush was made from the bushes on the left, and the frightened animal which had been roused by the report, stood in the road between the parties, and uttered prolonged and most unearthly sounds.

“What the d——l is that, Kipps?” asked the colonel of his secretary, who ran to him to see whether or not he had fallen.

“It is the devil himself, I fear! Are you injured, Gracchus?”

“It is a jackass!” said Wagwell. And so it was. He had been lying asleep by the road-side, and sprang to his feet when the pistols were discharged. And as he stood between the combatants and brayed, he turned his head first to the right and then to the left, hesitating in which direction to run. At length he decided to take the side of the colonel, and leaping forward, prostrated our candidate for presidential honours, and stumbling over him, ran off down the road, still braying most terribly.

Vanderbomb had received some smart injuries from the hoofs of the ass. One of his ribs was supposed by the doctor to be fractured, and one of his ankles was badly lamed.

“Never mind me,” cried the colonel, standing up on one foot. “How is my friend Pellet?”

“He is well,” said Wagwell.

“Then my pistol played me false. I should have winged him. I demand another fire!”

Wagwell, having consulted with Pellet’s friend, returned to the colonel, and announced that the other party proposed an accommodation.

“Will he retract?”

“I think so,” said Wagwell.

“Will he do it publicly?”

“Of course, if at all.”

“And not mention this last occurrence?”

“Which do you refer to, colonel?”

“The jackass. The idea of going out to be prostrated by a jackass! That is my *ultimatum*!”

“I will ascertain.” As Wagwell walked over to the other party, the colonel leaned upon the shoulder of his secretary for support.

“They agree to everything, colonel,” said Wagwell; “and, moreover, Pellet is inclined to support your pretensions. He is only withheld by the slight pecuniary obligation he is under to one of your competitors.”

“Draw on me, and discharge the debt, Wagwell. It is much better to make a friend, than to kill an enemy.”

“It is necessary, now, for you to hasten homeward, colonel,” said Dr. Jalap, who was satisfied that his services would be required at the Halfway Mansion for many days, and perhaps weeks. And matters being thus adjusted, the parties separated for their respective homes.

Before Colonel Vanderbomb and his party had returned from the field of battle, a scene of confusion and distress occurred at the mansion. Miss Flora was much astonished, when awaiting the presence of her brother at the breakfast-table, to learn that he had risen before the first crowing of the cock, and, accompanied by Kipps, departed, no one knew whither. Such unprecedented conduct on the part of her brother, could not fail to produce a marked effect upon the delicate nerves of Miss Flora. He had never before been known to move or act in a clandestine manner. However much his projects might be opposed, on the ground of extravagance or danger, he had always executed them boldly, and without an attempt to disguise his operations from any one.

The Rev. Mr. Oldstyle, from whom the arrangements for the hostile meeting had been carefully concealed by Dr. Jalap

and Mr. Wagwell, was as much at a loss as Miss Flora herself to account for the precipitate and mysterious departure.

When they repaired to the library, and beheld the half-finished replies to letters of interrogation Vanderbomb and his secretary were preparing, and many letters and papers still unopened and unread lying upon the table, it was quite apparent that they had not gone on any lengthy journey, and that they did not contemplate a prolonged absence.

“What is this?” exclaimed Miss Flora, while streaks of genuine redness flashed momentarily across her forehead, as she perused the violent and brutal assault on her brother in the *Clarion*.

“That is a very bitter article,” said the parson, glancing over it in pretended astonishment, and most effectually disguising the fact that he had perused it in manuscript and sanctioned it before it was printed.

“My brother! my poor brother!” exclaimed Miss Vanderbomb, throwing herself into a chair, and burying her face in her hands.

“My dear Miss Vanderbomb,” said the parson, “such attacks as these give public men no uneasiness whatever. They would rather be thus assailed by the press than to be neglected; for it is generally supposed that the more a man is abused by his political opponents, the greater are his merits, and the more formidable his pretensions.”

“It is not that; it is not that, Mr. Oldstyle, which I dread,” said Miss Vanderbomb. “I see it all, now. I know what has occurred. He’s gone to fight a duel, and I expect every minute to see his dead body brought into the house!”

“Upon my life!” exclaimed the parson. “Surely it has not led to bloodshed! That would be lamentable in the extreme!” The Rev. Mr. Oldstyle had never for a moment supposed that he could by any possibility be making himself a party to such a proceeding; and now the fearful apprehen-

sion that a hostile meeting had really grown out of the secret proceedings to which he had been a party, affected his nerves almost as much as those of the trembling lady before him. "It cannot be, madam!" he exclaimed, rising with a determination to rouse the village, and scour the country in quest of the missing gentlemen.

"I tell you it can be, and is!" replied Miss Vanderbomb, hysterically, and, the moment after, she fainted in the arms of the distressed parson. The doctor was sent for, but could not be found. He had left home at three o'clock in the morning, another confirmation of the worst fears of Oldstyle, and so he had the sole charge of restoring Miss Flora to consciousness, which he succeeded in doing just as the carriage drove up to the door.

"There he is! wounded! see! they have to lift him in!" cried Miss Flora, in startling tones, as she rushed into the hall.

"What the d——l is all this uproar about, Flora!" demanded the colonel, as he was borne past his sister by Mr. Wagwell and Dr. Jalap.

"Have you not been shot, and wounded?" she asked.

"I have been wounded by a cursed jackass running over me, and that's all. Shot! what put such a silly idea in your head?"

"Where have you been, Gracchus? Why did you leave us?"

"Don't ask such silly questions, Flora," said Vanderbomb, in great pain. "I suppose, when I am President, I can never turn a corner, under the most pressing necessity, without having the women watching my motions. It was a cursed jackass, I tell you!"

"You mean, brother, the vile animal who wrote the wretched article in the Clarion? He is not too good to murder you."

“No, I don't. I mean what I say. It was a long-eared quadruped, known to every one as a jackass!”

“But how, brother——”

“Madam,” said Dr. Jalap, interposing, “first let us convey the colonel to his bed, and examine his bruises; and, when the proper applications are made, then he will be in a better condition to answer all your questions.”

“Let it suffice,” said Wagwell, “that he has not been wounded by a bullet; but has merely sustained some bruises from the hoofs of a frightened ass that ran over him.”

“God be thanked it is no worse!” exclaimed Parson Oldstyle, heartily glad that he had not been made, unwittingly, a party to a murder, and inwardly resolving to be more circumspect in future in his endeavours to divert a madman from his preposterous schemes of ambition. But Miss Vanderbomb still required his tender care; for she laughed hysterically for joy, upon being told by the doctor that her brother was in no danger.

CHAPTER X.

PELLET'S PAPER COMES OUT FOR THE COLONEL.—A VISIT FROM MRS. SPATTER.—MATRIMONIAL ALLIANCE DISCUSSED.—SNEHPETS BACK IN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD.—WRATH OF KIPPS.—VANDERBOMB INTERROGATED ON THE SUBJECT OF THE ONE-TERM PRINCIPLE.—HE REPLIES IN FIVE HUNDRED PAPERS.

VANDERBOMB was confined to his bed for many weeks, to the great joy of his friends. The most serious injury he sustained was the one on his ankle, which at first threatened a permanent lameness. But the skill of Dr. Jalap, the incessant nursing of Miss Flora, and the daily consolations of Parson Oldstyle, triumphed in the end, notwithstanding the inflammations and fevers such annoyances occasionally produced.

During the confinement of the colonel, his secretary wrote incessantly at the bedside. Of course the invitations to address the people, both north and south, had either to be postponed or declined. But letters and sentiments for publication had to be prepared, and in this way our unfortunate adventurers found employment enough to occupy their time.

Pellet's paper, the Clarion, not only made a full recantation and apology, but the succeeding number had the name of Col. Gracchus Vanderbomb, of Sloughcreek, flying at the head of its mast as the editor's candidate for the presidency.

While the invalid was still confined to his room, he had a visit from Mrs. Spatter, of the White Cow Mrs. Spatter had never forgotten the day when she so manfully defended her

guests against the machinations of her half-crazy neighbours; and being now in great distress, she had resolved to seek advice and comfort from Gracchus and Plutarch.

It appeared that Mr. Spatter, who could never be induced to promise to vote for Vanderbomb, had become crazy and died in a madhouse. Mrs. Spatter was now a disconsolate widow, with several young children and the whole establishment of the farm and inn on her hands. However, this was not her greatest trouble. Some of her malignant neighbours had hinted that the aberration of her husband's intellect was produced by a blow on his head from Mrs. Spatter with the broom handle, on the day that he was engaged in making preparations to bestow a suit of tar and feathers on our adventurers.

"But," protested Mrs. Spatter, with tears in her eyes, "he was as well the next day and the next night, as I ever knew him. No, it was politics—nothing but politics distracted the brains of my poor husband! And Mrs. Muggs, the keeper of the Black Boar, four miles further on the pike, has raised the outdacious tale to injure my carreckter and business."

"You think it was politics drove him mad, Mrs. Spatter?" asked the colonel, with a smile.

"I know it was, sir; didn't they always keep him betwixt hawk and buzzard? One who was intimate with Mr. Notyale promised him the post-office if he would go for General Tocs; and another promised him a Chargeship if he would use his influence for Mr. Romlif, and so the poor man didn't know which way to turn. All night he would flounce about and hurra in his sleep, first for one, and then for the tother. Everything was neglected about the place but my calves, which I always had attended to properly, until he got to be raving lunatical. I did all I could for him, and what the doctor told me. I kept the jacket on him to keep him from killing the children, which he said wasn't his, and didn't belong to him, and that sort of nonsense; but I fed him regularly with

my own hands, and nursed him day and night, till he gnawed the things in two and broke away. When he was free, the first thing he did was to get the gun, and shout Tocs for ever! He then fired the gun at the sheriff of the county, who came to collect the taxes; and it was all I could do to keep the officers of justice from taking him to jail. But they put him in the mad-house, where he kept bumping his head against a post till he died, poor man!" Mrs. Spatter wept bitterly.

"Madam," said Vanderbomb, "no doubt your establishment wields a considerable influence one way or the other in all presidential contests?"

"La, yes; it's one of the preecinks, and the polls are taken there."

"Kipps," said Vanderbomb, "it would be a fine stroke of policy for you to become the proprietor of the White Cow."

"Gracchus!" cried Plutarch, "surely you can't mean——"

"I can, and do," replied the colonel; "and I have your promise to make any sacrifice for the cause, short of death. I have pledged myself not to require you to die for me."

"But remember the manner of poor Spatter's death."

"Poor man!" said Mrs. Spatter, "if he had not been kept between hawk and buzzard, he might have been living yet."

"If he had gone solely for the American eagle, Mrs. Spatter, he might have fared better. Do you know what I mean by the American eagle?"

"No, truly," said she, "unless it is the one with the stars and stripes."

"That is it, Mrs. Spatter, and I am the standard-bearer."

"Oh, I heard them saying you was a candidate."

"And would it not be better for the landlord of the White Cow to go for me, than for a hawk or a buzzard?"

"Yes, truly, if there was a landlord. But poor women, you know, can't vote, and oughtn't to, in spite of the mumbling Mrs. Tom, who once put up with us."

“What I wish to propose, Mrs. Spatter, is, that my friend here become the future landlord of the White Cow——”

“La, me, Col. Vanderbum, is that what you was hinting about, a while ago? What! have a step-father for my children——”

“Madam,” continued the colonel, “do you not recollect how naturally your baby was mounted on his knee——”

“Yes, but the brat—I whipped her well!”

“Really, madam, I am inclined to think your destinies are united. Remember how kindly you interfered in his behalf when he was in imminent peril—and that his appearance before you was precisely at a juncture when Mr. Spatter began the declension which resulted in his vanishing entirely from the political firmament—slain between hawk and buzzard—just when the victorious Eagle appeared, whose champion my friend professes to be, and is.”

“Oh, colonel, how can a poor silly woman understand all that? Do talk about something else. Just say how I can make the White Cow help to elect you, and it shall be done without lugging in Mr. Kip.”

“Madam!” said Plutarch, very gravely, “the colonel has said that your destiny is linked with ours—that is, mine or his. He speaks from inspiration, and I believe him. You no doubt recollect that one of the greatest emperors Rome ever had, was descended from an innkeeper’s daughter, Helena——”

“Why la! that’s my name, too!” exclaimed Mrs. Spatter.

“Is it possible!” cried the colonel, leaping upright in bed, and gathering the clothes closely round him.

“The mother of Constantine, the first Christian emperor,” continued Plutarch, “was an innkeeper’s daughter, and her name was Helena.”

“And my daddy kept the inn before I married Spatter!” said Mrs. Spatter.

"But, Gracchus, you must be aware that *I* can never aspire to become the master of the world. It is you that fate destines to be the founder of an illustrious line of princes. You it is, for whom the hand of Helena was reserved!"

"Kipps," said Vanderbomb, "you reason well, but I am not yet quite convinced."

"I never heard such powerful arguments in my born days!" declared the widow, her face almost as red as her hair.

"Be not shocked at our plain blunt words, fair lady," said Plutarch. "Women and posterity in prospective, form the basis of many a political imperial adjustment. In the great transactions of the world, history teaches us that alliances, followed by momentous consequences, have often been contracted, and consummated, without any previous acquaintance of the parties, or the slightest premeditation. If you were familiar with the history of nations, you would at once appreciate the necessity of throwing aside every semblance of modest reserve, and uniting heartily with us in the disposition of such high and mighty affairs."

"My Lord!" said she; "if Spatter had only talked politics that way, I could have listened to him every night. I am willing, sir, to learn history, if it can do any good for posterity."

"Mrs. Spatter," said Vanderbomb, "we will adjourn the conference to some future day. In the mean time, be comforted with the assurance that in me you will ever find a friend and protector; and that you may be enabled to exert the influence of your inn on the right side, without detriment to your fortune, I will cheerfully bear the expense. Let your house be open for the accommodation of my friends, free of charge. Here is my purse; when this is gone, draw on me for more, and your drafts shall be honoured."

"Thank'ee, sir. Everybody pays honour to my draughts,

and I hope your honourable self will help to drink 'em. Since I have been alone, I keep English ale, gin, and brandy."

"But not sweet cider, I hope, madam," said Plutarch.

"In season, I do; but now it's old and sharp. It would do your heart good."

"But it once did my stomach a grievous injury."

"Why, Snehpets says it was the brandy made you sick," said Mrs. Spatter.

"Snehpets! Madam," said Kipps, "I did hope I would never hear that name again. I supposed he was gone for ever from the scene of action."

"No, indeed, sir. He's back again, the most penitentiallest man you ever saw. He lost all his money, and is teaching school again."

"He is a vile pedagogue, madam; and if he frequents your house, you will never have the honour of a visit from me."

"La! he's a changed man. He brought me the Clarion newspaper, which is to make the colonel here our next president, and said he intended to support the nomination. It was him who persuaded me to come over here and see you."

"Kipps, moderate your wrath. Madam," continued the colonel; "I forgive Snehpets. Tell him so. Say he has my friendship and protection."

"I will, sir," said she. "There is another matter," she continued, after some hesitation, "I wanted to consult you about. I have found out it was my beast that ran over you, and crippled you that morning."

"The jackass?"

"Yes, sir. Snehpets saw him do it. I will sell the beast, if you want me to."

"Never mind the ass; keep him, if he can do you any good. He could not see me for the smoke—the fog, I mean."

"Madam," said Plutarch, "it would be a gratification to me if you would dispose of the young ram in the barn yard."

"I will, then ; he is at your service, if you want him."

"I don't want him ; but as he assaulted me once, I should not like to trust myself in his presence again."

"I'll sell him, then. Now I hope you will both come and see me again, and as often as you can. If you patronize the White Cow, I shan't care a fig for Mrs. Muggs and her Black Boar. You may depend on all the votes about my house. Good day !" Saying this, the widow curtsied and departed.

Our adventurers continued to be so incessantly engaged with their correspondence, that the time was near at hand for the great National Convention to assemble in Baltimore, and still the volume containing the military exploits of the colonel, had not been issued from the press.

This was the occasion of much anxiety and annoyance to the colonel, who was the hero of it, and of mortification to Plutarch, who was its author. They supposed an arrangement had been finally made with a publisher by their agent, Mr. Hurraw, and he was written to on the subject. In reply he stated, that the literary adviser of the publisher was fearful the work might excite the public mind to deeds of blood, and hence it had not been placed in the hands of the printer. Hurraw intimated that this was not the true reason why the publisher was so advised ; but rather because the reader of the manuscript referred to, advocated the election of Tocs, and this work might, if published, injure his cause.

It was too late now to negotiate with another publisher, and so, unfortunately for the world, the matter was suffered to drop. But Plutarch subsequently recovered the manuscript, and revised it, and it may yet see the light.

Immediately preceding the assembling of the convention at Baltimore, which was to nominate the candidates for president and vice president, the prominent men of the party were very generally categorically questioned on divers subjects, and among

the rest, whether, if elected, they would be content to retire at the expiration of a single term.

Gracchus seeing the replies, mostly in the affirmative, of the great men of the country, and waiting in vain for some one of the delegates to the convention to interrogate him, he resolved, nevertheless, to have his pledge recorded with the rest. He believed it might increase his chances of a nomination; and so he wrote a letter to himself, and had his friend Pellet to sign it. He replied at the same time, and submitted the correspondence for publication. It first appeared in the *Clarion*, now his confidential organ (and in truth he had become the owner of the establishment), and was subsequently copied by the *New York Censor*. Afterwards it appeared, accompanied by various comments, in more than five hundred papers. It certainly had a more extensive circulation than the response of any of the rest of the candidates, and really contributed more effectually to bring the name of Vanderbomb prominently before the public, than any other act of his life.

CHAPTER XI.

THE BALTIMORE CONVENTION.—VANDERBOMB PUTS UP AT BARNUM'S.—VANDERBOMB TOASTED AT THE DINNER TABLE.—HE RESPONDS HAPPILY.—HE MAKES A GREAT SPEECH IN MONUMENT SQUARE.—INTRIGUES.—VANDERBOMB WRITES TO FLORA.—HE IS SURE OF THE NOMINATION.—BALLOTING IN THE CONVENTION.—VANDERBOMB NOT NOMINATED.—HIS ASTONISHMENT.—HE GOES TO PHILADELPHIA.—CONFERS WITH MR. HEATED HURRAW.—HURRAW'S OPINIONS.—THE EQUESTRIAN ORDER, OR ROMAN KNIGHTS.

At length the great National Convention, to nominate candidates for the presidency and vice presidency, assembled in Baltimore. Gracchus and Plutarch, as well as Mr. Wagwell, Mr. Pellet, and Dr. Jalap, were there. Vanderbomb remained at his lodgings at Barnum's Hotel, while his partisans mingled with the delegates. The colonel considered it indelicate to solicit support directly in person.

The first day was spent in organizing the convention, and in preliminary conferences, preparatory to the contest among the partisans of the respective aspirants. The leading argument which Vanderbomb's agents were directed to use, was the availability of their candidate. Nothing could be alleged against him on the score of sectionality; and this was admitted by every delegate who was sounded, both from the North and the South. Every hour the partisans of Vanderbomb made either written or oral reports to their principal, and in none of them was found any objection advanced by the delegates to his nomination.

After the first adjournment of the convention, the colonel had the satisfaction of meeting many of the delegates at dinner, and he was gratified, after the removal of the dishes, to hear his health proposed at the other end of the table. This was followed by a deafening clatter of knife-handles, and the clapping of hands, and a toast was called for.

Before responding, the colonel had a row of bottles of the best champagne placed on the table, reaching from one end to the other. Then rising, he said :

“Gentlemen, this is not the place or the time for me to make a speech ; but I propose the following sentiment : Union of all the parts for the sake of the whole.” This was greatly applauded, though perhaps not fully comprehended.

Some one then proposed : “Numerius Plutarch Kipps, the mentor and friend of Col. Gracchus Vanderbomb, of Slough-creek.” When the applause subsided in a measure, Numerius arose, and said : “*Fidei certa merces*,” and added, pointing to the colonel, “*Ecce homo*.” This was succeeded by a momentary silence, as if it had not been clearly understood generally ; but the next moment it was applauded with great unanimity.

They drank and cheered and spoke for several hours, amid much hilarity and some inebriation, until it grew dark, when it was proposed, and universally seconded, that the colonel should address the people in Monument Square from the wall of the court house. This, above all things, was what Vanderbomb desired, and no time was lost in repairing to the place appointed. The colonel had prepared a speech especially for such an occasion, and was eager to address the multitude. But when he mounted the rostrum, it seemed, from the innumerable wild shouts around him, that the ungovernable enthusiasm of his innumerable friends would never subside sufficiently to permit him to begin his remarks. He stood up before them impatiently, a monument of resignation. Cheer

after cheer; three cheers; and three times three, were given in prolonged succession. Finally they permitted him to proceed, and he spoke for about an hour, being often interrupted by the most deafening plaudits. In the course of his remarks he promised the people every good thing that his invention had been able to devise, and he flattered, in ingenious phraseology, the delegates assembled in the city, and many of whom were doubtless then present, and listening to him, although he disclaimed being cognisant of that fact. All the great questions which agitated the country were reviewed, and his position in regard to them was decidedly a conservative one, and yet not inconsistent with the popular sentiment.

At the conclusion of his speech, the shouts and waving of hats and handkerchiefs were renewed, and continued to assail his ears until he reached his apartments at the hotel.

"Now, gentlemen," said he to his friends from Midway, when he had regained his own room, where they attended him, "What think you of the prospect?"

"The pear is ripe," said Wagwell.

"None of the candidates have caused such a popular demonstration," said Dr. Jalap.

"How could it be otherwise?" exclaimed Plutarch; "*hoc erat in votis.*"

"Suppress your Latin, Kipps. The people don't understand it. I am obliged to you for your good wishes; but no doubt our worthy friends might think you were talking about votes. We have no time to lose. To work, to work, all of us! Kipps, where's Pellet?"

"Gracchus, he is busily employed in reporting the occurrences of the day and night for his own press."

"Ah! that's right. Now do you despatch letters to the Censor, and the rest of the journals friendly to us. Wagwell, do you and the doctor go and mingle with the crowd. Listen to everything; but remain incog. Report everything you

hear which may have a tendency to affect my cause. Cabals and conspiracies will be formed to-night; and before morning the destinies of twenty-five millions of people may be changed a half-dozen times. These delegates are the real prætorian bands who hold in their hands the fate of empire, while the majority of the silly people think *they* have the power of deciding who shall be the president! There never was a greater mistake than to suppose the majority ruled in this country! If these delegates, these prætorian bands, see proper, they may pick up some man whom the people scarcely ever heard of, and have him elected. Then what would be the inducement for great and good men to devote their lives to the service of the republic, and to spend three-fourths of their days in preparations to attain the presidency, when they behold obscure and mediocre individuals hoisted over their heads upon the spur of the moment, and rewarded—and for what? Why, because they offered the largest donative! If this goes on, great patriots will become great demons, and destroy the government! I have laboured for forty years in view of this hour. The prize must not escape me. Go! mingle with the bands. You have a *carte blanche* to propose whatever rewards may be deemed advisable. You cannot know what my competitors will offer; but you can intimate that I will not suffer any of them to bid higher than myself.”

The doctor and Mr. Wagwell withdrew, promising to remember their instructions, while the colonel sat down to write a brief note to his sister. He told her that if the nomination were made that night, he would carry it by an almost unanimous vote. He could not tell what his adversaries might effect before morning; but he should have his spies in motion until the convention assembled. He concluded by saying that he was quite sure of receiving the nomination; and when the vote was announced, he would despatch a special messenger to her with the good news. And he requested her, when she

received the tidings of his nomination, to throw open the house and the wine cellar to all the inhabitants of the village; and above all things to make the parson drink a half-dozen bottles himself.

The next day the colonel remained shut up in his apartment, inaccessible to all but his confidential friends. Plutarch remained with him, while Dr. Jalap and Wagwell repaired to the lobbies of the building where the convention met. It was arranged that they should employ messengers to convey notes in pencil mark, every fifteen minutes, to the colonel.

The first messenger brought the following: "Mr. — of Texas, has proposed General Notsuoh."

"Kipps!" cried the colonel, "what think you of that? It is only a compliment, to conciliate his half-dozen friends. Notsuoh could not carry his own state, since he allied himself with Notneb, Nerub, Toof, and Yalc."

The next note stated: "Mr. Y—— of New York, proposes General Sac."

"Kipps! Sac has been beaten once. Who wants a spavined horse? Both the Sacs and Foxes are *hors de combat*. We have not now to do with Indian affairs. His day of grace is past. Those who committed themselves against him before, will not trust to his mercy or his friendship hereafter."

The next note said: "Reklaw has been added to the list for nomination."

"Kipps, this Mr. Reklaw would not survive a nomination, and fortunate would be the one on his ticket for vice president. Why, he wept hysterically when Klop and Sallad were nominated, because those who had such good fortune, happened to be his good friends. If they were to nominate him, he would die of epilepsy."

The next note stated, "Mr. Nanahcub has been proposed, amid loud cheering."

"Kipps!" cried the colonel, "they are reserving the strong

men for the last. Do you know I fear this man more than all the rest put together?"

"Why should you fear him, Gracchus? He is a man of peace; the people will want a man of war."

Just then the messenger came with another note, which the colonel seized with a trembling hand, not doubting but that it would inform him his own name, as the strongest one of all, had been proposed. It ran thus: "The convention proceeded to ballot, and upon the —— trial, the result was in favour of ——." The note dropped from the colonel's hand.

"Of Gracchus Vanderbomb, was it not?" cried Plutarch, looking up, and embracing his pupil.

"Kipps!" cried the colonel, thrusting his secretary rudely away, and striding indignantly backwards and forwards. "I say, Kipps, there has been foul play! We have been defeated by our neglect! Wagwell and Jalap should have promised capital appointments to all the delegates. All should have been promised places in the cabinet and foreign missions. Why, no one proposed my name! What has produced such a change since they toasted me yesterday, and drank my wine? Treachery, Kipps, there has been treachery! Kipps, I'll defeat their party. I'll——"

"Gracchus, perhaps they may nominate you for vice president. Cæsar, you know, becomes Augustus."

"You are right, Kipps; I'll wait awhile. It may be as you say. But if they don't do me justice, I'll join the other party."

The next note received said they had proposed a great many names for nomination; but among them was not to be found that of Col. Vanderbomb.

"Kipps!" cried the colonel, "it is all over with me here, so far as this convention is concerned. They'll repent it! Let us be off for Philadelphia. Perhaps it is in the convention to assemble there that I am to be nominated. I am now

glad my name was not proposed, unless it was to be followed by nomination; for I stand uncommitted to their worthless party."

"*La fortune passe partout!*" said Kipps.

"Kipps, let us not upbraid fortune until the whole game is played out. *Esperance en fortune*, be my motto. Remember all the states were not represented. But it will not do for us to go home. I will write to Flora. Here!" he continued, to the messenger, "tell Jalap and Wagwell to send me no more notes. Say I have left town."

An hour afterwards Vanderbomb and Kipps were in the cars, on their way to Philadelphia. Not a word was spoken by either of them, until they crossed the Susquehanna at Havre de Grace, when two gentlemen, sitting behind them, commenced a conversation in regard to the nominations just made by the Baltimore Convention. Vanderbomb was compelled to hear every word they said, as they sat immediately in his rear, and spoke very loudly.

"But the best of the joke," said one, "was the pretensions of that mad politician, Vanderbomb of Sloughcreek. It is said he absolutely believed he would get the nomination."

"Doubtless he was credulous enough to believe it," said the other. "The day before the nominations were made, he circulated champagne among the delegates at Barnum's."

"And at night he made a speech in the square, for the amusement of the people. No one could tell what party he belonged to, nor upon what ground he based his claims. It is strange that one so well informed, and so rational in other matters, should be so demented on the subject of politics."

"Kipps," said the colonel, in a whisper, "do not let it be known I am here. We will listen, and see to what extent we have been misrepresented. My enemies have done this; they have circulated stories of my being mad, and no doubt many good people believed them. No wonder I was not nominated!

My rivals took advantage of my reserve, and spread the slanderous report that I was deranged! It was unworthy of men aspiring to be presidents!"

The colonel succeeded in hearing a great deal more concerning himself, and which was quite enough to disparage his pretensions. But it was attributed by him to his rivals and enemies, and was charged to the score of persecution.

When they reached their lodgings at the United States Hotel in Philadelphia, Vanderbomb sent for Mr. Heated Hurraw, his political agent and pecuniary debtor. Mr. Hurraw was to be one of the secretaries of the convention about to assemble in this city, and it was supposed he might be prepared to indicate pretty clearly what would be the action of the body of which he was to be a *quasi* member.

Nevertheless he protested his inability to penetrate the future. He could only promise to use his utmost endeavours to get the colonel nominated; and he had sufficient influence, he was sure, with one or two members, to have his name proposed, along with the other candidates.

"But what should I do in the mean time to increase my chances?" asked Vanderbomb.

"Favour the pretensions of General Toes."

"And pray how might that forward my interests?"

"If Toes gets nominated, you will have the credit of it, when it might be that our opposition would have been unavailing. If he fails, then we may expect his friends to unite on you."

"But could he be elected? - What southern state would go for him?"

"The South could not be counted on. He would have to pass the Rubicon, and openly repudiate the South. Then, the issue being made, if the North united on him, he would be elected; for two to one of the voters live in the free states."

"Some of the free states are dependent upon the South for

their prosperity. What would become of the merchants and manufacturers of Pennsylvania, for instance, if the line were drawn and the trade with the South cut off? Tocs can't get Pennsylvania!"

"I think you are mistaken, colonel. When we call upon the merchants and manufacturers to stand by the party, they never fail to make the sacrifice. They are the most docile men in the world, and indispensable when funds are to be raised. They believe every syllable we tell them; and if they sometimes find themselves deceived, a complimentary speech, or a cunning article in the paper, reconciles them to the traces."

"But then, Mr. Heated Hurraw," continued Vanderbomb, "I have learned that four-fifths of the trade of Philadelphia is with customers in the slave states; and that with the exception of iron, there is hardly an article manufactured here with which the British come in competition. The merchants tell me that now nothing is imported which can be manufactured at home; and that three-fourths of their stocks consist of goods of American manufacture."

"Still they believe us," continued Mr. Hurraw, "when we tell them that the salvation of the country depends upon a high tariff—and it is a good hobby. But, suppose, colonel, the merchants should lose their trade, and suffer a little; if we can consolidate the northern vote, elect all the presidents, and control the government hereafter, *we* will be compensated for the sacrifice."

"Hurraw, I have my doubts as to the wisdom of your policy. Kipps, what do you think of it?"

"Gracchus," said Plutarch, "the merchants and manufacturers composed, in Rome, the equestrian order. They were the Roman knights, and came to wield a preponderating influence when they had the boldness to assert their rights; and if they are to prove themselves worthy of the same dignity

in our country, we shall see them some day turn a deaf ear to the politicians."

"But that day is far distant," said Hurraw. "They don't interfere at all in our primary meetings. We use our most insignificant characters in procuring the nominations on our tickets; and they are invariably supported by our wealthiest and most influential merchants."

"That will do, Hurraw. But when I am elected president, I will restore the equestrian order. The merchants and manufacturers shall be Knights, as they were in Rome, or Princes, as they were in Venice. They are not the ones to be trampled under foot, and sacrificed for the benefit of politicians. And so I will tell them in my next speech."

"Doubtless, colonel, you know what is best to be done. I merely tell you what has been the case hitherto, and what is contemplated by the leaders of the party. But there are divisions in the party in regard to which is the most available man—"

"Who could be more available than myself?"

"In many respects, none; none whatever in my estimation. But Pennsylvania, they say, is always sure for a general."

"There are not many steps between a colonel and a general. Besides, it strikes me that the country is getting tired of military presidents; and if we continue to nominate military chieftains, the statesmen will begin to meditate treason, and we shall soon have the race of patriots extinct. Yet I must confess it is my purpose, when I am president, if war shall occur, to take the field myself, and lead our armies against the enemies of the country. It shall never be said I remained in inglorious security, while I imperilled the lives of my people."

CHAPTER XII.

VANDERBOMB ENGAGES TO HAVE HIS LIKENESS TAKEN.—MANY STRANGERS INTRODUCED TO HIM.—HE VISITS THE THEATRE.—HIS RECEPTION.—AFTER THE PLAY HE MINGLES WITH THE PEOPLE INCOG.—THROWS OFF THE MASK, AND MAKES A GREAT SPEECH AT THE STATE HOUSE.—A SPURIOUS PORTRAIT OF THE COLONEL—AND OF KIPPS.—THEIR GREAT MORTIFICATION.—SYMPATHIZING LETTER FROM FLORA.—LIFE OF VANDERBOMB PUBLISHED ANONYMOUSLY.—HURRAW WRITES THE COLONEL GOOD NEWS FROM THE CONVENTION.—HE IS ELATED.—BAD NEWS COMES NEXT.—HE LEAVES THE CITY IN DISGUST AND GOES HOME.—RESOLVES TO BE AN INDEPENDENT CANDIDATE.—FLORA IS COMFORTED AND CONVINCED BY THE PARSON.

MOST of the day after Vanderbomb's arrival in Philadelphia, he was engaged with several artists whom Hurraw had recommended as the best qualified to produce on stone a perfect likeness of his imposing features. Copies of these were to be distributed over the country, and exhibited in the windows of the print-shops, to arrest the passing crowd. It cost the colonel some money; but what was money to him without the presidency? It had likewise been suggested by the Censor, that a portrait of Numerius Plutarch should also be made, to be exhibited with the colonel's; but this was objected to both by Kipps and Vanderbomb.

The arrival of the distinguished strangers had been duly announced in the papers, with those of a great many other politicians, and delegates to the convention which was soon to meet at the great hall where the last president had been made.

Numbers of citizens and others called at the hotel for the purpose of seeing the great man; and Heated Hurraw, at the instigation of Vanderbomb himself, introduced most of them by name to our unterrified aspirant.

At night they visited the theatre, and upon the entrance of Vanderbomb, there were many cheers uttered by the people.

"Kipps," said he, "it won't do to make a speech here, will it?"

"Not a long one, Gracchus."

Vanderbomb, however, bowed in every direction, standing with his hat in his hand, and smiling most graciously.

"They have not yet recognised you," said Hurraw to the colonel; "they are cheering Mr. Toof, who is standing just before us."

"Is it possible? do you think so?" said the colonel, sitting down abruptly. "I would prefer to remain incog. if they will permit me," he added, "since they have another object to bestow their applause upon; and since I perceive Toof enjoys it so heartily. But he is not a candidate; at least no one here in the North has any intention of bestowing on him any other reward than a little harmless flattery; and I can afford to let him enjoy his notoriety, for the services he performed in the late gubernatorial canvass. But what is he doing here among the Whigs?"

"Union or disunion, compromise or no compromise, overshadow all other questions, colonel," replied Hurraw.

One after another the great men in the city arrived, and as they were recognised, they were severally received with a great deal of cheering. At length some one proposed "three cheers for Colonel Gracchus Vanderbomb, of Sloughcreek," and although the curtain was then up, the performance had to be suspended until the ungovernable uproar which ensued had subsided.

"Let Toof, and Tocs, and Notyale, and Romlif, and Rets-

bew beat that, if they can!" said the colonel. "I only wish these good people here would dismiss the actors, form themselves into a convention, and nominate the candidate for the presidency to-night!"

After the conclusion of the first piece most of the great men retired, and Vanderbomb, suspecting more foul play, and knowing that intrigues were constantly going on, rose and departed likewise. He was determined to keep pace with the progress of affairs, and to suffer none of his competitors to get the advantage of him. But how could he know what was done behind his back? He could not inquire of the delegates himself, what might be said or done by the agents of his rivals to his detriment; nor could he learn anything from the people who thronged the saloons of the hotel, without betraying himself. Therefore he resolved to mingle with the crowd in the street, and listen to what might be said of him.

Every one, of course, thought and spoke of nothing else but the convention and the chances of the different men likely to be nominated.

"Yalc is too old," said one, "to live out the term."

"So much the better," replied the other; "for then we shall have a Northern president. You know if a slave state has the president, the vice president must come from a free state."

"The nomination for vice president on Yalc's ticket," said a third, "would be equivalent to a presidential nomination."

"But he couldn't be elected," said a fourth. "Although the people have been in the habit of beating him, it seems he will never become accustomed to defeat."

"Then give us Tocs."

"He can't get any of the Southern States, and the North will be divided."

"Then Retsbêw."

"Suppose we have a scrub race, free, as they say, for any

horse, mare, or gelding, without regard to age or weight. I should like to see how Retsbew can run. They say he has good wind and bottom, and I should like to see him lift his heels on the national course. There is no chance for any of our men, unless they fly the track, and leave the old party lines, and so we might as well have a little fun."

"Romlif's the man!" cried one. "He's in; let him stay."

"Kipps!" whispered Vanderbomb, "suggest my name to them."

"Gentlemen," said Plutarch, "there is another great man spoken of in connexion with the presidency, whom you have omitted to name. I mean Col. Gracohus Vanderbomb, of Sloughcreek."

"Three cheers for Col. Vanderbomb, of Sloughcreek!" cried one of them, and the proposition was responded to by every one within hearing. The colonel, to avoid being discovered, pulled his hat down over his eyes, and remained silent.

"But then, my friend," said the one Kipps had addressed, "Vanderbomb is crazy, and might play the d——l with the country."

This was too much for the colonel.

"It is a base calumny, sir, perpetrated by my enemies, to defeat my nomination."

"Are you Col. Vanderbomb?" exclaimed several.

"I am!" replied the colonel; "and if you will accompany me to any proper place, where I can address the people, I will undertake to prove that I am not only sound in intellect, but by far the most available man that can be run for the presidency."

This was boisterously agreed to, and the colonel was conducted to the steps in front of the old State House, where he spoke until midnight. It was an appropriate spot, as he declared, for one who might be elevated by the partiality of his

countrymen to the position once occupied by Washington, to utter his sentiments and make his solemn pledges. He made many happy allusions to the place where the Declaration of Independence was signed, and the holy ground on which the patriots and statesmen of the revolution had stood; and he was rapturously applauded.

He became hoarse before he ceased speaking, and was compelled to close his remarks, as he said, without concluding all he had intended to deliver. He was conducted amid much cheering to his lodgings, where, at a very late hour, he sought repose.

The next day Vanderbomb and Kipps visited the Mint, Girard College, the Navy Yard, Fairmount, and divers other places resorted to by the distinguished strangers then in the city. They were conducted by Mr. Hurraw, who still seemed to be faithful to his patron. As they were returning in the afternoon, the colonel was surprised to find a spurious likeness of himself offered for sale by the newsboys in the street. Although a mere caricature, yet the print presented some points of resemblance. The artist had doubtless seen the colonel in Baltimore, where it was executed, and had perhaps drawn it from memory.

Vanderbomb was quite indignant, and declared it was another device of his unscrupulous competitors for the presidency.

“Buy a likeness of Colonel Wanderbomb?” said the boy to every one who passed.

“Stop, boy!” exclaimed the colonel; “don’t offer them for sale. How many have you?”

“Only six. That’s all I could get. Price a quarter of a dollar.”

“Give them all to me. Here’s your money. Be sure, though, you have no more.”

“That’s all, sir. I never had any more.”

The colonel rolled them up very carefully, and depositing

them in his pocket, withdrew for a few moments to transfer them to some other place, whence there should be no resurrection for them.

Vanderbomb had scarcely turned his back, before the same lad cried out :

“'Ere's the faithful portrait and actual delinaments of Numerius Plutarch Kipps, the renowned secretary of Colonel Wanderbomb. Price twenty-five cents.”

“*O miseras hominum mentes!*” exclaimed Kipps, upon beholding the frightful image of himself. It was a capital likeness, and yet no worse looking than his face. “How many of these have you?” he inquired

“Only six,” replied the boy.

Plutarch bought them all, and followed the colonel. They met in the yard.

“Kipps, what have you there? Not more of them, I hope.”

“No, Gracchus.”

“But what are they?” continued the colonel, taking one from the reluctant hand of his secretary.

“*Et tu, Plutarch!*” exclaimed the colonel; “the whole world seems to be combined against us! Let me once have the power, and mankind shall howl for it. Go, Kipps! bury them fathoms deep, where they can never be seen again.”

Kipps did his bidding, and they returned to the reading-room of the hotel. But what was their astonishment now, to find some half-dozen other boys hawking about a new, and apparently an inexhaustible, supply of the offensive prints!

“Kipps!” said Vanderbomb, “they are as innumerable as the locusts of Egypt! We cannot suppress them. Let us go to our rooms and await the action of the convention. We will instruct Hurraw how to counteract the plots and conspiracies of our enemies.”

They did retire to their rooms, and had their meals taken

up to them. Hurraw was with them every hour, up to the meeting of the convention. He had been disappointed in being made one of the secretaries, which Vanderbomb attributed to the machinations of his rivals; but he had influence enough to obtain admission in the capacity of a reporter, and under pretence of sending minutes to the press, it was concerted that he should, from time to time, despatch messages to the colonel.

While waiting in anxious suspense for news from the convention, Vanderbomb received a letter from his sister, which was not calculated to heal his wounded spirit. Miss Flora described to him the particulars of her delight upon the receipt of his first letter from Baltimore. She had all the banners displayed from the observatory and windows, and all the transparencies illuminated and ranged symmetrically on either side of the mansion. All the inhabitants of the town had assembled at the mansion, to rend the sky with their huzzas, as soon as the news should arrive of his nomination. Dubiety Double-tongue, the keeper of the Midway Inn, had a row of bottles, with their corks started, ranged on his counter; and Mr. Saponaceous Bristle had charged the old four-pounder to the muzzle, and stood for hours with the match in his hand, awaiting the joyful signal. But, alas! how capricious the smiles of fortune! The terrible intelligence came at last, that all was disappointment and defeat! Miss Flora concluded, by declaring, that if her brother were so shamefully treated by the Philadelphia Convention, she should become disgusted with politics, and despair of ever living to grace the drawing-rooms of the White House.

By the same mail the colonel received a number of pamphlets and papers, which had been forwarded him by the post-master at Midway. Most of these alluded to his pretensions in such ill-disguised terms of raillery and ridicule, that he

could no longer resist the conclusion, that they were insincere in their advocacy of his cause.

“Kipps!” said he, throwing down the paper he had been reading last, “take your pen and order all the papers but the Censor and the Clarion to be discontinued.”

“Gracchus, I obey; but, you know the subscription-money has been paid in advance.”

“No matter; I will not read them. They shall not come into my hands. I won't pay the postage on such miserable sheets. Let Dubiety Doubletongue take them. They have been subsidized by the enemy. My competitors have bid more than my agents, as if they were resolved to monopolize all the avenues to the public ear.”

“In Rome they were not plagued with newspapers and lithographic prints,” said Plutarch.

“Now what is this? Kipps! I shall go mad!” exclaimed Vanderbomb, on finding that one of the pamphlets contained what purported to be ‘THE LIFE AND ADVENTURES OF COLONEL VANDERBOMB, OF SLOUGHCREEK, derived from authentic sources!’ “I say, Kipps, I shall really go mad, unless I can find my enemies and annihilate them. See here, what a miserable cut! A resemblance, truly! Who could have been the artist and the author? I know who instigated it—it was my competitors—but who was the author?”

“Gracchus, do you deal with the instigators, and let me battle with the author. You know I am to prepare your memoirs; and this knave would forestall my work. Let me open my batteries on him, and in the eyes of the whole world I will undertake to demonstrate his worthless insignificance.”

“Stop, Kipps,” said the colonel, turning over the leaves, “and let us see what is said of us.”

The colonel read the account of their adventure at the White Cow. It was stated, that his marked attentions to Mrs. Spatter had exasperated her husband, who was subsequently

killed in a duel by Vanderbomb; and that, while the colonel was disposing of the innkeeper, his squire, Numerius Plutarch, was engaged demolishing the jackass, the ram, and every other animal of the male kind on the premises.

“*Magna est veritas et prævalebit!*” cried Plutarch. “They cannot conceal the truth always.”

“But, Kipps, if they succeed in concealing it till after the election, it will answer their purpose.”

“That they shall not do, if I can wield a pen! Jackasses and rams! The authors of such calumnies as these shall be the animals I will contend against! I suspect that pedagogue, Snephets——”

“No, Kipps,” said the colonel, “he has repented, and intends to vote for me.”

“Whoever it was, shall withstand, or fall under the thunderbolts of my pen. Rams and jackasses! Gracchus, I have my doubts sometimes whether the world has gained anything by the invention of the art of printing.”

“Kipps,” said Vanderbomb, “between us, it is my intention when the reins of government are firmly grasped in my hand, to restrict the license of the press. But, in the mean time, perhaps these slanders may redound to my advantage. Charge it all to the score of persecution in your letters to the Censor. I regret, though, that Mrs. Spatter has been made the victim of their malignity. Kipps, she’s a virtuous woman, and ought to be rescued from this unpleasant dilemma. You would do me a favour to marry her.”

“Gracchus! it would be certain death! Anything short of that, I will do for you most cheerfully. I could not live where they kept that execrable cider; nor with one who presumed to lift a broom-handle against the sovereignty of her liege lord. Besides, you know, the intimacy was ascribed to *you*, and not to me. Helena was the wife of Constantine, and

not of his minister. And moreover, I must confess that I have no real fondness for her badly bred children."

"And I acknowledge, Kipps, that I do not admire the colour of the widow's hair, nor her constant prating about her calves, and the dairy. My wife should be like Cato's daughter, versed in the affairs of state, and capable of enduring much for the cause of her lord and the good of the country."

Here the conversation was interrupted by the entrance of a messenger with a note from Mr. Heated Hurraw, giving a list of the names of the distinguished men who had been proposed for nomination in the convention.

"I don't see my name!" cried the colonel. "Yes, Kipps! here it is!" said he, a moment after, his eyes resting on the postscript, which was as follows: "Col. Gracchus Vanderbomb, of Sloughereek, has just been proposed, by a gentleman from New Hampshire. Great sensation prevails. H. H."

"There, Kipps! Justice is about to be done at last! This gentleman from New Hampshire is an entire stranger to me. It is a great happiness to be appreciated so far from home."

"Gracchus, he says it produced a great sensation!"

"Yes, Kipps, and that's a good omen."

It did produce a sensation—an universal burst of laughter. But this Mr. Hurraw did not deem it necessary to mention.

That was the last gleam of hope that Vanderbomb had of a nomination. In the consultations and ballots that subsequently ensued, his name was not mentioned. And when the final result was announced, he took his departure for home, with an inappreciable contempt for his juggling competitors generally, and a hearty loathing of the ingratitude of Mr. Hurraw in particular. He resolved to appeal from the decision of the conventions directly to the people.

"Now, Kipps!" said he, as they drew near home, "the coast is clear. My opponents cannot intrigue with the people as they have done so successfully with the corrupt prætorian bands;

and these self-constituted delegates no more represent the wishes of our people, than the prætorian bands did the will of the Roman people. I will run in spite of the profligate politicians, bound to no party, and identified with no section. For this I was born; for this I have laboured and lived; and come what may, I feel that within which assures me of success."

When Vanderbomb entered his door, his sister, who had been advised of the result of the last convention by Wagwell and Dr. Jalap (who were the authors of the spurious biography), fell upon his neck, exclaiming against the "ingratitude of republics."

"Be not precipitate, Flora," replied the colonel, with a complacent smile; "it was the doing of the wireworkers of party. I have now cut loose from party, and will make war against all such unconstitutional and pernicious organizations. I am now an independent candidate; and I believe the people will elect me over the heads of the politicians!"

Wagwell and Dr. Jalap came in just in time to hear this annunciation; and they were surprised and disappointed to ascertain that their efforts to disgust the colonel with the visionary pursuit of the presidency, were still unavailing.

The parson had been more successful with Miss Flora. He succeeded in convincing her that the attainment of the highest office in the gift of the people, was like drawing the capital prize in a lottery. It was all a game of chance; and the lucky individual, whoever he might be, found the amount of suffering, mental and physical, always to be endured by the chief executive officer, to preponderate greatly over the pleasure and gratification incident to his great elevation. If he rewarded one friend by bestowing on him some desirable office, he was sure to offend twenty, who aspired to the same position. If he recommended to Congress a salutary measure, by which the country might be greatly benefited, his enemies made it an

invariable rule to impugn his motives, and to ascribe it to an overweening desire to seek popularity. And if the conduct of the president was such as to defy honest scrutiny, still his enemies, not to be defeated in their purpose of defamation, would fabricate and invent evil words and actions for him, and by means of an unlicensed press, contrive to make him an object of loathing and execration in nearly every section of the country. In short, he said that happiness was only to be found in peaceful religious retirement, and in conjugal affection.

CHAPTER XIII.

VANDERBOMB AND HIS SECRETARY CONTINUE THEIR LABOURS.—THEY DEMAND PAYMENT OF CERTAIN SUMS LOANED HURRAW.—THE COLONEL WRITES A PAMPHLET.—OLDSTYLE PROPOSES TO MARRY MISS FLORA.—HIS SUIT REJECTED.—THE PARSON LEAVES THE PARISH.—SUCCEEDED BY MR. SMYTH.—I. H. S.—VANDERBOMB ADDRESSES THE PEOPLE AT CHARLESTON.—KIPPS CONSENTS TO MARRY MRS. SPATTER.—A NORTH CAROLINA VOTER.—OUR ADVENTURERS RETURN TO THE HALFWAY HOUSE.

COLONEL VANDERBOMB and his indefatigable secretary did not for a moment suspend their important labours. They wrote almost incessantly night and day, and filled the columns of the Censor and the Clarion with their lucubrations. But they both fancied that they had been treacherously dealt with by several of their agents, and by Heated Hurraw in particular. They could not divest themselves of the belief that Hurraw had some agency in the production of the spurious likenesses of them. He alone knew that artists had been employed to make a perfect portrait of Vanderbomb, and was aware of Plutarch's positive aversion to having his taken. And as he was now the advocate of the nominee of the convention, it was presumable he had lent him his support secretly, before the nomination, when he professed openly to favour the pretensions of his patron and friend.

Plutarch was directed to demand the money loaned to Hurraw, and in the event of non-payment, the claim was to be placed in the hands of Wagwell for collection.

The colonel himself published, in pamphlet form, a denial

of the charge that he had killed Spatter, or had ever been intimate with his wife. He maintained that Mrs. Spatter was a virtuous and slandered woman; and for the truth of the assertion, he referred those who might entertain any doubts to Mrs. Spatter herself.

The entire production, purporting to be a sketch of his life and adventures, was, he asserted, without foundation in fact, and had been published anonymously, for base purposes, by profligate men who had not the courage to avow themselves as its authors.

When the manuscript was completed, it was submitted to the inspection of Mr. Wagwell and Dr. Jalap for their opinion; and of course they approved it, with certain mental reservations. It was then printed and extensively circulated.

In the course of a few weeks, Miss Flora made an important communication to her brother. The Rev. Mr. Oldstyle had formally proposed for her hand; and the blushing lady had not positively rejected his suit; but promised to consult with her brother in regard to the propriety of taking such an irrevocable step.

"It will never do, Flora," said the colonel, "that is, if you desire to be the lady of the White House. If you are willing to relinquish that honour, then I have not a word to say in opposition to the match. But, yet, I must remark that it would have been more seemly for you to have married the Rev. Mr. Good, some five-and-twenty years ago, or the Rev. Mr. Grace, some fifteen years ago. You might have had either of them; and I believe you never encouraged any but reverend suitors. By this time I should have had nephews and nieces quite grown."

"You ought to be ashamed, brother, to talk so to me!" said Miss Flora, reproachfully.

"No; it is you who ought to be ashamed to have neglected

such duties in your youth. But now, in the name of all the saints in the calendar, what do you want to marry for?"

"Brother——"

"Brother! yes, you can give me a brother, and that's all you can do! No, Flora, when you become Mrs. Oldstyle, you must make up your mind to relinquish the idea of ever being the mistress at the White House."

"Brother, Mr. Oldstyle says it would be as easy for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle, as for you to reach the presidency."

"Did he say that? Then he is an ignorant, presumptuous, prevaricating——"

"Brother!"

"No, no; not brother; and he never shall be with my consent. I would disown him! See here, Flora! Look at these papers. I have not read them. I made a vow in Philadelphia never to read but two—the Censor and Clarion—but Kipps has read them, and told me their contents. He says the nominees of the conventions are engaged in a Kilkenny cat fight, and must all be utterly demolished. What then? Why, I belong to neither party, neither section, and will escape unscathed. When my rivals are all annihilated, will I not remain master of the field? I tell you it was a fortunate thing that I did not receive the nomination in either convention. I am at this moment the least objectionable, and, therefore, the most available candidate upon the course. My chances, Flora, were never half so good as at this moment, and they are becoming brighter every day."

"Oh, brother, I am rejoiced, inexpressibly, to hear it! Why, then, did Mr. Oldstyle make such an extravagant remark!"

"Why? Why, because he wished to pervert the language of his text. He was, as he supposed, about to become a rich man."

“Do you suppose, brother, considerations of that nature influenced him?”

“I do not like to be uncharitable, sister; you know I am a member of the church; and I have an instinctive veneration for its ministers, while they confine themselves within the limits of their ecclesiastical duties: but if they presume to meddle with our temporal affairs, and to discuss the policy of our political enterprises, we may be pardoned if we express a doubt of the disinterestedness of their motives when we behold them seeking to form matrimonial alliances, which can produce no other result than an accumulation in their hands, of the filthy lucre against which it is their habit so vociferously to declaim.”

“Brother,” said Miss Flora, “I will reject his suit. How should he know that you can never be the president?”

“How should any one know it? How many have been elevated to that office, who were never thought to aspire to it a few short months before the election?”

“Mr. Oldstyle said it was a lottery.”

“And there he came near to telling the truth. Then if it be a lottery, why should not my ticket be as likely to draw a capital prize as any other? He deserves a blank!”

“Yes, and it will be a blank, so far as I am concerned,” said Miss Flora.

“Tell him to prophesy again, Flora.”

The result of the rejection of Mr. Oldstyle's suit, was his relinquishment of the parish church, and acceptance of a call in the north. But his place at Midway was immediately filled by the Rev. Issachar Hieronymous Smyth, a young man of five-and-twenty, of whom the ladies of the parish, and Miss Flora especially, became, in the language of Mr. Dubiety Doubletongue, the innkeeper, “passionately fond.” And on the next great festival, when the chapel was decked, for the first time, with evergreen, the innkeeper, whose wife and daughters were among the most zealous admirers of Mr. Smyth,

became quite discontented at the supposed overwhelming attentions bestowed by his family, and by the ladies generally, on the young minister. He ventured, for the first time in his life, to enter the chapel, for the purpose of ascertaining precisely what it was there that occupied so much of the time of the ladies, when no services were going on. He cast a look at the decorations, and then retired in utter disgust.

"It is all over. It's a gone case; I knew it!" he exclaimed, while passing the library window of the Halfway mansion, near to which Numerius Plutarch happened to be sitting.

"What has occurred, Mr. Doubletongue?" asked Plutarch.

"Why, the women have all made fools of themselves; and now they are going to make a fool of Mr. Smyth."

"That can hardly be. Mr. Smyth is truly a learned man for one of his years. He has been classically educated, and is deeply versed in theology."

"If he can stand the flattery the women are preparing for him now, then I'll acknowledge he is great, and I'll be the first to do him reverence," said the innkeeper.

"What is it the women are doing?"

"They've done it! They've put the initials of his name on the pulpit!"

"Put what?"

"They've put I. H. S. on the pulpit, and they stand for Issachar Hieronymous Smyth!"

"*Damnanti quod non intelligunt!*" exclaimed Plutarch. "Why, miserable man, it means Jesus, the Saviour of mankind!"

"Does it?" asked the innkeeper, at once ashamed of his ignorance. "But now pray tell me if you did'nt d—— something a minute ago."

"It was a quotation from Cicero, meaning things are condemned without being understood."

“One thing more, Mr. Kipps. I ask it as a particular favour, that you will never mention my blunder to any one.”

Plutarch promised, and faithfully kept his word.

The failure to obtain a nomination in either of the conventions, caused Vanderbomb to modify his plans for the ensuing campaign. Had he been nominated, most of the work might have been done by others, those expectant friends who would have been committed to his cause, and whose promotion in political life would have depended on his success. But then he might have been a mere instrument in their hands, to whose opinions of policy it might be expected he would submit on all occasions; and, as it had occurred before, that the nominee was under the necessity of making declarations that did not comport with his own opinions of propriety, and which not unfrequently resulted detrimentally to his cause, so, doubtless, Vanderbomb might have been subjected to the same humiliating necessity.

But now no party was responsible for any position he might see proper to assume, and he was under no pledges or obligations to any one. And if he could not summon to the field as many active partisans as his competitors, he determined to make up for the deficiency in the number of his advocates in the many fields of operations, by the celerity of his own movements.

Hence it was that as soon as he had remodelled the addresses he had designed for the different sections of the Union, he set out, accompanied by his faithful secretary, for Charleston, South Carolina.

The progress of our adventurers was deemed of sufficient importance to be noted in the telegraphic despatches, and heralded in all the papers. At every point where they paused for a few hours, Vanderbomb was solicited to address the people; and he was gratified to find that he was called upon

by both parties, and all parties, and the people generally, of all ages and sexes, without distinction of party.

But his great speech was reserved for Charleston. Here an immense multitude gathered round him, and made the welkin ring with their shouts.

He spoke for three hours, and boldly took the extreme Southern side of all the great questions in agitation. He denounced the juggling arrangement by which the South had been debarred from an equal participation in the fruits of the war with Mexico. He had fought in that war himself, and contributed large sums of money to equip volunteers, who poured out their blood for the acquisition of territory; and now he was not permitted to go to California with his property, his negroes at Sloughcreek. He said that California should not have been admitted as a state for ten years, when the population would have been fixed, and the wishes of the majority of the *bonâ fide* citizens properly made known. The Yankees, he said, were always the first in at a feast, and the first to leave when the cravings of hunger were satisfied. Hence, of all who voted for the state constitution forbidding slavery, it was a well settled point that not one in ten remained in the country; and these same men, the Yankees, who made the constitution of California, had subsequently both claimed and exercised the right of voting in New England.

He was in favour of dividing California, and yet making a slave state on the Pacific; and of refusing to admit New Mexico and Utah as free states. Cuba should be annexed, and likewise two or three new slave states south of Texas. Our mission was to democratize the world, and we should begin with Mexico and Spain; and, if the Union were not dissolved, next with Canada. If it were dissolved, he thought the best policy would be for the South to form a treaty of alliance, offensive and defensive, with Great Britain, for the purpose of combating the Northern States.

He was in favour of the Union, as long as justice was done to all its members, and the guarantees of the Constitution faithfully adhered to; but when the alternatives were dissolution or submission to aggression, his sword, his fortune, his life, should be thrown into the scale of resistance.

A protective tariff was unconstitutional, and oppressive to the agricultural states; and he did not favour internal improvements by the general government. The fugitive slave law was an absurdity and a mockery. When any of his negroes ran away, he abandoned them for ever. To reclaim them would cost more money than they were worth, and perhaps his life besides. "Why, fellow citizens," he exclaimed, "it is dangerous for a southerner to travel in a quiet manner on the common highways in the North. Some of you must recollect that I, myself, was once seized, and confined for two days and nights in a leathsome dungeon, upon the mere suspicion that I was seeking to enforce this fugitive absurdity, this futile act of Congress!"

Here he was interrupted by such a torrent of acclamations that it was quite impossible for him to proceed. After waiting a reasonable length of time for the tumult to subside, he descended from the rostrum, and, accompanied by his secretary, shut himself up in his room at the hotel, to enjoy in anticipation the effects of his mighty effort.

Some one, however, had placed upon his table a copy of the Southern Partisan Leader, which contained a vile calumny. Plutarch read it at the request of Vanderbomb. The paragraph, in corroboration of the libel in the spurious biography, which seemed to have been circulated everywhere, stated that the poor Mrs. Spatter had, since her chivalrous husband fell in a duel, been entirely abandoned by Colonel Vanderbomb, and was fast losing her reason.

"Kipps," said Vanderbomb, "that tale will ruin my prospects, if it be not counteracted in an effectual manner."

“Gracchus,” said Plutarch, convulsively rubbing his bald head, “when your pamphlet has been circulated sufficiently, the calumny will be counteracted.”

“I fear not, Kipps; a falsehood will traverse the whole country, while the truth is putting on its boots to follow. There is one way to put an end to the slander.”

“And what way is that?”

“For you to marry her, Kipps.”

“It is a bitter pill, Gracchus!” said Plutarch, making a wry face. “But, nevertheless, if it be the only remedy, I will swallow it.”

“My true friend!” cried Vanderbomb, seizing his hand, “I knew you would serve me in this manner, if I insisted on it! Now, I shall be elected. When I am president, if Mrs. Spatter should prove to be distasteful, I will use my influence and power to have you divorced.”

“Gracchus, say no more. I will sacrifice myself for the benefit of my friend. But when must this thing take place?”

“Immediately, Kipps. And when the wedding is published, no one will believe this mischievous falsehood, invented to do me injury. But, my good friend, you must not deem yourself sacrificed. Mrs. Spatter is in the heyday of life, not repulsive in appearance, and is possessed of some fortune. I remember that when we were prisoners under her roof, and she was nobly aiding us to elude our enemies, you uttered some warm expressions in estimation of her worth; and you likewise inculcated the policy of marriage——”

“True, Gracchus,” said Plutarch, interrupting him; “but it was under the exhilaration of the brandy, which had been so immoderately administered.”

“She can keep a constant supply of brandy on hand, and administer it as immoderately as before, when occasions of depression shall demand a recurrence of exhilaration.”

“And must I be separated from you at last?”

“By no means, Kipps. When the ceremony is over, you can still attend me through the campaign. When I am elected, you know, you can be divorced, if need be.”

“I am glad of it, Gracchus; for I must confess the thought of being a mere tapster lay heavy on my mind. And yet I would rather undertake to translate all that Ovid ever wrote, than undergo this marriage. It shall be done, however. But how? How shall I approach her?”

“Write, Kipps; write her at once, that we will be at the White Cow on Monday, and that you propose to wed her at noon of that day, and leave her for some days, or weeks, on Tuesday.”

Plutarch submitted several letters to Vanderbomb, but none of them met with his approbation. Every one had to be eliminated of its Latin, and of course what remained was nonsense. At length Vanderbomb wrote himself; it was brief, and to the point. The miserable secretary copied it and sent it to the post office. And from that moment he seemed to bend under the intolerable weight of his anticipated woes. His only consolation consisted in the thought that he had, by sacrificing himself, secured the elevation of his pupil and friend.

Vanderbomb made many speeches in the various towns on his return to the North, and was loudly applauded at all of them. But at one of the towns in North Carolina, he met with a man who would not espouse his cause, but continued in a most extraordinary manner to huzza for General Jackson and Yelnats.

“My friend,” said Vanderbomb, “General Jackson has been dead these seven years.”

“They told me that once before; but I don’t believe it. General Jackson is my man, and I will vote for him for president, and for Yelnats for vice president.”

“But Yelnats was not the friend of Jackson,” said Vanderbomb.

“Not the friend of Jackson? Why, he learned me how to holler for him!”

“Nevertheless Jackson is dead, and Yelnats was opposed to him.”

“Stranger,” said the countryman, “that tale may go down in the North, but it won’t do here. We are Southern Democrats in these parts.”

“Why, my good friend, Yelnats is a Whig, and has been much applauded in the North.”

“Stranger, you can travel!” said the voter; “and perhaps, the sooner you go the better it will be for your health. We have gnats here that yell, and mosquitoes that howl.”

“Kipps!” said Vanderbomb, as he resumed his seat, “I shall not get a majority here.”

“Gracchus, you will have as good a chance as any one else, if they vote for men who are not candidates.”

“Kipps!” said Vanderbomb, “this circumstance reminds me that I have not as yet, that I am aware of, an electoral ticket in each of the states. This matter must be attended to. By the Constitution I understand that the successful electors can cast their respective states for whom they please; and although some of them are unpledged, and will be as likely to vote for me as for any one else, yet, as a matter of precaution, it will be well to have Vanderbomb electors in those states where my competitors have pledged tickets. We must urge this duty upon our friends, through the columns of the Clarion and the Censor.”

CHAPTER XIV.

A LETTER FROM MRS. SPATTER.—SECRET DISCUSSIONS IN COUNCIL.—VANDERBOMB AND HIS SECRETARY SET OUT FOR THE NORTH.—KIPPS ENCOUNTERS A PHILOSOPHER.—OVERCOMES HIM.—ENCOUNTERED BY A LEARNED NEGRO.—ARRIVE IN BOSTON.—PUT UP AT THE REVERE HOUSE.—PORTRAIT OF RETSBEW.—RETSBEW MAKES A SPEECH.—VANDERBOMB FOLLOWS HIM.—HE IS INTERROGATED BY A SHOE-DEALER.

WHEN our adventurers arrived at the Halfway-House in Midway, a letter from Mrs. Spatter was handed the trembling secretary. It was addressed to "mr. numerous pluto kip," and ran as follows: "sir—i hav got Yore 'pistle, and Am a stonishd At the Offer To marry Me but Do not Think hard off You For It i am Still yor Friend and Well Wisher and i Hope You will Come of Ten and Fetch kur Nel vander Bum with You if Either of you Too Must marry Me to Save my karac Ter may Be Best for kur Nel vander Bum to Do it i Have A nother-of Fer Here But will Wait a While It is mr. sneh Pets If He's Got Red hair So Have i But You mr. kip Have got None And i don't Like To have a Man with Out Hair i Hope You wont Be of Fended As i Mean no of Fence tell The kur Nel he Is gain Ing Ground Fast here and Most of The Licker is Gone yours Truly and Friendly Till Death—helena spatter."

Plutarch pored over this precious epistle more than an hour, before he could comprehend it; and when he did under-

stand its purport, the first exclamation that issued from his mouth was "Snehpets!"

"What of Snehpets, Kipps?" demanded the colonel, who had been perusing a letter from Mr. Paul Parley, the innkeeper of Pennville.

"Why, the drivelling pedagogue has had the presumption to propose to marry Helena!"

"Indeed? Kipps! Snehpets is now one of my most zealous friends. Let him have her; it will save you from the marriage fate, and will answer my purpose just as well."

"But it don't answer my purpose to have Snehpets preferred to me, and he shall not espouse her!"

"Let me see her letter, Kipps. What orthography! She calls you Pluto!"

"I could teach her all the languages in five years," said Plutarch.

"I see," continued Vanderbomb, "she is not impatient for you. So we need be in no hurry to go there. Have another cask of old brandy sent over immediately. Here is business in another quarter, demanding instant attention. We must bustle manfully, Kipps. There is no time to throw away on matrimonial speculations, while our rivals are in the field."

"Snehpets is in the field, Gracchus."

"Pooh! never mind Snehpets. I tell you it will answer my purpose as well for him to marry the red-haired woman, as for you to do it."

"But will it answer mine, Gracchus? I feel within me a desire to triumph over that man."

"Have you been drinking brandy again, Kipps?"

"A little. Ever since you induced me to taste the fluid, it has become a habit for me to drink a moderate quantity every day."

"We will see the widow when my business is over. In

the mean time let there be a paragraph inserted in the *Clarion*, stating she is soon to be married, but omitting the name of the happy man. Here is a letter from Paul Parley, of Pennville stating, that he can get almost a sufficient number of men in his village to serve as my electors, and quite enough, if one Samuel Johnson, whom I do not know, and the black preacher, whom I do remember, be placed upon the ticket; and provided, likewise, the report they have seen of my speech at Charleston be a fabrication. Write him that he may make up the electoral ticket; the voters at a distance won't know whether they are white or black. Let me once get in the presidential chair, and I will make them wheel to the right and left! And as for the report of my speech in the South, tell him to believe nothing he may hear respecting me, unless it emanates directly from myself. Say the air is filled with false rumours respecting me, and calumnies are heaped over my head mountain high. Kipps, the spurious biography, and all the vile slanders uttered against me, will now turn to my advantage. Henceforth do what I will, say what I please, and the people won't believe the truth itself, after detecting the vile falsehoods promulgated by my enemies. Persecution, truly thou art my friend!"

Plutarch's pen flew over the paper almost with the same rapidity that the words had been spoken by Vanderbomb, and in the course of an hour more than a dozen letters had been despatched.

"Kipps!" said the colonel, after taking several turns in the library with his hands behind him, "to-morrow we will depart for Boston. I must make a speech there; and to-night we must devote ourselves to the substance of what I shall deliver. I hope no report of my speech at Charleston has gone to the North."

"I have examined the Northern papers, Gracchus," re-

sponded the secretary, "and have not found a single allusion to it."

"That's well. I must be prepared to encounter Mr. Retsbew; he is familiar with all the sinuosities of politicians, and has a personal knowledge of the origin and history of every measure that has been before the country for the last forty years. I have studied his history, and am prepared to interpolate him now with his own language long since forgotten. For instance, I'll quote him when he was in favour of free trade, and Calhoun advocated a high protective tariff. I must likewise have with me the last annual message, which his friends say was partly his composition. It contains an infinite amount of able writing, as all must admit; but I shall attack it, and as no one, from its interminable length, can undertake to defend it, I shall make political capital. Nothing could be more popular with the people than short messages, and I will promise them brief ones when I am president. My messages shall merely make recommendations of salutary measures, and furnish information of what has transpired since the last preceding communication to Congress. Reasons I will give when I return a bill unsanctioned; but arguments in an annual message are altogether unnecessary, and I will have none of them in mine. They subject the president to assault, and breed contention. Amidst the infinite diversity of opinions conceived by mankind, nothing can be more absurd than for one in the presidential office, not wiser or better informed than the rest, to suppose he can by laborious argument convince the world that his views are correct, and all others of a contrary nature wrong. Various principles of equal plausibility are at the service of any one; and when postulates are formed, corollaries will flow from them like rays from the sun. Peripatetic philosophers in the academic groves may indulge in the exercises of logic; *but presidents should attend to their*

own business. Who requires any additional proof at this day, that Retsbew and Romlif can write well?"

"Gracchus, my noble Gracchus, you are a superior man!" said Plutarch, in admiration of the profound observations of his pupil. "Peculiar abilities are required for governing mankind, while the art of writing is a common one. One of the best emperors Rome ever had, Dioclesian, was no writer. He uttered no words, and flourished no rhetorical figures, which the people could not comprehend; he merely acted, and then all could understand what was done. But you, Gracchus, will have the advantage of the experience of the past, as well as of the learning of the present. In confronting the logicians, you will overcome them with their own weapons; and in conferring with the people, your laconic simplicity will be comprehended by all."

At the time appointed, our adventurers set out on their Northern tour. The editor of the Censor heralded their arrival in New York with a blast of a whole column of eulogistic remarks. Great numbers of curious people assembled round the car in which Vanderbomb was seated, and just before the train started for Boston. They requested him to make a speech, but he excused himself, as there was not sufficient time. He bowed to them, however, repeatedly.

There was seated in the car a famous philosopher and polemic, who, when the train was in motion, conceived the idea of amusing himself and the company at the expense of Plutarch. This genius, in exterior appearance, might have been taken for one of the school of Diogenes; while in reality the system he professed and taught was in diametrical opposition to that of the ancient worthy. This specimen of the genus *homo* advocated the most extreme doctrines of social communication, irrespective of the laws, and in defiance of the rules of society. But his absurdities were tolerated in the North in consideration of his advocacy of all the popular notions of

that fruitful region. He was a Whig, and a man of peace; yet he would not submit to the action of his party, and favoured resistance to the Fugitive Slave Act of Congress. In the land of chimeras, he strove to favour the prejudices, whether political, religious, or social, of the majority; and hence his essays and lectures were highly esteemed and liberally paid for. Unlike Diogenes in everything except his apparel, he not only reaped a plentiful crop of notoriety, but at the same time gathered an abundant harvest of dollars.

The few preliminary remarks which Mr. Furor, the philosopher, addressed to Plutarch, were replied to very civilly; and a conversation ensued which soon arrested the attention of all who were near them. At length Mr. Furor expatiated to some extent on his peculiar doctrines, and then demanded of Plutarch his opinion of them. Vanderbomb, who had been listening, at that moment by a significant look warned his secretary to be upon his guard. He had learned who it was that was addressing Kipps, and remembered he had more than once been assailed by that individual in the newspapers, as a southern slaveholder.

But Mr. Furor and the company insisted on hearing Plutarch's opinion, and he felt an irrepressible inclination to say something in condemnation of doctrines which he detested. So he replied in Latin. He spoke for ten minutes, in that language, to his attentive auditors, and enforced his arguments with many appropriate gestures. When he concluded, he was surprised to find that the philosopher had turned away, and was looking abstractedly out of the window.

"Have I not refuted you?" demanded Plutarch, placing his hand on Furor's shoulder.

"How can I tell?" was the response.

"How can you tell! Why, don't you understand the language I have been speaking?"

"No; and not one who heard you understands a word."

“Nor did they understand a word of your English!” said Plutarch. “Never, again, attempt to instruct great men, or to entrap them, until you shall have learned the Latin language. Your philosophy, although you are not aware of it, is derived from the ancients. No man can be a critic or a philosopher without knowing Latin. I have been forty years learning it, and my head is bald; by the time you shall have learned it, yours will be whiter than it is now, and then you will be prepared to teach doctrines of more practical utility.”

“That will do, Kipps,” whispered Vanderbomb.

“No it won’t!” said a learned negro, of great corpulency, who overheard him. “Give it to him, Furor. I know you have the ability—” Just then the learned negro, who had been permitted to take a seat in that car at the express solicitation of Furor, under the pretence that he wished to have some conversation with him, was beckoned to by a conductor, and told that he must join those of his own complexion in the car which had been provided for them.

Furor protested most furiously against this procedure, and was seconded by his friends, who declared the negro’s presence was not offensive to them. Vanderbomb was neutral. Others, however, and a majority, thought he should be removed.

“Do you call this liberty?” exclaimed the learned negro. “I am a freeman. Is this the equality we are to have in the North?”

“The other car is as good as this one,” said the conductor.

“But where’s my right? Where’s my equality?” continued the negro.

“Your equals are in the other car,” replied the conductor, “and you are attempting to get above them. They sent me for you; they say they have as much right to be here as you have; and if you don’t go back to them, they’ll come here to you. That won’t do. We all have our rights, and I know

mine. It is my right and my duty, to place you in the coloured people's car; so, come!"

There was no reply. He was reluctantly obeyed.

In due course of time our adventurers arrived in Boston and put up at the Revere House. The news of their coming had, as usual, preceded them. A very large concourse had already assembled in and around the hotel; but, contrary to Vanderbomb's expectations, and much to his disappointment, there was no cheering when he arrived.

"Kipps," said he, "they have not yet recognised me. Let us look on a while in silence. Be careful not to betray me, or else they will split my ears with their plaudits. I do not wish to deliver my speech to-night; perhaps to-morrow, they will get me Fanueil Hall, the old cradle of liberty, to speak in. But what in the world are so many thousands assembled here for, if it was not their intention to cheer me?"

Vanderbomb and his secretary promenaded the hall, making their way with difficulty through the dense mass, and entered the spacious parlours. Here Vanderbomb paused before a full length portrait of the great Retsbew, and regarded it long in silence. It seemed to look reproachfully at him, and he really felt rebuked under its penetrating gaze.

"Kipps," said he, "that is a great man. Did you ever meet with one, North or South, who attempted to maintain the contrary?"

"No, Gracchus. He is a scholar; he understands Latin."

"He is a statesman, Kipps; and has been any time these thirty years. And yet how many men of inferior capacities, of fewer claims for services rendered, and infinitely less known to the country and the world, has he seen elevated to the presidential chair by the undiscerning citizens of the republic! Kipps, it is enough to make one despair of the republic!"

"True! True!" exclaimed a tall gentleman at his elbow, seizing his hand in great agitation, while tears ran down his

cheeks. He relinquished his grasp after a slight pause, and disappeared in the crowd.

"Do you know who that was?" asked one, addressing Vanderbomb.

"No; who was it?"

"It was R—— C——, late Senator of the United States."

Just then a deafening peal of plaudits burst from the assembled multitude in the street, at the corner of the hotel, and was followed by a simultaneous clapping of hands from all parts of the house.

"Kipps!" whispered Vanderbomb, "they've found me out. I can't escape."

The cheering was immediately succeeded by a movement within towards one of the open windows, and by repeated and still more boisterous shouts without.

"Kipps!" continued he, "why don't they call for me if they want me? Who is it they are calling for?"

It was Retsbew himself; and he was then standing at the window, bowing to the cheering multitude. When silence ensued, he began to speak, and never ceased until he had delivered a great oration, which was echoed throughout the civilized world.

"Kipps," said Vanderbomb, "do you think Retsbew did that to forestall me? He knew I was coming here to address the people. If I thought—what's that?"

At last, and some ten minutes after Mr. Retsbew had retired, Colonel Vanderbomb was called for!

"Shall I address them, Kipps, or hide myself?"

"Speak to them by all means, Gracchus, and strive to surpass Retsbew himself."

He did surpass him in many respects. He was more ultra on the Northern side of the great questions discussed, than Retsbew could be, even in his own Massachusetts. And

peal after peal of the most air-rending shouts, saluted his ears at every period.

When he was done, however, a tall Yankee with merry eyes stood up, and charged him with having uttered contrary sentiments in Charleston.

“Produce your proof!” said Vanderbomb. “If the papers have made a false report of my speech, I must not be held responsible for their statements.”

“It was not reported.”

“Then where’s the proof?”

“I am a witness. I was there.”

“You there?”

“Yes, I was selling shoes to the jobbers. I am a manufacturer.”

“Fellow citizens,” said Vanderbomb, “I trust you will not place any faith in what this cobbler may be disposed to say.”

“Cobbler!” cried a hundred voices. “Why, he’s a manufacturer, and a member of the legislature. Half the members are manufacturers. More than half of us are manufacturers.”

“Yes,” continued the Yankee, “every shoe worn by his negroes at Sloughcreek, are made within fifty miles of Boston.”

“But, fellow citizens,” continued Vanderbomb, “you will do me the favour to suspend your opinion in regard to what the gentleman says of my Charleston speech, until it shall be published in the papers. My friend, Mr. Numerius Plutarch Kipps, who happens to be present, will arrange his notes taken on the occasion, and when the speech is ready for the press, it shall be submitted for your inspection, and placed at your disposal. You know how easy a matter it is for one to be misunderstood, and to be misrepresented, very innocently too, as no doubt was the case in this instance. I will acquit the gentleman of any design to misrepresent me. You cannot be ignorant, for an account of it was published everywhere, how

shamefully I was misunderstood and assailed in the South at the White Cow Inn. Gentlemen, the southerners, supposing I was come among them to induce their slaves to run away, seized my person, thrust me into a vile potato hole, under a filthy bar-room, and made preparations to tar and feather me!" This was enough. There was a unanimous cry of indignation against the South, and the colonel was at once canonized as a martyr to the principle of universal freedom.

Vanderbomb, carried away by the manifestations of enthusiasm around him, exclaimed, "Gentlemen! it is true I have some slaves at Sloughcreek. But they were inherited from my grandfather; and I am not at liberty to emancipate them, without providing for their removal. I now declare to you that as soon as my affairs will permit it, and upon the happening of a certain contingency, it is my intention to set them free, and either to defray their expenses to Liberia, or permit them to move to the North and become good citizens."

"Don't send them here!" exclaimed a score of men; "we don't want your negroes on our hands."

"My friends," continued Vanderbomb, "if they come here, they can at least be required to make their own shoes."

"Then our trade will be gone," cried some of them, amidst peals of laughter.

"Kipps!" said Vanderbomb, "what else shall I say? I'm afraid I won't get a large majority here."

"Gracchus," replied Plutarch, "I think you have said enough to convince all reasonable people that you are the most available candidate for the presidency. If they will not be convinced, you can not compel them."

"I think so, too, Kipps. Fellow citizens, I thank you for your attention, and will not detain you any longer. I have been travelling all day, and feel quite exhausted."

CHAPTER XV.

VANDERBOMB SERENADED.—THEY HASTEN BACK TO MIDWAY.—ANOTHER LETTER FROM MRS. SPATTER.—THE ELECTION.—UNEXPECTED RESULT.—THE THREATENED VENGEANCE OF THE COLONEL.—HE PLOTS.—

OUR adventurers slept none that night. They were placed in a spacious room on the lower floor, and were serenaded till morning in a peculiar and indescribable manner, both vocally and instrumentally. It seemed that every article capable of evolving sounds had been seized upon to do honour to the colonel and his secretary. Violins, trumpets, and bells; triangles, tongs, and horns; rattles, trumpets, and tin pans; all contributed their vibrations to induce pleasant slumber, and agreeable dreams of the din of conflict and the shouts of victory.

The next day, Vanderbomb having delivered already what he intended to say to the Bostonians and Massachusetts men, our adventurers settled the score and departed southward. They slept most of the way in the cars, and reached home just when a procession of the people of Midway, which had been formed at the solicitation of Miss Flora and Mr. I. H. Smyth, who entered fully into her schemes of ambition, uttered their last huzzas before the mansion, and were upon the eve of being dismissed.

Vanderbomb detained them a few moments while he uttered a few patriotic sentiments, and then permitted them to return to their homes.

Many weeks were spent by our adventurers in the library, writing out instructions for their friends in the different sections of the Union.

Among the letters they received during their sojourn at the mansion was one from Mrs. Spatter, as follows ;

white cow oct — 1852.

gentle Men i have Hearn You have come Back And thout You would Com To see Me before This writing But you Havent The clarion Says i Am to be Maried And i Want to know Who it is to mr. snehpets is Ready For me i Am ready for the One who it is To Be if He is the Right one i said Before i Didn't Prefer mr. pluto kip i don't Think He would Like to Be troubled with my Concerns He is No farmer And don't Like my Cider And i don't Like His bald Head who ever Gets Me won't Have much Trouble the Negroes attend to the Horses And the Crops and i Take Care of my Calves And whip The children Myself come to Me or Write at Once For i am Getting tired of Waiting no More But yours Till Death

dos us Part

helena spatter

“Snehpets is ready, is he?” exclaimed Plutarch, rising hastily and pacing the room. “Gracchus, that man is my evil genius, and I must overcome him!”

“Wait, Kipps, till after the election. But I thought you did not wish to marry this woman?”

“I don't, Gracchus; neither do I want Snehpets to marry her. I cannot forgive him!”

“Forgive him for what? What has he done to you? You know it was the ram—”

“I know that, Gracchus; but it was at his suggestion that we were placed in that disagreeable and disgraceful situation. And now he has insidiously roused the prejudices of this woman against my head!”

“Suppose he has; why should you care, since you have no desire to marry her?”

“I don’t like to have my head jeered at by one who has no brains! But, Gracchus, why not marry Helena yourself? Your posterity——”

“Never mind my posterity now, Kipps. Let me first endeavour to achieve greatness at the ballot-box; when I fail in that, I may win it by matrimony. One way or the other, either myself or my children must rise to the summit of power. Write to Helena we will be at the White Cow next week, and remain there till after the election.”

Vanderbomb had sent his attorney, Wagwell, to the different cities to discover and prosecute the authors, printers, and publishers of the false biography. He now received a letter from him, stating that he had not yet succeeded in accomplishing his mission, but was on the track of the offenders, and would soon overtake them.

“There!” said Vanderbomb, placing the letter in the hand of Dr. Jalap. “You see, doctor, that vengeance is sure, though it be slow. I hope he will overtake the offenders in time for the discovery to serve me before the election.”

A letter was likewise received from the Rev. Mr. Oldstyle, beseeching the colonel to pause in his mad career before his wits were hopelessly gone. He said that those who pretended to be his friends, were either amusing themselves at his expense, or actuated by motives of cupidity.

“Jalap!” cried the colonel; “this priest wanted to marry Flora for her fortune; and he imputes motives of cupidity to my friends! He calls me a madman, I suppose, because I opposed the match. Poor, weak man! Let him go. I hope the loss of his vote won’t affect the grand result.”

Another letter, from Paul Parley, stated that the black preacher and Mr. Samuel Johnson had declined being placed

in the list of electors; and when this became known to the rest, every one of them had their names stricken off.

This gave Vanderbomb a deal of uneasiness, and several days were consumed in vain attempts to remedy the evil.

Finally another epistle, short and to the purpose, was received the next day from Mrs. Spatter. It ran thus: "gentle Men i Couldn't Wait any Longer to night After supper i am going to Marry mr. snehpets the Liquor You Sent Me is all Drunk Up And you Needn't send any More as the Voters say They Can't Vote for colonel vander Bum Because he hasn't a electo Ral Ticket And What's More they Say They Wouldn't If they Could.

helena snepets

That Is to Be before you
Receive This."

Blow after blow fell upon the colonel in such quick succession, that his energies were paralyzed, and he seemed to sink into a state of stupefaction. And Plutarch sympathized with him, as a faithful follower should have done.

At last the election was over, and a few days afterwards Colonel Vanderbomb, departing from the resolution he had formed in Philadelphia, sent over to the inn for all the newspapers. In the returns from the various states, there was not the slightest indication that he had carried a single one of them; and his votes, whenever any had been cast for him and recorded, were placed in the column headed "scattering."

"*Sic transit gloria mundi!*" exclaimed Numerius Plutarch, throwing up both his hands, and fixing his gaze upon the ceiling.

Colonel Vanderbomb sank back in his chair in silent meditation. Miss Flora buried her face in her scented handkerchief, and sobbed hysterically.

"You are ill," said Dr. Jalap, taking the colonel's hand and feeling his pulse.

"I am not!" replied the colonel. "Leave the room, all of you, except Kipps."

He was obeyed.

“Kipps!” said he, “is it too late for me to claim a seat in the legislature of Virginia or New York?”

“I suppose so, Gracchus, seeing that both seats have been filled. In both states a new election was ordered immediately.”

“Enough! I remember. What shall I do now? Submit?”

“No, Gracchus!”

“Never! Let me see. Shall I go North or South? I will order all my estates to be sold, but this. Here, Kipps, I will remain and work, and I shall be *felt*, FELT, Kipps! You will still be faithful, Kipps, and stand by your old friend?”

“Always, Gracchus, always!”

“Kipps! if I can't be president, I can be a second B—r! Do you understand?”

“I understand. Be revenged, Gracchus!”

“Kipps! Let us plot——”*

* Inasmuch as Colonel Vanderbomb's pursuit of the presidency terminates at this point, we are not required by our agreement with the publisher to attend him any farther. That many of his adventures, subsequently, in a new career, might be worthy of recording, there is no reason to doubt; but they would form another volume, under another title.

THE END.

