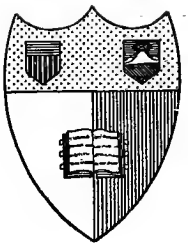

"OLD WRECKS," ALIAS CAPTAIN RICKETTS.

ADVENTURES

OF

OLD DAN TUCKER,

AND

HIS SON WALTER;

A TALE OF NORTH CAROLINA.

BY C. H. WILEY.

WITH NUMEROUS ILLUSTRATIONS,

BY FELIX O. C. DARLEY.

"Give me the broad prairie,
Where man, like the wind, roams impulsive and free;
Behold how its beautiful colours all vary,
Like those of the clouds or the deep-rolling sea?
A life in the woods, boys, is even as changing;
With proud independence we season our cheer;
And those who the world are for happiness ranging,
Won't find it at all if they don't find it here."

Life in the West. By GENERAL MORRIS.

LONDON:

WILLOUGHBY & CO., 22, WARWICK LANE.

LONDON:
PRINTED BY WILLOUGHBY & CO., 26, SMITHFIELD.

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ADVENTURES

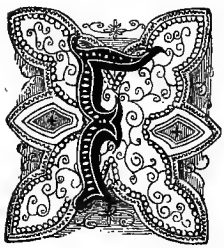
OF

OLD DAN TUCKER,

AND HIS SON WALTER.

CHAPTER I.

CAPTAIN RICHARD RICKETTS.—HIS ENTERPRISING DISPOSITION.—HIS IMPORTANCE IN UTOPIA.



EW sailors have visited the ports in North Carolina and not heard of Captain Richard Ricketts, famous for his deeds and many names. He was known abroad and to fame by the above appellation; but among his friends and familiars he was better known as "Rickety-Rackety," "Horse Racket," and "General Wrecks." Whence he derived the first of these names, is a matter involved in doubt; and in fact the whole of his early history is enveloped in the mists of antiquity, and little can be learned concerning it except by the dim and dubious light of tradition. It is said that early in life he was the captain of a small coasting vessel, which sometimes carried produce to market without the knowledge or consent of the original owner. On one occasion, a farmer who lived on the banks of a small, but navigable stream, found one morning that his crib had been emptied during the night; so he started with his overseer and a few neighbours, armed with guns, and soon

overtook the vessel of Captain Ricketts, which was moving slowly down the stream. The ship was speedily boarded, and the corn discovered; and any other but Captain Ricketts would have found it difficult to account satisfactorily for the manner in which his vessel had been loaded. Ricketts, however, with entire self-possession, declared that he was innocent. He said that during the night, and while he was creeping close in shore to find deep water, there came a sudden squall of wind, which blew over the planter's corn pen, tumbling the whole of its contents into his vessel, where he was obliged to keep it until he came to a landing!* This ingenious excuse not satisfying the indignant planter, the author of it was tied to a mast, and received on his bare back nine-and-thirty lashes; after which he was permitted, with an empty vessel, to continue on his course. From this time, disgusted with a sailor's life, he was never again seen in his old haunts, nor did any honest man regret his absence.

Due east of Albemarle Sound there is yet to be seen, on a narrow neck of land, a small cluster of stunted live oaks, from whose boughs hang long, luxuriant grey beards of moss, the apparent growth of centuries; and in the midst of these oaks stands an empty, crazy, antiquated tenement, looking quite as old and desolate as the neighbouring sand-hills. It is a roomy, but slight and simple, structure of scantling and boards, with a floorless porch on one side and a shed on the other. Near it are the remains of smaller buildings; and immediately in front, and under a large Druidical oak, is a shallow well, with a part of the frame, the sweepbeam, and the old bucket still remaining. Here it was that Captain Ricketts lived in state after having abandoned a life on the waves; and here it was he performed those exploits which have given him a name among posterity.

It is said of him that he was not a man of an imposing appearance, and that, though rich, his manners were simple and his apparel plain. He was of a quiet, thoughtful turn, with a shrunken, mummy-like body, and a face, the loose red skin of which was drawn into a variety of fanciful

* This is founded on fact.

puckers, in each one of which those curious in physiognomy could see the printed outline of some iniquitous plot. All his features were small, and wreathed with a perpetual smile; but his deeply sunken, restless, round, bullet-like eyes, glanced with a sinister light, causing in the object of their momentary gaze an unpleasant sensation. A dilapidated felt hat, with the rim falling about his face, covered a head slightly sprinkled with the frosts of age; his withered legs were cased in leather breeches; an old blue cloth coat, patched from collar to skirt, hung loosely on his back; and a tow shirt, and pair of stout, red leather shoes, completed his ordinary dress.

At the time when this story commences he led a rather lonely life; his household was small, consisting only of himself and an old negro woman. He was, however, the proprietor of the only store or grocery in that section of country; and this, together with the owner's wealth and importance, attracted much company to his house, which was, indeed, the head-quarters of all Utopia.* Increasing prosperity and the burdens of age at last prompted Captain Ricketts to change his mode of life. He became desirous of sharing his joys

* In Utopia neither their goods nor wives were held altogether in common by these people; but while they were profusely generous and hospitable, they entertained peculiar notions upon the subject of matrimony and the virtues it inculcates. Polygamy was not allowed; but in its stead there was a prevalent custom much more convenient to the bankers, and better suited to the changing tastes of the men: the women were treated kindly and as equals, but every man was considered as having the right to sell or swap his wife whenever he chose; and in this business there was a constant and lively trade.

Modern improvements, arts, and wants, have found their way among the bankers; and it is not to be supposed that the description herein given would at present suit them. There was a time, however, a period not remote, when, unfettered by the conventional rules of society, unaffected by the fluctuations of trade, the rise and fall of dynasties, and the irregularity of the seasons, they led a careless, indolent and happy life, strangers alike to the sweltering heats of summer and the snows of winter. Without fear or pride, malice or ambition, abundantly and easily supplied with food, and caring little for clothing, their existence had many charms for them; and would not be without its attractions in the view of a certain class of philosophers and philanthropists. Some of these had cast their eyes upon this country in former times, and from them it received the appellation of Utopia; a name which perhaps it merited as well as did the famous island of Sir Thomas More.

and cares with an intimate and friendly partner and companion, and accordingly began to look for a wife. Desiring to form a connexion with one who had been broken to the matrimonial yoke, and not having time to canvass the whole country, the captain gave notice of his wants, and requested all those who had wives to dispose of, to bring them to his store on a certain day.

CHAPTER II.

THE ARABS OF NORTH CAROLINA.—ARRIVAL OF STRANGERS IN UTOPIA.—RECEPTION OF DANIEL TUCKER AND THE "LITTLE POCOSIN."

THE first Saturday in the month of —, 17—, was the day appointed by Ricketts for the transaction of the important business mentioned in the preceding chapter. On that day a vast number of Arabs,* Bankers, or Utopians, as they were sometimes called, and of all ages and sexes, congregated at the house of their richest neighbour. The married men were attracted by the prospect of good prices for commodities of which

* The sand bar which stretches along the coast of North Carolina separates the ocean from a succession of sounds, the largest and most beautiful of which are those well known by the names of Albemarle, Pamlico, and Currituck. East of these inland seas is the bar, a waste and barren region, in some places bleak and wild as the deserts of Africa, and strangely in keeping with the majesty of that mighty deep whose awful grandeur is enhanced by the silence and desolation that reign along its borders. Even here, in this dreary, naked, and sterile region, are the homes and haunts of men, a race who have never been classified by science, and who, though sometimes called Arabs, and Bankers belong neither to the savage nor civilised state of society. They are generally a motley collection of idle, roving, harmless creatures, leading an easy, indolent life; free alike from the cruel, murderous, and plundering propensities of barbarians, and the more refined vices of polished communities. In the curious and beautiful little lakes of clear fresh water that gleam like mirrors in their arid and wild domain, myriads of fish abound; wild ducks, wild geese, and other sea-fowl in

they had tired; the matrons, in their best apparel, were allured by hopes of a wealthy husband and a fine house; the boys came for fun, and the maidens "to see and be seen." Few of the men came without a jug or empty bottle, and as it was an interesting and exciting occasion, frequent and deep potations were a necessary preliminary to the transaction of business. The matrons, and the maidens, too, indulged in an occasional glass; and soon the crowd, with its faces wild, swarthy and bearded, withered and smirking, brunette, merry and sparkling, presented a study for a painter, mingled as they were in a close, confused and tumultuous assembly; some boasting, cup in hand, of the beauties and excellencies of their better halves; and some playing the agreeable to the girls in their own rude and hearty way. Round old Ricketts there was a circle of men and women, all talking at once: while he seemed to have an ear for each, and kept his restless eyes glancing through the crowd. Suddenly the noise and confusion ceased; for the whole company, as if by instinct, had become aware of the presence of persons of a different nature. These were a man and a youth, the former rather advanced in years, and the latter apparently under twenty. The elder was a small spare man, with a head slightly sprinkled with grey hair, a mild blue eye, and good-humoured face; he wore a blue home-spun coat buttoned to the chin,

countless thousands cover the waters, and on these, which are easily taken, they chiefly live. In former times, however, they had another source of subsistence; a source from which they drew their main supplies of money, goods, and groceries. They followed the occupation of wreckers; a business whose prosperity was attested by the long dark line of keels, hulks, and dismantled vessels that covered the shore. It would seem that this fraternity would have found sufficient employment in the unavoidable casualties of the winds and waves on this disastrous and melancholy coast; but population and competition increased, and the cunning of man was sometimes employed to add to the natural horrors of the dreaded region. The public generally were not concerned in these wicked tricks; and rude as it was it would not have countenanced them; but those who used them were secret in their operations; and, as it happens in all communities, would often be respected for wealth which they had obtained by disreputable means. Thefts, of course, were common; and stranded cargoes rapidly diminished from the time they were landed on the beach till the day of sale; still the crews were always saved, and treated with a kindness and attention that often attached the bankers to them

a pair of linsey-woolsey trowsers, and shoes that glistened with new varnish. His open forehead, puckered mouth, and twinkling eye, indicated by their blended expression a kind and careless heart; but a close observer might have imagined that the clownishness of his manners was somewhat affected, and that occasionally the shadows of deep thought flitted over his brow. The character of the youth was harder to fathom, though it seemed stamped in his face. His features, taken singly were not handsome, but their united expression was extremely engaging, and with the compression of his lips, and his quick, uneasy motions, seemed to display a fiery, energetic temperament; his broad white forehead looked thoughtful, and his large, black, and lustrous eyes beamed with sentiment and melancholy. He was of medium height, slightly built, straight and active; his hair was long and dark, his hands small and delicate, and his voice so soft and musical that the few words he occasionally uttered riveted at once the attention of every hearer. His manners were awkward and stiff, and his conduct shy but not timid, while he gazed earnestly at the persons and things around him. While these new comers were thus the object of general attention, they did not escape the notice of Captain Ricketts, who greeted them with much apparent cordiality, and demanded their names.

"My name," said the elder, "is Daniel Tucker, and I am ginerally known as Pocosin Dan; this is my son Walter, and him we call the 'Little Pocosin.'" *

"Good names, very good names," said a man in the crowd; "but where the d——l did you come from, and what do you follow?"

"As the Injuns would say, we come from towards sundown," answered Dan; "and when we are travelin', we follow our noses."

"Whoorah for old Pocosin! At him ag'in, Ribs!" shouted the crowd, and the questioner continued:

"S'pose I cut your nose off, what will you follow then, old fiddler?"

* The Indian name for a small swamp.

"I 'd follow you with a stick till I could n't find the pieces," replied old Pocosin.

"Well done ag'in, stranger!" cheered the crowd. "Stand to your partner, old Bones!"

"It 's my opinion," said the person to whom this last epithet was applied; "it 's my opinion that these fellows are pirates or spies, and no better than they should be; and I move we pluck their feathers and send them home."

The stranger lad's hand was immediately at his breast, and the glitter of a dirk was visible; when his father, as if by accident, brushed his arm aside, saying with the utmost coolness and simplicity—

"Bless your soul, stranger, you 'd find precious lean pickin's, I assure you, for we are as poor as the turkey of Job; and I do n't know when I 've seen the colour of any one's brandy."

"Give him some liquor! Give both of 'em some liquor!" cried several voices; "they shall be treated well while here. Come up, strangers; the man that touches one of you will have to fight a crowd."

The younger Pocosin declined the invitation; but the elder touched Ricketts lightly, and, taking him aside, desired to speak with him in private. They were not long absent, and when they returned old Dan spoke as follows:—

"Gentlemen, and ladies too, I want you all to bear witness to a bargain between me and Captain Ricketts. He is to take my son Walter there as a clerk; to feed, clothe and lodge him well, and watch over his morals; and Walter on his part is to give his attention and time to the Captain's store, free of all charge, except what I 've mentioned. Is that the bargain, Captain?"

Ricketts answered in the affirmative, and Dan continued:—

"It 's farther agreed, that at the end of every month either party may be off from the bargain by giving four days' notice. Ain 't it so, Captain Ricketts?"

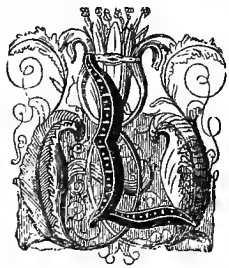
"It 's all as Mr. Pocosin says," answered Ricketts; "and now, my little friend," addressing Walter, "I want you to go right to work. Here 's pen and paper, and I want you

to take down the name, age, and appearance of all the good women who 've come to be sold. Put down everything, for I want to choose with my eyes open."

Walter seating himself behind a rude table, prepared to do as he was told; the crowd pressing around, and looking on with no little interest.

CHAPTER III.

WALTER COMMENCES HIS NEW ENGAGEMENT.—UTOPIAN WAY OF CHOOSING A WIFE.—THE CHOICE MADE BY CAPTAIN RICKETTS.



ITTLE Pocosin found his task no easy one, for in addition to the fact that half a dozen were talking to him at the same time, the Utopians indulged in tropes and figures and used a language with which he was not familiar; while his sensibilities were often shocked by the coarse manner in which husbands and women gave minute inventories of the virtues and excellencies of the latter. The Bankers were as moral in their own way as other people more refined, nor was Utopia the only place where wives were bought and sold; but it was the custom there to offer them in market overt, and to cry up their value in plain and honest language. It must not, however, be supposed that the women were ever traded off against their will, for their inclinations were generally consulted; though in some rare cases they were sacrificed to the ambition and avarice of their friends, as it sometimes happens to maidens out of Utopia. But to proceed with our narrative. Walter, after hours of labour, finished his task, and desired to know if he should report to Captain Ricketts alone, or in presence of the crowd. The captain and all his friends answered that the report must be read, and in presence of the assembly; and accordingly Walter began as follows:—

"Betsy, or 'Sun-flower,' of Currietuck, wife of Harry

Reefer. A swift-sailing craft, well rigged, but little ballast, and will not mind her helm—performed two voyages; as sound as ever. *Mem:* is twenty years old, has two children; talks and laughs loud, and has a wit more brazen than flashy; squints a little, and shows her teeth too often. Price, two bushels of sweet potatoes."

The Sun-flower was not entirely pleased at this description, and it might have been a warning to others to have their charms spoken of in private; but each confidently expected to hear herself highly praised. The clerk therefore proceeded:—

"Dorcas, called 'the Little Fifer,' and wife of Topsail Bennet. Her lips are as pleasant as sassafras in April, and her breath like the taste of racoon oysters; but she moves like a sand-fiddler,* and her tongue is a yard long. *Mem:* She is eighteen years old, been married four months. The first month she called her husband 'Honey;' the next, she found him a 'Good-for-nothing;' the next, 'a beast;' and the next, 'a monster.' Price, two shillings and sixpence."

"Sally, called the 'Pearl of Utopia,' and wife of Canty Snip; is sixteen years old, sings well, but sews indifferently, and is better at a reel than a roast. *Mem:* Looks as if she were fond of rum and ribbons. Price, seven quarts of rum, and one ham of bacon."

"Peach Blossom, widow; who says she is about twenty-one years old, though she may be thirty, and looks forty-five."

"Stop!" interposed Captain Ricketts: "I 've told everybody that I did 'nt want a young woman. Read about the old ones."

"Most of them have just been married," answered Walter; "but there are a few who are not so young. Here is one called Hagar, aged forty-five, and wife of Ike Harvey, as he calls himself. She can sew, knit, spin and cook well, and has been twice married."

"What 's the price?" demanded Ricketts.

* A small animal of the shell-fish kind, and which abounds on the beach. Its motions are extremely odd and amusing; it never turns when it wishes to go in any direction, but will run sideways or backwards; and when once it starts, no obstacle stops it. It is the terror of ladies.

"Five gallons of rum, and one pound sterling for her and her child," cried a voice in the crowd.

"How old is the child?" asked the captain.

"She was thirteen last May," said Ike, "and can do all that her mother can, and more besides; and is the most quiet, tidy, sweet, lovin' little crittur in the world. She 's precious good, and there ain't the like of her in all Utopia."

"I want no daughter," replied Ricketts, pettishly: "they 'd break any merchant in the kingdom."

"She 's not my child," said Ike; "but I love her for all that, and I 'll keep her, if you say so."

"I cannot leave my child; I will die before I 'll leave my child!" cried a female voice: "it 's bad enough, Ike, to leave you—you who I have so long served and nursed as if I were your slave, you who never in your life had any reason—"

"Oh, rattle-snakes and simmons, brimstone and alligators!" shouted Ike; "I want none of your whinny-whannies here, my duck, and so say no more about it. I 'll take the gal and raise her like a lady, and in a few years—"

"Please, please let me stay with mother," cried the girl, weeping and sobbing, and clinging to her parent. "Oh, please, sir, take me; and I 'll never give you any trouble, and never ask for anything as long as I live."

The crowd began to melt, and so did Ike, for, taking hold of the girl, he said—

"Captain Ricketts, you do n't know what a treasure she is. See here, her cheeks are like the skin of a ripe peach, her lips is sweet as a snow-bank in August, and jest look at them eyes! She 's a cherub, she 's a saint, sir! O, I 'd rather hear her sweet little voice nor all the fiddles in creation!"

The girl clung still closer to her mother, blushing, trembling, and shrinking from the gaze of the crowd, as they cried—

"Take her, captain, take her, and make no more fuss about it."

"I cannot give any money," said Ricketts.

"Say ten shillings," replied Ike.

"Not a cent: I 'll give the five gallons of rum."

"It 's a bargain and a 'nation hard one," exclaimed Ike,

whose face indicated an appetite for whose gratification more than wives are sometimes sacrificed.

Walter, sick of his task, rose and joined his father, and the crowd began vociferously to call on Ricketts to make a display of his gallantry. The little old man seemed in a prodigiously lively humour, and with great apparent boldness advanced to embrace his wife, but she contemptuously shook him off; and, casting a parting glance on Ike, took her daughter and withdrew. It was now late in the day, and the bridegroom, after repeated and unequivocal hints to that effect, invited his guests to spend the evening with him in making merry. Of course the invitation was accepted, though it was understood that most or all of the men would have to sleep on the sand; not a dear price to them for one of their merry entertainments.

Some of the girls now went to gather flowers wherewithal to deck themselves and friends; others assisted the young men to sweep off the loose sand from the hardest and smoothest part of the beach; and the old men and old women tried in various ways to make themselves useful.

CHAPTER IV.

A BALL IN UTOPIA.—GLOOMY REFLECTIONS AT PARTING BETWEEN DAN AND HIS SON WALTER.—THE INFLUENCE OF DAN'S INSTRUMENTAL MELODY.—DR. M'DONALD RIBS AND MISS POLLY DAWSON.

EARLY in the night the Bankers' ball opened; and though there were in the crowd many a rude and vicious heart, and many a devious and darkly brooding spirit, the assembly and the scene were well calculated to inspire in a stranger and a mere looker on, the most pleasing and romantic thoughts. The serene blue heavens were their pavilion; the fresh cool breezes of the evening breathed over the plains the aroma of sweet shrubs and flowers, and the lamp of goblins and

fairies, the full-orbed moon, hung in mid air, pouring over land and sea a flood of soft delicious light that clothed them in a drapery wild and dreamy. The surf broke gently and slowly on the white beach, the spray sparkling with a thousand tender hues; a single mocking-bird chaunted his lively airs from a solemn and venerable oak, whose drooping branches, hoary with moss, swept the ground; and the measured sound of light and nimble feet, the music of violins, and the merry voices of girls decked with garlands were mingled in the air. It was a time in which the soul throws off its mould of earth, and, feeling its kindred with the fantastic spirits then abroad, sweeps on the pinions of thought through bright, imagined realms, and holds amorous dalliance with the fair, sweet creatures of another world.

There were, however, but two in that coarse, unlettered assembly who seemed to feel the influence of the hour and the scene; these were the two Tuckers, who, sitting by themselves upon the beach, gazed for some time in silence upon the broad, bright, unruffled waters. Each appeared to be absorbed with reflections tender and pensive, but the elder, soon recovering from his reverie, rallied the other upon his extreme dejection.

"Come, Walter," said he, laying his hand on the lad's shoulder, "this is not a time for gloomy thoughts. What do you say to a wild caper on the sand with these barbarians?"

"I can 't dance to-night," replied Walter briefly, and without averting his eyes from the water.

"Well, you can at least see others dance; come, we are losing all the fun."

"I 'd rather sit here."

"And how long do you suppose you have already sat here, my boy? The moon was nearly straight above us when we first came here, and now see, she is half-way down the heavens."

The young man turned his eyes in the direction of the orb alluded to, but gave no answer, while the other, in a kinder and more serious tone continued—

"Walter, my son, there is something preying on your

A BALL BY MOONLIGHT.

mind, and I take it as a hardship that you do not tell me what it is. You were always wont to unbosom yourself to me, and why do you not do it now?"

"To tell you the truth," said Walter, "I feel sad at the prospect of parting from you. I was just now thinking about to-morrow, when you will be far away, and I shall be here among these strange people, without a friend or an acquaintance; and you too will be alone."

"Then you do not want to stay?" answered the elder, inquiringly.

"Yes, sir, yes, if it will pleasure you; but—but—"

"But what, my son? Speak out candidly and fearlessly."

"I do not like these people."

"Your stay will be short."

"They don't seem honest to me: I don't know why it is, but I feel horrified at the idea of remaining with them. True, it is a beautiful place—why do you laugh?"

"I laughed at your odd fancy," said the elder Tucker; "what beauty is there in these naked and barren sand-hills?"

"Oh, much—a great deal of beauty to me! They look so wild, and bleak, and new to me; and then there is something so grand and noble in the ocean, that somehow or other I fairly love it, and could live here for ever if it were not for these horrid people. The ocean seems to me like a friend, a great and awful being; and never, never shall I forget it."

"Mighty souls hold sympathy with mighty elements," said the senior; "and thus the great have ever loved the ocean. They imagine that it is boundless and free as their own hearts—it is the image of their thoughts. But to return to our subject: I have already told you, that some of these people are thieves, and all of them are rude and illiterate. The exact character of old Ricketts I do not know; but notwithstanding the strong reasons that have induced me to place you with him for a short time, I will not urge you to remain. Above all, I again enjoin it upon you to disregard our contract—to disregard all agreements, and quit him the very moment you catch him engaged in a dishonest act. Now, my son, speak freely and truly, do you wish to remain?"

"I do; indeed I do—and you do not understand me. I prefer to remain here; but nature, you know, will have its way, and I am obliged to feel sad for a time. My reason satisfies me that it is best for me to fulfil your wishes, but my heart will rebel for a while."

"My wishes are all for your good," said the other; "and now that your mind is made up, let me impress on you a few additional precepts. Attend strictly and closely to your business, and treat all politely, but form no intimacies and no hatreds. Never permit yourself to imitate the manners or use the vulgar language of these people, and do not for a moment forget that you and they are different beings. Do not complain of toil, of scant diet, and a hard bed; these will but strengthen you. But read, as much as you can, the few books which you have; remember me; remember your own destiny; and remember God, to whose good keeping I commend you. And now let us return, for these people will suspect us if we remain long away. It is easy for you to join to some extent in their *innocent* amusements, and yet not be like one of them. The great art of living with low-bred and vulgar people consists in this: be neither dignified nor intimate, too distant nor too free. For myself, to please them and open the way for kindness to you, I will put on the buffoon, and give them a taste of my musical powers."

There were few men in his day superior to the senior Tucker in the art divine of discoursing instrumental melody; and no fiddler ever excited more rapturous applause than that with which he was greeted on the sand-hills of modern Utopia. The men thought he had a wizard chained within his instrument, and honoured him accordingly; while the young maidens clustered about the junior Tucker with a manner more tender and respectful than that which they displayed towards less fair and ruder beaux.

It would seem to be one of the conditions of every society, that it should contain what are technically called a belle and a beau: that is, a lady and a gentleman who are each the admiration and delight of all the young people of the opposite sex, and the object of the envy and hatred of their own.

These characters are, too, in all ages and countries, formed of the same original materials; that is to say, whatever be their mode of exhibiting it, the male must be essentially a vain, conceited popinjay, with more feathers than brains, and more impudence than worth; and the lady more remarkable for pertness and ribbons, a loud voice and a bold stare, than for nimbleness of wit, sweetness of temper, and grace or dignity of manners. Dr. T. M'Donald Ribs, the most cultivated, physically and intellectually, of all the inhabitants of Utopia, was a young man who had succeeded in winning his own intense admiration, and that of all the ladies. He had, in his extreme youth, been blest with the advantages of polished society; in other words, he had lived in the office of an apothecary, in one of the settlements on the Albemarle; and had even skirmished on the frontier of literature, and carried off prisoners a few scraps of learning. Having no family influence, by the help of which to push his fortunes in an aristocratic community, and being without money or character, he set out on foot to explore the country; and finding that he could be a great man in Utopia, he there located and commenced the practice of medicine. He was one of those who, when among their superiors in rank, rail against the conventional rules of that society from which their vulgarity excludes them, and when with those like themselves, assume the airs and ape the manners of higher and foreign circles. This Caliban of the parlour and Chesterfield of the kitchen, exhibited among his equals a fastidious taste and a fiery temper, never having been known to be pleased with his food or lodging, or to agree with any one in sentiment upon any subject. He was always talking of the manner in which people lived, dressed, and ate in other places; and he studied to be thought eccentric and bold. In appearance he was not particularly handsome, being tall, spare, and bony, with long, straight hair, that fell over his shoulders, and had nearly the hue of the sand-banks on which he resided. His eyes were of a very light blue, his nose short and crispy, his chin, long and sharp, and his mouth broad and protuberant. Miss Polly Dawson was certainly very good looking; indeed,

she was handsome in form and feature, and, for a belle, had a wonderfully low, sweet voice, and manners sedate and coy, except in the dance, when she seemed to have taken for her model Cuttie Sark, in the vision of Tam O'Shanter. Of course, as in duty bound, she was more outlandishly dressed than any of her sex; but, in spite of a double quantity of calico, a triple quantity of ribbons, and a quadruple supply of flowers, her full, ripe, and elastic form, her finely chiseled features, her rich complexion, and piercing black eyes, fully entitled her to the distinction she had acquired. The suns of eighteen summers had matured and expanded in its richest glory this wild blossom of Utopia, and the warmest glow of life was swelling in her veins and burning in her heart. Ceremony being little regarded among the Bankers, Polly, with all her maiden modesty, was unable to hide her preference for Walter Tucker, upon whom her marked attentions drew the awful and indignant scowl of Dr. Ribs.

Walter, all unconscious of the storm gathering over his head, began to lose his melancholy in the pleasant society of his fair and tender partner; Polly Dawson, delighted no less with the consciousness of producing envy and mortification, than with hopes of a new and brilliant conquest, became more and more kind and attentive to her new acquaintance; and the crowd, enlivened by the music of old Tucker, and the excitement of the dance, had little time or inclination to notice the whims, or sympathise with the sufferings of the outraged beau. That notable person having in vain exhausted every artifice in attempting to excite the remorse of the belle, having frowned and scowled upon, walked round, and rubbed against Walter Tucker, to little purpose, became at last so charged with wrath that, without the slightest provocation, he fell furiously upon a sallow and unhappy-looking lad, with an inflated spleen, and but for the interference of the crowd would have speedily sent the poor boy to his final reckoning. As is usual, however, in such cases, the whole assembly ran together—every man grappled with his nearest neighbour, and groans, blows, oaths, and shouts were mingled together. No one had the slightest knowledge of the cause

or progress of the fray; no one knew friend from foe, and soon the whole crowd were rolling together pell-mell in the sand, wild with rage and whiskey, and conscious only of a pleasant and exhilirating excitement. This paroxysm at last exhausted itself—there was a general reconciliation and treat, and all that was known of the matter was that Dr. Ribs had acted with distinguished spirit and prowess. It was understood that he had, for a slight insult, chastised several bullies, whose names were not known, and his importance was, therefore, much augmented. In a better humour now with himself, and with everybody else, the Doctor joined heartily in the sports of the evening, and the dance was recommenced with enthusiasm and vigour.

CHAPTER V.

"OLD WRECKS" SHOWS THAT HIS NAME IS APPROPRIATE.—THE SHIPWRECK.—THE COURAGE OF OLD DAN, AND THE GENEROSITY OF WALTER.—THE PASSENGERS SAVED.—THE SUPERSTITION OF THE SAILORS.

ONE person, and only one, at the ball alluded to in the preceding chapter, observed that as the night waned there were visible indications of a change in the weather. For some cause best known to himself old Ricketts had for some time past been a watcher through the night; and now as the moon disappeared in a thick bank of clouds in the western horizon, and the wind freshened, the countenance of the captain assumed an expression unusually cheerful. Encouraging his guests to continue their revelry, he and his old cook stole off to the stable, from which they led out a pony,* tethered him,

* It is the general belief in North Carolina that a custom similar to that we have attributed to Ricketts gave a name to a noted portion of the State. The region of country due east of Albemarle Sound, and between that and the ocean, is called Nag's Head; a name not unknown to the politicians of the country, as applications have been made to Congress for appropriations to open an inlet, in this section across the bar of the ocean.

and fastening a large lantern to his head, turned him loose. The captain then, enjoining it on the negress to keep the horse in motion, returned to the house, apparently delighted at the deepening darkness, and the gale that now threatened a speedy termination to the sports of his guests. The heavens were soon overspread with clouds, the night grew pitchy dark, and the wind became so violent that the women and sober men crowded into the house, the younger Tucker almost trembling with awe as he heard the roar of the chafed and angry ocean. He thought of those who might be out in such a storm, and he was wondering at the hardihood of the mariner who could ride undismayed upon the fearful deep when lashed into fury by the tempest, when a sudden exclamation threw the whole company into commotion. He was at first alarmed with a vague suspicion of disaster, but his fears were quickly dispelled by the cheerful countenances around him, and the wild exclamations of delight which burst from the lips of all, both male and female. For himself, he could see nothing at which to rejoice, while he was still more bewildered by the cries, "She 's on the right track!" "She 's in the Devil's Basin now!" "She 's swamped! she 's swamped!" which were uttered by the crowd as they fairly tumbled out at the doors and windows. Rushing into the yard himself, he found his father, who, taking him by the hand, said hastily, and with emotion—

"Farewell, my dear boy, we may not meet again! There is a ship aground, and I am going with Captain Ricketts in a boat to see what aid we can render to those on board. Good bye! they are waiting for me."

"I must go too," said Walter, seizing his father's arm with both his hands; "you 'll be lost—you 'll certainly be lost, and I will perish with you!"

It is said that an old banker, in former times, kept a nag or pony which on dark nights he would drive about the beach, tethered, with a lantern fastened to his head; and the "bobbing up and down" of this light would deceive sailors, and decoy their vessels over the bar, causing them to be wrecked.

From its salubrious climate and facilities for sea bathing, Nag's Head has now become a fashionable resort in summer; and at that season may there now be found elegant people and good society.

THE SHIPWRECK.

"Nonsense, Walter! nonsense!" said Dan. "Release me, my boy; many an unhappy man may be drowned while you delay me thus!"

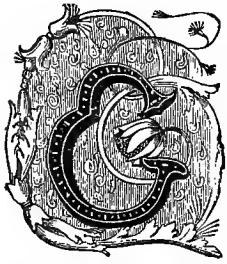
"Come on! all hands aboard!" shouted those who were manning a boat on the beach; and the elder Tucker, with Walter still clinging to his arm, and whom he in vain endeavoured to shake off, hurried to the shore. Here he had little time to hesitate, for the young man was in the boat before him; and soon the hardy bankers, chanting a wild air, and indulging in ribald jests and oaths of the most shocking profanity, were riding on the billows. The wind blew from the shore, and had somewhat lulled, but still there was a heavy sea rolling; and as the boat rocked to and fro, now moving slowly and almost perpendicularly upward, and anon darting swiftly down between the yawning waves, Walter Tucker nearly lost his consciousness, and was still clinging to the gunwales when he found himself safely by the side of the grounded ship. A shout of joy from those on board the latter brought him to his senses, and he soon forgot his fears as he began to feel for those whom he had come to relieve. The ship had struck upon the sand; and while the passengers stood trembling and weeping on deck, parents and children, wives and husbands clinging to and embracing each other, the sailors were busily engaged in lightening the vessel. Most of these latter, expecting to be lost, had got drunk, and their wild shouts mingled with the fierce roar of the waters, and the piteous moan of the beasts that were thrown into the deep to be devoured while yet alive by the greedy sharks that were shoaling round the ship. A leak had sprung in the hold—deeper and deeper the vessel was settling in the water, and wave after wave swept the deck, when the passengers began to crowd into the yawl and the pilot-boat which had come to their relief. The last to leave the ship were two young persons, a male and female, who threw their arms about each other and seemed utterly powerless when told that one of them would have to wait for the return of the boats. There was no time to be lost in efforts to separate the couple; and Walter Tucker, springing out of the boat,

whose complement was not full, forced the tender and generous passengers into it, and remained with the sailors, hardly expecting ever again to see the land. It seemed to him that every wave would dash the ship to pieces, and he was growing so numb that he could hardly cling to a mast as the waters broke over him, when his father's hand was laid upon his shoulder.

The Captain, stationing the mate with a guard of sailors by the goods on shore, accompanied every boat to the vessel, and did not cease his exertions until he had landed almost his entire cargo. On his return from his last trip he was indignant at finding that his guard had deserted their trust; and following them to the house, his indignation was turned into astonishment at what he heard. The superstitious sailors averred that they were in a land of witches, and that several bales of goods had suddenly, and without any visible external agency, glided swiftly off and disappeared; some of the passengers confirmed the statement, and many of the bankers themselves were in a state of great alarm, charging the crew with dealings with mysterious and familiar spirits. The whole company were astounded and frightened at the incredible stories which they heard, and all marched out together to witness the phenomenon which had so terrified the mate and his companions. The morning had, however, now shown its cheerful face in the east; and the goblins of the beach, if any there were, had flown with the shades of night, under whose mantle they had played their devilish tricks.

CHAPTER VI.

A DISPLAY OF UTOPIAN HOSPITALITY.—DESCRIPTION OF THE PASSENGERS.—CHESTER ROWTON EXCITES THE CURIOSITY OF THE ELDER TUCKER.



GREATLY to their surprise, the passengers who had trusted themselves to the ill-fated Syren found that they were among a kind and considerate people, who ministered to their wants with a tact and delicacy not to be expected in a race so rude. Some of those who had participated in the frolic of the preceding night, were imbued with the most generous and hospitable feelings; others expected, not unreasonably, to lose nothing by their attentions; and all seemed to feel for and sympathise with the forlorn and suffering strangers. Captain Ricketts, acting as a sort of commissioner of wrecks, gave his immediate attention to the cargo, busying himself in having it placed in a place of safety on the beach, and sheltered by a temporary shed. Dr. Ribs, on the other hand, assuming to himself the office of master of ceremonies and dispenser of hospitalities, with all the pompous courtesy which he could command, gave the strangers a hearty welcome to Utopia, assured them that their condition should be rendered as pleasant as possible, and in companies of twos, threes, and fours assigned them to the charge of his wealthiest neighbours. He himself was a boarder, he said; but, in the name of his absent and generous host, he would take the liberty of offering the shelter of his roof and the hospitality of his board to Robert and Alice Bladen, who, as he judged by their dress and manners, were of superior rank, and would be pleased to be within the reach of a man of the Doctor's importance and refinement. Now, Miss Polly Dawson had

concluded to make a similar offer, and she attached herself warmly to the girl, at the same time that Dr. Ribs fastened himself to the gentleman; while perhaps each one was mainly solicitous about the person who was to accompany the guest thus beset with entreaties. The young strangers, who were brother and sister, and were the same persons whose attachment for each other had been so conspicuous on the night preceding—could not agree as to the place where they should take up their temporary abode. Robert Bladen, pleased with the black eyes of the fair Polly Dawson, was for accompanying her, and indeed took the liberty of distinguishing her with such compliments and marks of favour as fairly made her heart dance within her. His sister, however, filled with vague fears and suspicions, was unwilling to move from her present location, protected as it would be by the presence of the sailors. She had, too, ascertained that the clerk in the establishment was the person who had displayed so much gallantry on the night before; and his conduct then, together with his face and manners, and those of his father, seemed to vouch for the respectability of his employer. She wished, besides, to be with some one of her own sex in whom she could confide, and such an one she thought she had found in the little daughter of Ricketts' new bride; a quiet girl, in whom the womanly sagacity or whim of Alice had quickly read an uncommon character. Of course the lady's wishes had to be obeyed, but the belle of Utopia had no reason to complain of the ill-success of her charms. She attracted the attention of Chester Rowton, a person of more elegant manners and distinguished air than any of those who had landed on the beach, and a young gentleman who would have cut no mean figure in any circle. He looked not more than twenty-five, had a decided Norman cast of features, was refined in conversation, and seemed a thorough man of the world. His attentions to Polly Dawson were more playful, and not so marked as those of Robert Bladen; in fact he appeared so devoted to the latter's sister, that no other object could fix his serious regard. He at first desired to remain with her at Ricketts', but finding or seeming to find that the accommodations were not

sufficient, he bade her a reluctant farewell, and accompanied the delighted beauty of the beach. His baggage was shouldered by the latter's father and brothers; the other strangers followed their respective hosts; and Walter Tucker and his father had now time to scan more closely the features of Bladen and his sister, and to learn something of their history and destination. The young man was a stout counterpart of his sister, with fine, curly, chestnut hair; an open, generous, confiding countenance; and the modest, manly demeanor of one who had not seen more than twenty summers, had known little of the intrigues of courts, the corruptions of cities, or the general heartlessness of the world.

His sister could not have been more than sixteen years old; and there was yet in her manners much of the careless, artless girl; while her form, which was extremely light, airy and graceful, had not yet assumed its full proportions. She was not beautiful: no one thought her beautiful when he first looked at her face, and yet no one ever left her after an hour's acquaintance without having on his heart a sweet impression which long years would not erase. Truth, tenderness, and innocent vivacity sparkled in her light blue eyes; her face, which was not large, shone with a light so celestial, that the form of her features remained unnoticed; while her voice, in all its various intonations, was always low, and soft, and musical. Full of timidity and genuine modesty, she was an utter stranger to the artifices of her sex, and while in every word she spoke, in every act, and look, motion, and laugh, she was violating some cardinal rule of conventional etiquette, she was ever graceful, ever interesting, ever clothed in the drapery of spotless purity. She and her brother soon informed their entertainers that they had relations in the Province of North Carolina, who stood high in the court of Governor Martin, where they intended first to go, and where it was the purpose of Chester Rowton to remain. Of this latter, who had excited the curiosity of the elder Tucker, they only knew that he was of noble birth and enterprising character, and expected to find in North Carolina a field for the exercise of his genius.

CHAPTER VII.

SCENES IN UTOPIA.—DR. M'DONALD RIBS IN LOVE WITH ALICE BLADEN.—PROVES HIMSELF A BAD GEOGRAPHER.—ALICE BECOMES INTERESTED IN WALTER.

PERSON'S name becomes so identified with his character, that the two often seem to be remarkably well suited to each other, although we have the authority of Shakspere for the assertion that there 's nothing in a name. It may be so; but sometimes the name, even to a stranger, will convey a tolerably correct impression of the person who owns it; and such was certainly the case with regard to the beau of Utopia. His original Christian name was Timothy, which while a boy was always abbreviated into Tim; a designation which offended his vanity when he grew up to man's estate, and which he then changed to the more euphonious appellation of T. M'Donald. The Ribs still remained, though somewhat ennobled by the aristocratic prefix, even as the protuberant ossifications of his body were rendered less ridiculous by the dignity of his carriage and the grace of his manners. In truth, the Doctor was essentially a man of bones—aye, of bones, which if found among fossil remains would have puzzled the most skilful naturalist; while that part of him through which it is said the evil one makes his approaches, was extremely meagre. By the benevolent wisdom of Providence, however, he was endowed with a high opinion of his personal attractions, and his egotism furnished him with a shield as impervious to the shafts of ridicule as the hide of a rhinoceros to the stings of a mosquito. He was, too, somewhat fluent of speech, and on all occasions and on all subjects mustered into service the high-sounding techni-

calities of his profession; a number of which he had picked up at various times, and stowed away in his memory. Taking it into his head to become desperately enamoured of Alice Bladen, he spent the Sabbath with her, entertaining her with a history and description of the region in which she was then placed. She was not displeased at his attentions, furnishing as they did food for mirth, while his knowledge of localities enabled her to gratify her curiosity in regard to the country and people of Utopia. Fascinated with the wild and desolate features of the place, each one of which was new to her, she spent the day in rambling about, imagining herself in the great desert of Sahara; while a group of high, steep, bleak hills of loose and naked sand, on the sides of which half naked, sun-embrowned and savage-looking children were climbing and tumbling, strengthened the illusion.

"What a sweet place!" exclaimed Alice, as she approached the hills; "how I should love to live here among these wild and wandering Arabs, knowing no one, and no one knowing me or my language."

"The Arabs speak English," said Doctor Ribs, "though it 's somewhat tinctured, as we doctors say; nor are they so wild as you suppose."

Alice stretched her eyes, and some of the others looked curiously at each other, when the beau continued:

"I'm an Arab myself; not born here, it 's true, but this is now my home; and I 'm sure I 'm as tame as a pet cat."

"What on earth do you mean?" exclaimed Alice, astonished at the Doctor's language, and infinitely amused at his smirking manner.

"This place," said Walter Tucker, "is called Arabia, Miss Alice; and the Doctor thinks you are alluding to it, and not to Arabia proper."

"Arabia proper!" exclaimed the beau, "what do *you* know about this country? I 'spose you think that your own swampy country is better than this; but I 'd have you know that this is as proper an Arabia as any in the world; and I ought to know, for I 've travelled *some*."

"Were you ever in the East?" asked Alice.

"This is east, Miss," replied the Doctor; "but I 've been North as far as Currituck Inlet, and that 's what few Arabs can say."

"I should think so," said Walter Tucker; at which Robert Bladen and his sister gave him a very pleasant look.

"And this is called Arabia?" said Alice, after a pause. "It does indeed look like that country which from a child has filled my imagination with romantic visions. Brother, please let 's visit it."

"Wait till I am disappointed in love," answered he; and instantly observing a crimson flush on his sister's cheek, he continued: "I have heard it said by a wise old friend of ours, that the East possesses a peculiar fascination for disappointed lovers."

"And he might have added for disappointed politicians also," said Walter; "somehow or other, whether it be from the pictures we see of it, or from some other cause, we have an opinion that it is a land of repose."

"I should not think that you learned that from its history," replied Bladen; "for it has been the scene of mighty events and terrible convulsions."

"And perhaps for that very reason," said Alice, "we think it to be a land of rest. It is like an old man, whose youth was agitated with a whirlwind of passion, until the strong energies of his nature were exhausted, and he was left without emotion, without love, or fear, or hope, ambition, envy or hatred, a calm, quiet, contemplative spectator of the course of things. The passions, like a great sirocco, have swept over that land, and left it; and now among its broken arches, its tottering columns, and its piles of ruins, is the most appropriate place to sit and think on the text of the Preacher, 'Vanity of vanities; all is vanity.'"

"Truly, sister, you are no indifferent preacher yourself, and I hardly know what to think of you. Travel, and the excitement of new scenes, have wakened a new genius within you."

"I feel astonished at myself," said Alice, "for ideas which

have long been floating indistinctly in my mind have suddenly assumed distinct and palpable shapes; and, what is more, I can now express myself more fluently and eloquently than I formerly could."

"That reminds me of a figure which I have heard father use," spoke Walter Tucker; "he says that when we are young the knowledge of certain subjects is perceived by the mind as the eyes see a far-off continent. For a long time there is before us the dim outline of a huge mass of something, we do n't know what. Gradually it becomes more and more distinct; then we see the mountains, hills and plains; and at last the country, with all its colours, shapes and appearances, lies before us."

"Did your father ever send you to school?" asked Alice Bladen, looking at Walter with a kindly inquisitive look.

"He has taught me himself," answered the lad; "and ever since I could read I 've been wanting to visit those countries about which you spoke. I should feel so free in those lonely deserts, and would have so much to think about while wandering among ruins that look like the wreck of an old world! I have heard father say that what they call the barbarous state is the most natural state of mankind, and that this is their first and last condition. He says that nations are like children; when they are infants, they are too innocent, and happy, and ignorant to care for those things which engage them in manhood, and when they are old they are too wise. But however this be, I always had a desire to visit the east."

"And so have I now," said Robert Bladen, the party having reached the top of the highest hill: "I should like to go that way as far as my fatherland. See, sister, what a wide waste of water lies between us and our home."

"But the sea seems to bring us close by it," answered Alice; "for there are no hills, and houses, and countries between, and on the banks of this very water stands our dear old house. It seems to me that I can almost see it in the far horizon, peeping out from the trees that surround it. I do believe, in fact, I see something; yes, do but see, it 's a ship. it 's a ship! How small and white, how beautiful, it looks!

One could almost imagine that it is the tiny and snowy barge of some little fairy, taking a pleasure trip on the water."

"I had rather imagine it to be a vessel from home, and filled with our friends," said Robert. "I wonder if it will come near enough for us to hail it: let's hold out our handkerchiefs."

"That ship," said Doctor Ribs, "is many miles from here, and if it seems only as large as your hand, how do you suppose those on board can see your handkerchief? It would be dangerous for it to come nearer than it is, though I have no doubt it is bound for Edenton or New Berne."

"I hope so," replied Robert; "and then we shall soon hear from home."

"It 's only one day behind us, brother," said Alice, laughing.

"No matter," answered Robert; "it must have left since we did; and besides, you know we were unusually long on the route."

As if impatient to start off immediately for New Berne, whither he was bound, Robert Bladen now descended the hill, and with him the rest of the company, who by this time began to have an appetite for dinner.

CHAPTER VIII.

MUSTER ROUND THE WATCH FIRE ON THE BEACH.—OLD DAN TELLS A TALE.—THE STORY OF JACK HAWSER.—UTOPIAN SPRITES.

DURING the day which followed his disaster, the captain of the lost vessel had heard many strange reports about the frequent appearance and evil practices of witches and devils on the beach. He himself gave but little credit to these stories, which he considered as the offspring of ignorance and superstition; but his crew were not so incredulous, and most heartily wished themselves safely away. In the course of the even-

ing, Chester Rowton and several of the bankers came to the head-quarters of Utopia, and it was agreed that all the men should that night keep watch about the stranded goods. Accordingly, the air being cool, a fire was kindled on the beach; and Walter Tucker and his father, who had not yet taken his leave, together with no small number of Arabs, the sailors, and Captain Ricketts, seated themselves about the cargo. For awhile the company were lively and mirthful, but as the night waned, and drowsy feelings came on apace, various kinds of amusement were proposed for the purpose of keeping themselves awake. Some were for a dance: there was a clamorous call for old Pocosin Dan and his fiddle, but Tucker, being averse to such sports on the Sabbath, desired to amuse the company with a story. "If you will keep silent," said he, "and listen to me, I will tell you a tale which I heard many years ago, and which concerns the very business we are on to-night.

"You must know," continued he, "that the Devil keeps watch in every man's heart, even as we are watching these goods; and the moment you begin to harbour an evil wish, he smiles upon you in the shape of some pleasing hope, pats you on the back and whispers in your ear, 'that 's a bright thought, my good fellow; follow it up.' In this way a man may unawares make a bargain with the old enemy, and before he knows it, his soul will be sold and paid for. Whenever a bad idea pops into your mind, you may know Satan is about: and if everybody would recollect this, and act accordingly, there would 'nt be so many sinners lost. Now it so happened that there once lived in England, in the old country, a very sprightly lad, whose name was Jack Hawser, and whose parents were very poor, but honest and pious. Of course, little Jack from the time he was a child looked with wonder and admiration at the rich people about him, and he was always thinking how happy he would be if he only had a large sum of money. One day—Jack was then nearly a grown man—the minister of the parish took for his text that passage of Scripture where it is asked, 'What would it profit a man to gain the whole world and lose his own soul?' and

at the conclusion of the discourse he told his friends to go home and think of and answer in their own hearts this solemn question, 'Will you give your soul to God, to be saved in heaven, or sell it to the devil for worldly gain?' Jack thought a great deal on this matter; he argued it with himself, and every time he did so the blessings of a large fortune would become more and more enticing. He wanted to be a great merchant, and have ships at sea; and he thought at last that he would sell himself for a little while, and after he had got to be rich and prosperous he would repent and try to be saved. As soon as he came to this conclusion, he felt certain that he would find a sum of money in a certain place in this country; but as his parents would not let him go to sea, he ran away, went to Liverpool, and there bound himself to the captain of a merchantman, which was to sail with a rich cargo to America. Well, the vessel started; and young Jack Hawser, in whom one evil deed prepared the way for another, began to reflect on the great amount of money the captain would receive for his goods, and how easy it would be to raise a mutiny in the ship and take it. He grew worse and worse; when he got to New York, he spent all his little earnings for drink and lewd women, and by the time his master was ready to sail had become a thorough villain. The captain had sold all his goods for money, and wishing to carry home a load of produce from the Southern provinces, set sail for the West Indies. The crew mutinied; the captain, mate, steward, and several sailors were put to death, and thrown overboard, and Jack Hawser and his assistants became masters of the vessel and its contents. Then it was that Jack began to harbour more wicked designs, and to lay plots for the destruction of his companions, so that he might have the ship and all its money to himself. While he was thus thinking on this matter he remembered the preacher's sermon, and wished that the devil might now come to his assistance. Suddenly the stars and moon disappeared, and terrible black clouds rolled through the air, almost touching the masts of the ship; the winds blew furiously, and the ship rolled and pitched among waves as big as

JACK HAWSER AND THE STRANGER.

the largest mountain. It got to be so dark too, that no one could see the face of his nearest neighbour; the rigging was torn like rotten threads, and one of the masts fell with a terrible crash, and all seemed to be lost, when a great light appeared to the West. The sailors endeavoured to steer towards it, but the vessel in turning got into a trough of the sea, and a heavy squall striking her at the same time she fell on her beam-ends; and before they could get into the yawl, several—in fact one half—of the sailors were lost. The other four came safely to shore, landing on this very beach, and having nothing with them but the clothes which they had on. They were glad, however, to escape from the water on any condition; and next morning they began to roam over the sand in search of some habitation and of something to eat.

"Jack Hawser, straying off from the others, was walking by himself, when suddenly a man, who had not, as Jack thought, come from any direction, was walking by his side. Jack looked at him, and he looked at Jack, at the same time smiling and telling him not to be afraid; though the young man could not but feel a strange sort of dread. His companion was plainly dressed like an Englishman, and spoke very familiarly; but still he looked very mysterious, did not make any noise as he trod on the sand, and his voice sounded as if it came from a hundred miles off.

"There was a spice of malice, too, in his looks, and his smile made Jack shudder; and though he seemed charmed by the man's face and was obliged to look at it, it had a very strange and fearful appearance, and stripes of dark shade lined it, and it seemed to change from brown to white every instant, and then from blue to livid, just like a piece of variable coloured silk. His teeth were monstrously large, and white, and sharp; and his hair, which was of all colours, smelt of brimstone; and while his laugh made the cold chills run over Jack, his eyes looked devilishly cunning and deep, bright and obscure, bold and double meaning. Though close by Jack Hawser, he seemed to be millions of miles off, so far off and hidden were his thoughts, and feelings, and nature, and so little did he seem like a man of earth. He walked, and

moved his body and limbs as if they were made of air and moved about of their own accord, without any sort of effort; and when he laid his hand on Jack's shoulder, it had a most unnatural feeling, different from anything else in the world, making Jack's hair rise on end, and his flesh shrink and quiver all over him. Jack knew it was the devil, but he was afraid to say so, and so he held his peace till the Evil One told his business; advised him to kill his three companions, as soon as they went to sleep, and then to search a certain spot, near yon sand hills, and he would find a large heap of gold. Jack, glad to get rid of his new acquaintance on any terms, promised to follow his advice, and then the old man vanished in an instant. That very day Jack Hawser proposed to the sailors, after making a hearty meal of fish, that they should all take a sleep; but he remained awake, and while his companions were all unconscious of what he was about, he took a large stone and smashed their heads one by one, and then threw them into the sea. He then hurried off, and found the gold where it was promised—a tremendous large, glittering heap, that made Jack dance for joy. He could hardly believe his own senses, and in a sort of rapture fell upon his knees to kiss the bright coin; when suddenly he found in his arms a skeleton of fiery bones, and his lips touched a raw and bloody head, the clotted gore besmearing his face and hands, and getting into his mouth. He was nearly frozen with horror, and the more he tried to get away the tighter were his arms drawn about the bones, and the ghastly head—covered with eyes that were balls of fire, with terrible mouths, full of brains and mangled flesh, still rubbed against his face—kissed and licked him with tongues that were spewing hissing serpents. All day and all night Jack was tied to that fearful monster, some of its mouths growling like tigers, some wailing and groaning like men in the agonies of death, some screaming piteously like infants, some howling and some laughing, and mocking, and gibbering, squeaking, and screaming like ghosts and witches, while cats were mewing and fighting on his back, and serpents and slimy snails crawling over his flesh. At last he tried to pray, but as his heart

thought of God and heaven, a loud clap of thunder shook the earth to its centre, and then a voice crying out. 'You shall be a merchant in hell!' the howls and yells of ten thousand devils rent the air, and poor Jack Hawser disappeared in the yawning earth, still hugging and kissing against his will the monster with the bleeding and grisly head. Ever since that time the place where Jack's ship went down, is called 'The Devil's Toll Gate;' and it is said that he steals off all the goods that are stranded on the beach, and among these hills over there they disappear, and are carried in mockery to the merchant of the lower regions."

As Pocosin Dan finished his story, and while the attentive sailors were looking uneasily and suspiciously around them, a sudden cry of horror and astonishment turned all eyes to the pile of goods, which began to move and tumble about as if making way for a bale at the bottom, which, apparently instinct with life, glided from the rest of the cargo and dashed swiftly over the plain. The astonishment and awe of the crew were unspeakable, and even the Bankers and the captain of the lost ship began to feel extremely uncomfortable. A new supply of grog was ordered, a stricter watch enjoined, and weapons prepared; but there was a great conflict of opinion as to the best mode of proceeding against the Evil One, and much doubt as to the propriety of any plan proposed. At length several hardy tars, armed with cutlasses and clubs, and emboldened by drink, mounted the haunted pile, and swore they would follow it to the gates of purgatory. They had scarcely seated themselves, when one of them, finding himself moving, grasped his seat more tightly, crying out, "Clear the way! now for a fair wind, and a smooth passage!" One of his companions at the same time mounted behind him, and the others vociferously cheered, some crying, "Hoist the union, Jack, when you get to port!" some shouting, "Stand up for merry old England!" and some urging them bravely to board the old pirate devil, in the name of his sacred Majesty George the Third.

"Three cheers for England!" responded the hardy couple, as they started on their cruise; and away they were swiftly

borne, one of them crying out as he glided over the sand, "Farewell, messmates!—fifteen knots an hour for Davy Jones' locker!" In the course of an hour they returned, whooping and singing as they came, and bearing in triumph something between them, declaring, with all the rich expletives and emphatic oaths of the sailor's vocabulary, that they had slain and beheaded the great enemy of mankind.

The Bankers heard their exultation without any visible emotions, except that they looked anxiously at each other, pressed closely together, and spoke in hurried whispers. Their conduct was not unobserved, and soon the cause was known, for by the dim light of the fire they recognised the severed and ghastly head of one of their neighbours and friends, and that of a horse! The whole matter was a mystery to all but the Bankers, the two prominent actors being as much in the dark as the others, and not willing to believe that they had not actually encountered a spirit of darkness. They could only relate that they had succeeded, near the neighbouring hills, in lashing the goods on which they rode to a small tree, and that in a few minutes the devil, in a sort of compound shape, with two heads, and a great variety of horns, legs, and arms, came upon them; that, after a fierce and bloody battle, they had put him to death, and taken off his heads. Upon examination, the master and his friends found that the Bankers had ingeniously played upon the superstitious credulity of the sailors, in order to conceal their own cunning and knavish tricks for the purloining of goods. They were in the habit of thieving on such occasions in pairs, and had often successfully used the following artifice: a long, black rope was attached to the tail of a horse, which, with a rider on him, was stationed at some distance from the cargo; the other end of the rope was provided with a hook, and this was adroitly fastened to a bale of goods, which, of course, would soon disappear at the full speed of the horse. In this way had the Bankers been managing on the night alluded to in this chapter; but nevertheless, some of the sailors were not satisfied with the solution, or at least affected not to be; and to this day the hills where they performed this bloody

exploit are called the 'Kill-Devil Hills,' and is so designated in the maps of the State.

The Arabs affected to feel little for their hapless acquaintance, for whom they had all predicted a wretched end; Ricketts was particularly and perhaps honestly indignant at his practices; but his neighbours withdrew in a rather moody humour.

CHAPTER IX.

THE REAL UTOPIA.—ALICE BLADEN AND CHESTER ROWTON.—A LITTLE BIT OF PHILOSOPHY, WITH A DASH OF LOVE IN IT.—CORPOREALITY OF UTOPIAN SPRITES.

WHILE some of the events recorded in the last chapter were occurring, Alice Bladen was amusing herself with the little daughter of Mrs. Ricketts. In the language of the ladies, when speaking of their preferences (which their enemies say are not always rationally to be accounted for) Alice took a liking to the child, and even treated her with familiarity, although they presented the greatest contrast in dress and manners. The girl was simple as well as Alice, but diffidence, and a consciousness of social inferiority, caused her to be demure and taciturn. The two were in a rudely furnished room by themselves; the girl, whom Alice had sent for, sitting stiffly in her seat, and at a respectful distance from her companion, who at first found some difficulty in getting her to sit at all.

"What makes you so silent and reserved?" said Alice; "are you afraid of me?"

"No, Miss;" replied the girl.

"And you say you never had any name but that of *Puss?*"

"No, Miss," answered the girl, laughing, and hanging her head; "sometimes they call me *Utopia*, but I never heard of any other girl who was called that way;" and here she timidly and modestly laughed again.

"It 's a good name; the very name for you," said Alice; "and hereafter I will always call you by it. Would you like to learn to read?"

"I can spell now; and mother says she hopes to learn me to read before next winter."

"Who made you, Utopia?"

"God," said the girl, gazing earnestly at her questioner, with her light hazel eyes beaming more confidently than usual.

"What ought you to do to make him your friend?"

"Never lie nor steal, nor do a bad thing, and say my prayers every night and morning."

"And who taught you all this, Utopia?"

"Mother," answered the girl, with a voice exceedingly fine and tremulous.

"Does she say her prayers?"

"I don't know, Miss;" and she again hung her head, the blood almost burning her soft, transparent cheeks.

"Would you not like to live with me, Utopia?" asked Alice.

"If mother did, I would."

"Would'nt you like to go without your mother, and learn to read and write, and be a fine lady, with nothing to do but knit and sew?"

"I 'd rather live with mother."

At this instant, the old negress announced that a gentleman wished to see Miss Bladen, who, with Utopia, went into another room.

"I hope I do not intrude improperly and at an unreasonable hour, Miss Bladen," said Rowton, bowing respectfully.

"Certainly not," answered Alice; "why do you think it necessary to ask the question?"

"You were up the whole of last night, you know; and I supposed you might wish to retire early to-night."

"I cannot sleep till I hear from the witches," replied Alice; "and, by the way, why are you not watching on the beach? I never thought you afraid of spirits."

"I am not, nor do I believe in them," said Rowton; "and therefore it is that I am not watching for them. If I were

in another place I could guess who the witches are, but I will let time develop; in the meantime, may I have the pleasure of a stroll with you? A lover of nature like you should be on the beach, for the night is delicious, and the scenes are beautiful beyond all description. I think if you have a heart at all, it must to-night be stirred with soft emotion."

> "On such a night
> Stood Dido, with a willow in her hand,
> Upon the wild sea banks, and waved her love
> To come again to Carthage,"

said Alice, laughing; "and that I may not have to be a similar love-lorn lassie, telling tales to the cold moon and colder stars, I 'll keep my heart to myself for the present; but of course I will walk with you; and come, Utopia, you must go with us."

"Whom do you call Utopia?" asked Rowton, looking at the girl; "that 's an odd name to hear in such a place."

"And have you not heard that you are in Utopia—the happy place that philosophers have talked so much about? We are now, I assure you, in that blessed abode; and here is its fairest gem, with no name but that of her country, and a pretty one it is."

"And why not leave this gem at home?" said Rowton. "I would prefer to have none of the Bankers with us."

"She is my friend, sir, while I 'm here," answered Alice, rather seriously; "and I choose to have her with me."

This reply froze in his breast many gallant speeches which the gay Englishman was about to utter; but he soon recovered himself, and his wit sparkled like the spray in the moonbeams.

"The ever-restless ocean!" exclaimed he, as he and Alice stood on the beach, the surf breaking at their feet. "The ever-restless waves of the ocean! Often, for hours on hours, have I stood on the beach, when a boy, waiting for the waters to get calm; but wave would still follow wave, and thus it has been since the first morning that smiled on the newly-finished earth! What a picture of human life and human progress! Thus nation follows nation, in the same track,

and passes away, after having run the career of folly which its predecessor ran, and been dashed on the sands and rocks where it was broken and lost. Everything in nature is under a curse; it would almost seem that an evil demon rules in the affairs of the world."

"Of course man was cursed, and the earth was cursed for his sake," said Alice; "but there is a promise, and it will be fulfilled. All things admonish us that this is a temporary state of probation and suffering, and that an eternal rest awaits the good and faithful. Oh, how full of sweet meaning is the language of St. Paul, when he says, 'It remains then that there is rest for the people of God;'—rest from toil, and labour, and want, and hunger; rest from the tongue of slander and detraction; rest from the 'slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,' from the stings of conscience, the strifes and artifices of ambition, envy, hatred, and avarice; rest from doubt and fear, and the horrors and phantoms of a mind diseased. How often have I wished that I was a preacher; how eloquent I could be on the text I've quoted!"

"I never heard his grace of Canterbury more impressive," answered Rowton; "but with much fewer words and much less eloquence you can convince me (and only you can do it) that your first proposition is true. Excuse me—but how can you have the hardihood to say that faith and perseverance will be rewarded? Now do you not know a case that contradicts you?"

"Indeed I do not," said Alice,

"Is it possible you have forgotten! Do you not recollect a certain gentleman who loved with ardour and wooed in honour a certain lady? Has he not for months and years shown his tenderness, his constancy, his devotion, in a thousand different ways? Did he not for her sake abandon the flowery paths of pleasure—bid adieu to the blandishments of a court, and spurn its favours—forego a bright career of ambition, and a glorious meed of fame—yea, tear himself from home and kindred, and brave the perils of the deep, for her sake? Is she not the breath of his nostrils—the object of his unceasing thoughts, the being who is inextricably twined

about his heart, connected with all his dearest hopes, and holds his happiness and his destiny in her own keeping? And yet, without any assigned cause, without a pretended reason, she is ever callous to his sufferings, and sees with indifference his heart crushed and bleeding at her feet!"

"It still can study pretty speeches, and love Utopian beauties," replied Alice, laughing. "But the case is not in point; and if it were, it is not altogether as you stated it—hush! what is that?"

"Only the noise of those revellers who are watching for ghosts; Alice, you seem to be jealous, but—"

"Not in the least, I do assure you, Mr. Rowton," said she; "you are entirely mistaken—Utopia, Puss! where is the child? Please, Mr. Rowton, let us go to the house, for I think something has happened. Oh, my dear brother! I wish I could see him safe!"

The wish was gratified, for Robert was at the house as soon as Alice and her companion; and, to her great horror, he related what had happened in connexion with the stranded cargo, and with which the reader is already acquainted.

CHAPTER X.

NEW BERNE.—POLITICS AND WOMAN'S WILES.—LADY SUSANNAH CAROLINA MATILDA, SISTER TO THE QUEEN OF GREAT BRITAIN, AND GOVERNOR TRYON —THE ASSUMPTION OF REGAL STATE IN NEW BERNE.—A WOMAN'S AJUDICATION IN A LOVE CASE.

HERE are few places in the world more pleasant to the man of taste than the city of New Berne, in the month of May or June. There is about it a grave and mystic air of antiquity, that at once conjures up a thousand dim recollections and fancies of the remote and misty past. The green foliage of elms and forest trees, and the gay blossoms of an endless variety of shrubs and plants, and thick-clustering vines, blend

the charms of nature with the beauties of art; the placid Trent and stately Neuse, half circling the shady old town with a silver cincture, glide quietly together on its east, their united waters expanding into a broad bay, whose serene, smooth face, unfurrowed by steam-belching monsters, is ever wreathed in smiles by the ripple of light canoes and white-winged ships. If unfavoured by the Muses, the sister Graces at least have all been dwellers there; and the people, like the well-trimmed lawn, show in their manners and conduct that education and refinement were intended, not to destroy, but to prune the wild luxuriance of nature, and direct her rude energies to good, useful, and benevolent purposes. The soft and balmy climate of this region, and the promise which its waters gave of a safe, capacious harbour and thriving commerce—convenient as it was to the great Occum river, or as it is now called, Pamlico sound—endeared it to some of the first discoverers; and soon it became the centre of a wealthy and refined community, and ultimately the seat of the royal government.

There were originally in North Carolina three settlements or counties, that of Cape Fear, of which Wilmington became the head; Albemarle, of which the largest town was Edenton, and Bath, which was between the two former, and the capital of which, New Berne, was nearly equidistant from Edenton and Wilmington. This last, as stated, became the seat of government; and here in former times was held a court whose splendours were unmatched by anything of the kind on the American continent, North or South. It was the subject of praise and wonder far and wide; it even drew forth admiring tributes from the pens of philosophers and the lips of travelled scholars; and, considering the times and the country, seemed to many the work of enchantment. Such in fact it really was, for what alchymic art or wizard's wand so potent to influence as a fair and graceful woman? In those days legislative assemblies, representing, as they mostly did, poor and discontented constituencies, were stubborn and parsimonious; but what was beyond the power of manly eloquence and persuasion, of official corruption and

patronage, was easily accomplished by female wit and blandishment. In the beauty and accomplishments of his wife and her sister, the famous Esther Wake,* Governor Tryon found his most able assistants; and these subduing the hearts and understandings of a refractory Assembly, obtained from it appropriations which were applied in the erection of a palace that should have stood a monument of the gallantry of North Carolina gentlemen, and of the charms and excellence of Carolina ladies.

The Governor's palace in New Berne had not been provided with a throne; but there were, in its place, two chairs of state, two large arm-chairs of mahogany, richly carved and cushioned, and on the back of one of which were blazoned the arms of England, and on that of the other the armorial bearings of the lords proprietors. These seats having become offensive from their constant and pompous use by Governor Tryon, were seldom occupied

* The beauty and accomplishments of Esther Wake, sister-in-law of Governor Tryon (predecessor of Governor Martin), were long celebrated in North Carolina; and it was in honour of her that Wake county was named. It is said, that it was through her influence with the leading members of the Assembly, that the Governor obtained appropriations for the erection of the magnificent palace which he built in New Berne. Of this palace, Martin (afterwards Chief Justice of Louisiana), says in his History of North Carolina:—

"The building was superior to any of the kind in British America; and the writer of this history, who visited it in 1783, in company with the late renowned and unfortunate Francisco de Miranda, heard that gentleman say it had no equal in South America."

It was dedicated to Sir William Draper, the conqueror of Manilla, who was on a visit to Governor Tryon's, and who was said to be the author of the following lines inscribed over the principal door in the vestibule:

"Rege pio, felix, diris inimica tyrannis,
Virtuti pas aedes libera terra dedit.
Sint domus et dominus sacclis exempla futuris,
Hic artes, mores, jura, legesque colant."

Which are thus translated:

"In the reign of a monarch who goodness disclosed,
A free, happy people, to dread tyrants opposed,
Have to virtue and merit erected this dome;
May the owner and household make this the loved home
Where religion, the arts, the laws may invite
Future ages to live in sweet peace and delight."

Martin's History, vol. ii. pp. 265, 266.

by his more prudent successor, Josiah Martin, who avoided that arrogant assumption of royal state which had rendered his predecessor obnoxious to censure and ridicule. On one occasion, however, their public exhibition became indispensable and appropriate. On one of them sat, or rather half reclined with indolent grace and dignity, a fair-looking lady, royally attired in rich blue robes, on which and on her head were glittering a profusion of costly and magnificent jewels. The Governor stood uncovered and respectfully by her right, on her left sat his lady, on a more humble seat; while the hall was crowded with a gay and well-dressed audience of ladies and gentlemen. Each one of these latter was presented by the Governor to the lady with the diamonds, the Lady Susannah Carolina Matilda, sister to the Queen of Great Britain, and whose hand each new comer, kneeling, kissed with reverential courtesy. A cringing servility to power formed no part of the character of the North Carolina gentry; but they were, nevertheless, a loyal people, much attached at one time to the person of George the Third, and ready to exhibit, without meanness, a proper respect for royalty, especially when represented by a fair, and gracious, and graceful woman. The Governor's guest, the Lady Carolina, was such a person; and her first levee was attended by the beauty wit, fashion, and worth of the gay town of New Berne and its vicinity. Lawyers and statesmen, generals and demagogues, hastened to do her honour; and, being looked upon as the door to royal favour, she was soon surrounded with an atmosphere of intrigue, and hundreds of plots and plans began to hatch. When the hour for the reception of visitors had passed, she turned to her honoured host, and with a playful condescension said, "Here, take your seat, Mr. Martin; I am tired of state already, and must go and gossip with your lady about the company we have seen. Bless me, how I should dislike to be a queen!"

"I must ask the favour of your ladyship to sit a moment longer," replied the Governor, bowing, "and honour me with your opinon touching a weighty matter just come to hand."

"I am but a poor statesman, and a much poorer politician," returned the lady; "but the little wisdom I have is at your service, provided you will be brief, Monsieur Governor; and provided, farther, that you have no long-winded grievances to present from some assembly of rustic and indignant patriots."

"The subject matter falls properly under your jurisdiction," said Martin; "for certainly your ladyship should be the supreme arbiter in the court of Cupid."

"A love matter is it?" asked Carolina Matilda, with animation; "upon my word this is a singular subject to bring before his majesty's Governor of Carolina. Of course I will hear the case, though it be ever so long; and trust me, let it be as doubtful and knotty as it may, your good lady here and myself will make a most righteous award. Proceed, for I have a woman's curiosity."

"A vessel has just arrived," said Martin, "from England, and by her I have, among others, received a packet of letters from a friend of mine in London. By these I am informed, first, that there has long been a contract of marriage between Chester Rowton and Alice Bladen, by her guardian, Sir Charles Yeamons,* an old gentleman of character and rank in England. It seems that the lady and her brother are the orphan children of Colonel Robert Bladen, who was killed in battle, and whose widow has been dead some time. These young people were adopted, brought up, and educated by their childless maternal uncle, Sir Charles Yeamons; and he, wishing to do a good part by them, offered to Alice a match entirely worthy of her in every respect. Secondly, the young lady was perverse and whimsical; and though she had at her feet one of the richest and handsomest courtiers in the kingdom, she was blind to her own interest and happiness, and very absurdly refused to love her guardian's friend and favourite. Lastly, when she arrived at a proper age, her uncle determined to consummate her happiness against her will,

* Sir John Yeamons, Governor of South Carolina, and one of the first settlers on Cape Fear, was one of the ancestors of the Waddels; a family distinguished in the annals of North Carolina for its patriotism, public spirit, and intelligence.

and accordingly informed her that as soon as his gout got easy he would present her with a dashing husband. Hereupon the silly thing sheds a flood of tears, and utters a torrent of supplications; but finding them of no avail, she persuades her brother to fly with her to foreign parts. The young couple were traced to a vessel bound for Cape Fear; and what is the most singular of all, Chester Rowton took passage in the same ship. It is supposed that by some means he got wind of his sweetheart's intentions and concealed himself on board until the vessel was under weigh, and this is the only part of the whole matter from which old Sir Charles Yeamons can extract the least consolation. I am desired to search for the fugitives, or to cause search to be instituted, and if possible send them back to England. A power of attorney is also enclosed, authorising me to act for the guardian, and I am conjured to be vigilant and faithful."

"A hard case, truly; like all love cases of which I ever heard or read," said the queen's sister; "but my mind is made up; let the lady follow her own inclinations. It is an old point, settled by numberless adjudications, that woman's heart is not to be bought or sold; and certainly it shall never be said of me that I countenanced any such attempt."

"With submission," spoke Martin, "it seems, in my humble judgment, that that is not the question for me to consider. According to the laws of the realm, the guardian has control over the person of his ward, and no one can doubt the right of Sir Charles Yeamons to carry back his niece. Now, am I not substituted in his place, and is it not my duty to hunt out this erring damsel and restore her to her friends?"

"By no means," said the Governor's lady; "no one has the right of imposing a duty on you against your will, except our gracious Sovereign. Although the guardian has empowered you to act in his place, you have not yet accepted that power; and whether you should accept it or not is a mere question of propriety."

"Spoken like a lawyer," exclaimed Carolina Matilda; "I see, Monsieur Governor, you and your lady are no exception

to the general rule—she is your better half; and I 'm sure you 'll not have the ill-grace to deny it."

"Certainly not," answered the Governor; "never shall I deny her the just praise for wisdom and goodness which is her meed. But admitting that it is a question of propriety, what am I to do? According to the evidence before me, I do not see that the lady will suffer any especial hardship if she is returned; while it cannot be denied that, young, wayward, and poor as she is, she is no fit person to be wandering among strangers far from home, and with no friend but an inexperienced brother."

"Do you call it no hardship," asked Mrs. Martin, "to be forced to vow before heaven to love cherish and obey for life a man whom you hate? for I take it for granted the girl by this time despises the man whom they would force upon her. For my part, I feel much for the poor damsel; and I think, husband, your proper course will be to find out where she abides; see if she be among friends and has means, and if so let her remain where she is. Our first duty is to seek her out, and my heart misgives me that she may be in want."

"Those are my sentiments precisely," said Carolina Matilda; "and if I have any influence over you, Monsieur Governor, let me command you to take counsel of your lady in this matter, and to act under her advice. Believe me, sir, that a woman is the only proper judge in such a case. And now, if nothing farther claims our attention, we will adjourn the council."

CHAPTER XI.

LIFE IN UTOPIA.—THE DOCTOR'S DEVOTEDNESS TO ALICE.—ROBERT BLADEN.—SPECULATIONS ON THE FORTHCOMING TOURNAMENT.

HILE the conduct and situation of Robert and Alice Bladen were the subjects of discussion at the Governor's palace, the young lady, unconscious of the interest she had excited elsewhere, was amusing herself with the people and affairs of Utopia. Every morning before she was up (and she was an early riser), she was greeted by the little daughter of Mrs. Ricketts, and presented by her with a bouquet of newly-gathered flowers; after rising she spent some time with her brother, and then she gave audience to Dr. Ribs. Rowton was for several days absent, and it was during his absence the beau pushed his fortunes in the court of Cupid with vigour and despatch. When he first divulged his sentiments to Alice, she listened to him with attention, feeling a strong disposition to indulge in mischief at the doctor's expense. He was led to believe that the manly beauties of his person had made a favourable impression, and that his flowing locks especially were the object of admiration. It was hinted, however, that they were not of the right colour, and accordingly he had them tinged with a hue so fiery red, that the children fled affrighted from the owner's presence. Alice was charmed with his appearance; "but alas!" said she, "my brother has discovered our inclinations, and he is bitterly opposed to the match which you propose. He has even made threats of violence, and I fear for your safety, for he is brave, and cruelly true to his purposes."

"Fear not for me, dear madam," said Dr. Ribs, trembling in his limbs; "no man will dare to interfere with me. All the people are afraid of me; and well they may be, for I'm not one to be trifled with, I do assure you, madam."

"There is but one way to avoid this difficulty," replied Alice; "you must lull his suspicions by the tonsure."

"The tonsure? what is that?" asked the beau; "I never administered one in my life, though I have no doubt *some* doctors would use it to serve their ends."

"It won't hurt *him*," answered Alice; "nor you either, for I will be the only sufferer. My brother knows my attachment for long red hair, and he will suspect you until you shave your head. I dislike to ask such a favour, but I 'm sure you 'll oblige me, or rather disoblige me in one respect to gratify me in another. I must else forego seeing you with your hair on; and you know which I would choose."

The doctor looked a little aghast at the request; but finally, assuring Alice that her will was his law, besought her to be herself the executioner of his offending locks. She declined the task; and her lover left her, to return in the evening with a head so denuded of its former capillary glory as to excite the horror of every beholder. The lady's next freak was to cause the beau to besmear his face with paint, and to draw in bright colours; a large turkey gobbler on each cheek, so as to resemble an Indian chief. Thus she amused herself from day to day, causing the doctor's friends to regard him as a lunatic, when a new thought occurred to her. There was to be a shooting match near the house of Ricketts, the prize being a bale of goods which the old Banker wished to dispose of. Such exercises of skill were common in the neighbourhood; those who engaged in them paying so much for each chance or shot, and the owner of the prize generally getting two prices for his goods, for men in all countries have a propensity for gambling. As soon as Alice heard of the proposed trial of skill, she communicated her wishes in regard to a certain matter to Dr. Ribs, and he, treasuring her instructions, promised faithfully to carry them out. Having arranged the affair, and full of the notion of converting the match into a

sort of tournament, Alice approached her little gossip Utopia on the subject.

"We must all choose us a beau for the occasion," said she to the girl; "whom do you select?"

"I don't know what you mean, Miss Alice," said the girl.

"Who is your sweetheart, then?" inquired Alice.

"I don't know," replied Utopia, laughing, and hanging her head.

"Don't you like some one better than you do the others?"

"I like mother best."

"Who next?"

"You, I reckon," said the girl, still laughing, with confusion.

"And whom next?" asked Alice.

"I don't know."

"Tell me now truly," said Alice, "did you ever have a sweetheart?"

"I never thought about it," answered Utopia, her head drooping on her breast, and her cheeks burning with blushes.

"I know who 's your sweetheart," said Alice; "it is the little Pocosin,"

"Who 's the little Pocosin?" asked Robert Bladen, who had stolen up behind his sister.

"The sweetheart of Utopia," answered Alice; "though she won't acknowledge it;"

"You 're giving her to the wrong one," said Robert, "for she's my intended. If I win you at the shooting match, may I have you, Utopia?"

"I don 't know what you mean," said the girl.

"Well, I 'll tell you," replied Robert; "I 'm going to take three chances at the match, and if I win the goods I 'll give them to you, and you must give yourself to me in return. Won't you?"

"I don 't know, sir," said the girl.

"What will you give me, then?"

"I have no use for the goods."

"Well, I 'll do this: if I win, I 'll sell the goods for money, and give it to you, and you must kiss me and learn to read.

Next year I 'll give you another guinea, and you must let me kiss you again, and must learn to write; next year after that you must learn to sing, and I 'll kiss you again, and give you another guinea. Is it a bargain?" The girl hung her head and made no answer; and Alice asked her brother how he was going to fulfil his part of the contract, when he would be so far away from his little *protègée*.

"What, will you not go with us, Utopia?" asked Robert Bladen.

"If mother will," answered the girl.

"I 'll find a way to send you the money," said Robert Bladen; "and now, sister, what new foolery have you put into the head of Dr. Ribs?"

"That renowned and incomparable cavalier," answered Alice, "shall appear to-morrow in a manner worthy of himself and his former fame. I have desired him to dress and act in the character of an Indian chief; and I think if we can survive his appearance, we 'll never forget it."

"For my part," said Robert, "I think you have carried the joke far enough; and I already feel uneasy for fear he may find out the tricks you have put upon him."

"Never, never," exclaimed Alice; "all the world, myself included, could not convince him that I am not in love with him to distraction. What a blessing is egotism!"

"It is, indeed," said Robert, "and the best of it is, Providence has kindly bestowed it most freely on those who are the least attractive in the eyes of others."

"Walter said he was going to shoot for you," said Utopia to Alice.

"Going to do what?" asked Alice, with a voice and manner somewhat equivocal.

"He said," answered the girl, "that he wouldn't shoot for the goods; but if they were to put you up, he 'd take a hand." And hereat the girl laughed more than usual.

"Master Walter is pert," exclaimed Alice, "and needs a lecture. Bring him to me this moment; I will not rest till I curb his vanity."

"He meant no harm," said Utopia.

"Bring him to me," replied Alice; "he 's a hopeful lad, truly."

"He says you must please to excuse him, as he 's busy," said Utopia, returning from her mission.

"How great he 's grown!" cried Alice, colouring; "too busy, is he? That young gentleman is getting impudent."

"He says he meant no harm," said Utopia, "and that he was just in fun."

"Sister," spoke Robert, "I see no reason why you should be displeased with Walter; in fact, I think you ought to feel flattered by his preference."

"*His* preference! Truly, brother, you forget who he is"

"The admiration of a humble Banker is, as a mere tribute to beauty, as valuable as that of a noble lord. Besides, he has generous feelings, and you ought not wantonly to hurt them."

"Then he ought to keep his feelings in their proper place," replied Alice; "I have no desire to wound them, unless he make himself ridiculous."

"He says he feels ridiculous now," said Utopia, laughing again.

"Worse and worse!" exclaimed Alice. "This noble youth first condescends to offer to gamble for me, and then feels ashamed of himself for having shown such regard! Poor fellow, let him enjoy his vanity."

CHAPTER XII.

A TOURNAMENT IN UTOPIA.—DR. RIBS APPEARS IN A NEW CHARACTER, AND COVERS HIMSELF WITH ANYTHING BUT GLORY.—THE LITTLE POCOSIN THE VICTOR.—UTOPIA DECLARED QUEEN OF LOVE AND BEAUTY.—CONSTERNATION AMONG THE BANKERS.—"WILD BILL".—EXPLANATIONS AND PREPARATIONS.—MIGRATION OF CAPTAIN RICKETTS AND HIS HOUSEHOLD.

HE females, as well as males, attended in large numbers the "shooting-match," at Utopia, and among them came Miss Polly Dawson, escorted by Chester Rowton. She seemed by no means vain of her brilliant conquest. Nor did she manifest the least symptom of jealousy during the day, although Rowton devoted himself almost entirely to the English beauty.

"I have seen the day," said he to Alice Bladen, "when I should not have ranked myself as second to any marksman in Europe,"

"I should be happy to see a specimen of your skill to-day," replied Alice, "and I hope you will gratify my desire."

"Become a competitor of these rustic loons!" exclaimed Rowton: "surely, Miss Bladen, your estimation of me must have fallen, low as it was before."

"It was not, Mr. Rowton, because I supposed you a fit associate of these men," said Alice, "that I wished to see you engaged in their sports. Our time begins to hang heavy on our hands, and I think each one is bound to contribute all he can to the general amusement."

"I might reply, that you have not so acted," answered Rowton, "but I 'll drop that for the present. I hereby offer myself your servant, ready to minister to your pleasure in any way that you will be pleased to direct."

At this moment several voices called attention to an object

advancing from the north, and all eyes turning in that direction, beheld, distinctly marked upon the clear horizon, a strange and portentous figure. On it came at a rapid pace, the sailors half believing it to be a bodiless apparition, and it even filled the Bankers with amazement and dread, until its near approach disclosed the person of Dr. Ribs. A bear-skin ornamented with a scarlet band, and a plume of turkey feathers, was twisted about his head; from his waist up he was covered with a closely-fitting shirt, on which was painted a whole menagerie of beasts, birds, and reptiles; shorts made of untanned and uncurried deer skin pinched his legs as far down as his knees, and from these to the soles of his feet he was protected only by a thick coat of red paint, with spiral stripes of black and white. A quiver of arrows hung upon his shoulders, on his left arm he carried a bow, and parallel with his horse's neck lay a wooden lance in rest.

"Squee-ou!" he shouted as he galloped up, "clear de way for de big Chowanoc! Squee-ou-oo!" continued he, as he swiftly circled round the astounded group. "Je-whoop-ee de Chowanoc!" and with this he let fly an arrow, aimed at a distant tree, but which went wide of the mark, and struck Captain Ricketts in the back with such force that he bounded into the air with a nimbleness which astonishod himself.

"Squee-ou!" again shouted the motley cavalier, as he poised his lance and started on another circuit, to the consternation of all on the beach. "'Squee-hee?' Squee-devil!" cried a sailor, springing at the bridle of the doctor's horse, and stopping the animal so suddenly that the rider tumbled off. "Squee-devil and all his angels till ye! Ye should come to an anchor when yer rudder's gone." The crowd were of the same opinion, and the unlucky beau, notwithstanding the interposition of Alice Bladen, was kept a close prisoner until the shooting was over. He swore, chafed, and begged to as little purpose as if he had been talking in the original Chowanoc; and, to his inexpressible grief, another carried off the prize. That other was Robert Bladen, who was as good as his word, handing Utopia a guinea, and when he found a secret chance, imprinted on her burning lips a kiss,

THE RACE UP THE SAND HILLS.

while her heart seemed to be violently struggling to force its way through her bosom.

The doctor was now released; and, burning with a desire to show his skill before his mistress, he declared himself the best horseman in the company, and proposed immediately to put his powers to the proof by riding to the top of one of the neighbouring sand-hills. They (the hills) were some fifty feet high, steep, and composed entirely of loose sand, but the doctor's boast, so far from being considered extravagant, excited at once a general emulation. Various rewards were proposed; and finally it was agreed that the first who accomplished the ascent on horseback, should receive a wreath of flowers, and that the lady to whom he presented them should be considered the queen of love and beauty in all Utopia. Every horseman now whipped and spurred his animal at a furious rate, and soon the sides of the highest hill were covered with steeds and riders rolling over each other and covered with sand. Even Rowton, famous for the grace and ease with which he managed his horse, despaired at last of accomplishing the feat, and it was declared on all sides to be impossible. At this juncture the little Pocosin, who had not before shown himself, appeared, and ascending with his pony to the top of the hill, which so many had tried, made him leap from that to another, and then came down in safety. Immense was the applause excited by the performance of this extraordinary feat—great were the encomiums bestowed on Walter, still greater those showered on his pony, which now received a large addition to its already extensive catalogue of names. The men clustered about the horse—the only and much-beloved horse of Captain Ricketts—the girls gazed pleasingly at Walter, towards whom every female face, with one exception, was turned, all wreathed in gracious smiles. Even Alice Bladen looked kindly at him, but he heeded her not; and going straight to the girl by her side, little Utopia, placed on her head the wreath of flowers. She excited no envy—she was too small, and meek, and obscure for that—but no cheers greeted her coronation, and the awkward lad who had singled her out, left her without saying a word; and

taking his employer aside, told him something that seemed to affect him much.

"Gentlemen and neighbours," cried the old man, excited; "gentlemen and neighbours, Wild Bill's about!"

This simple and mysterious announcement produced a sudden and singular effect on the Bankers, among whom every other subject seemed to be instantly forgotten, while their manner and speech betrayed not a little trepidation, as the name of "Wild Bill" was repeatedly pronounced.

Alice Bladen, and even her brother, though ignorant of the cause of excitement, caught the contagion, and became alarmed; nor were their fears entirely allayed by what they heard from Chester Rowton. "And is it possible," said he, addressing himself particularly to Alice Bladen, "that you have been here so long and heard nothing of Wild Bill, the terror of all the surrounding country?"

"Who is he, and what is he?" asked Alice, anxiously; "tell us at once, for this suspense is intolerable."

"He is a negro," answered Rowton, "who years ago ran away from his master, and has put his owner, the courts, and the Government at defiance. He lives in the swamps and in obscure and artificial caves in the sand, and is, according to tradition, the head of a band of outlaws, white and black, and whose ravages extended for many miles along the coast, and far up into the settlements. For years they have been the terror of the people beyond the Sound, as well as of the simple inhabitants of this beach, who keep for him a regular watch, and hoist signals along the sand to warn each other when he is supposed to be near."

"Has he been seen lately?" asked Alice; "where is he, and what has he done to cause the excitement?"

"Whether he has been seen or not, what he has done, and where he is," replied Rowton, "no one knows; they only know that the signal is up, and the whole may be a false alarm. The truth is, Bill and his exploits have become apocryphal; and though no one can, of his own knowledge, testify to the horrors of his appearance, or even that there is such a being, yet, like the Evil One, he is the hero of a thousand

dim and terrible traditions, has been endowed with the attribute of ubiquity, and is the constant object of alarm to old women, children and imaginative men, the mysterious and dread-importing 'they say,' always prefacing the narrative of his dark deeds and darker looks. Thus has his name become a spell that conjures up a thousand vague fears and monstrous fancies, and the cry of 'Wild Bill,' even in the upper settlements, scares the farmer from his fields, and hurries home the lagging school-boy. For my own part, I believe these stories are sustained by a very slender foundation of truth, and as to Bill's being "—

"What stories is them you speak of?" asked a Banker, who had approached, and whose looks indicated that his imagination was fearfully awake, and his power of hearing, just then, intensely acute.

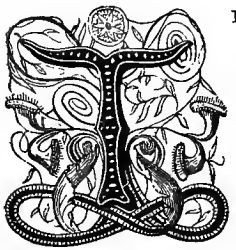
"The stories of Wild Bill, your great bug-bear," replied Rowton. "What do they say he's done?" inquired the man, becoming more excited. "Is the Great Bug-Bear with him? I should'nt be surprised if there's forty of them, and they say they're all armed with muskets, pistols, and dirks. Oh, Lord, what is to be done!" and with this, and without waiting for an explanation, he rushed into the crowd, which, hearing a part of his story, and catching all his fears, was stricken pale with fear, its terrors being increased by the shrieks and cries of the women and children.

The captain of the lost ship and his sailors, though sharing little of the dread that paralyzed the majority, were still at a loss what to do, and Chester Rowton and old Ricketts showed themselves the master-spirits of the occasion. They, and they only, retained their self-possession; they harangued and exhorted the crowd, and having recovered it from its confusion, and hushed the cries of the women, endeavoured to organize a system of defence. The cargo—the object of solicitude with the sailors, was to be guarded by them—the bankers, generally, under the command of Captain Rickets were to station themselves at the house of a poor man in the neighbourhood, and Rowton, with a few resolute Utopians, and the little Pocosin, were to go in quest of the object of

terror. In explanation of this system, Ricketts declared, that he, being the richest man in the country, he had no doubt Wild Bill was aiming at his house; that he would remove his goods and effects, and leave his faithful old negress to watch, and that she would secretly bring word to him while Bill was rioting with his companions on a few kegs of liquor which would be left for him, and thus he would fall an easy prey to the Bankers. The women were to go with Ricketts; and as the place where he proposed to station himself was distant only a mile from the cargo, it was supposed that his party and the sailors could readily assist each other in the case of an attack. This plan met with general approbation; but a few, consisting of Robert Bladen, his sister, the wife of Ricketts, and the little Pocosin, utterly refused to sanction it. Alice and her brother could not be induced to leave the immediate neighbourhood of the sailors, and Mrs. Ricketts, her little daughter, and Walter, declared they would keep them company. Persuasions and entreaties were used in vain; but old Ricketts, as he supposed, had a right to enforce the obedience of his own household, and accordingly, his wife and step daughter were compelled to follow him. As to Walter, he resolved to die before he would accompany the scouting party, and he was finally permitted to accompany Ricketts. The Bladens firmly adhered to their determination of remaining near their English friends, and their wishes were reluctantly complied with, but Rowton asked in vain for permission to keep them company. His coolness and energy had made themselves felt among the Bankers, whose leader, by unanimous consent, he now became; and thus, after many tender and half-whispered protestations, he took a sorrowful leave of his wilful mistress and her headstrong brother.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE ESCAPE FROM UTOPIA.—THE LITTLE POCOSIN CONDUCTS THE FUGITIVES TO HIS FATHER'S HOUSE.—OLD DAN MORALISES.



THE sun was setting when the bankers separated; and as the twilight began to deepen into darkness, an uncomfortable sensation crept over Alice Bladen and her brother. The former especially became restless, uneasy, and finally alarmed, nor could she dispel her fears, although she could not account for them. A full knowledge of her situation revealed itself to her; she reflected on her position, a stranger, with only one near friend, on a foreign and bleak coast and among a rude and barbarous people. The water hemmed her in on every side, and it was so dangerous that no ship could ride in safety; she was without companions of her own sex of equal rank, and she was, too, likely to remain in such a place for some time under the protection of one to whom she wished to owe no obligations. Her brother in vain combated her thick-coming fancies, and to a late hour they promenaded from the cargo to their late residence, talking of home and the recollections which it awakened. While they were thus engaged, they descried objects moving on the sand, and the lady was nearly petrified with terror, when a familiar voice pronounced her name. It was the little Pocosin who spoke, and who, after being answered that no one was near but Bladen, and his sister, informed them that his companion, Utopia, had something of importance to communicate. Alice was delighted to meet with the girl, almost forgetting her fears in the presence of one of her own sex in whom she confided; nor did the girl seem less pleased at the meeting; but her mission was urgent, and she pro-

ceeded at once, and in the most simple manner, to tell the object of her visit.

"Mother says you must leave very quick," said she, addressing herself to Alice; "you must go right off, for you 're in danger."

"Go where?" exclaimed Robert; "and in danger of what?"

"I don't know, sir," answered Utopia; "I don't know what the danger is; but you must go off as soon as you can with Walter."

"Merciful heaven!" cried Alice, "I knew it, I knew it! Oh, what shall I do?"

"Knew what?" asked her brother. "Come, sister, don't let your fears unnerve you until you know what to be afraid of. Tell me in brief, sir," continued he to Walter, "the cause of this visit, for the girl hardly seems to know what she is about. Who sent you here—what did you come for—what is the danger, and where are we to go?"

"I came at the request of Mrs. Ricketts, and this little girl," replied Walter, "and you are to go with me to my father's. What the danger is, this girl only knows; that is, she and her mother."

"Mother's other husband—uncle Ike—I call him," said the girl, "came to me, and asked me if I was 'nt a friend of yours, and I told him I was—'and can you keep a secret,' said he; I told him yes, 'Will you swear to keep it a secret?'"

"Oh, balderdash!" exclaimed Bladen, "come to the point at once, and never mind this rigmarole."

"Yes, sir," said Utopia, meekly.

"Brother," said Alice, "you are too harsh; go on, Utopia, and tell your story in your own way."

"He asked me if I would swear to keep it a secret from everybody but you," continued the girl, "and mother and I told him I would 'nt swear, but I 'd promise. Then he used a very bad word, and said that there was a scheme on foot to —to do you harm, and told me to let you know of it as soon as possible."

"What harm? to do what?" asked Alice, quickly.

"I don 't know," replied Utopia; "he never said, only that you would be carried off, and your brother and Walter killed. He said he could 'nt tell me any more, and when I told mother, she said she had expected something, and made me come to see you. She told me to tell you from her not to stay a moment, but to go with Walter as soon as you could get ready."

"A pretty tale!" exclaimed Robert, "a pretty tale, truly! And who, I should like to be informed, is to vouch for Walter's fidelity? I would trust you, my little sweetheart, and I know that you are honest in all you say; but you have been imposed on, that's clear, and I suspect this young hero knows more than he cares to tell."

"I vouch for myself," said Walter; "I vouch for myself, sir, and can only assure you of the honesty of my intentions. I excuse your suspicions, but—but no one else should talk to me so. If you can trust me, I am ready to take you to a place of safety—if you cannot, I will stand and fall by the side of this lady, and when my blood is flowing at her feet, you may then judge whether it comes from the heart of a traitor."

"I believe every word you say, Walter," spoke Alice; "I will trust in you, and leave at once."

"I prefer to put my trust in the true hearts and stout arms of these loyal Englishmen," said Robert Bladen, "and in my own well-tempered blade, sister; these people may be true or false, but we 'll have nothing to do with them. Let us to our countrymen; they will stand by us to the death, and with them only are we safe."

"Brother, let us follow Walter," answered Alice; "some of the sailors are drunk, and others may have been corrupted. Come, I must have my way."

She was as good as her word, and she and her brother were soon ready to leave, the captain of the stranded ship, to whom every thing had been communicated, having selected two of his most faithful men to carry their baggage. The utmost secresy was enjoined on these men. They were cautioned to hurry back, and reveal to no one but their commander the

hiding-place of the persons whom they were to escort; and they were also commanded to be as noiseless as possible on their return. Utopia would neither go with her patrons nor remain with the sailors, and, against every persuasion and entreaty, started on her return alone, having with a smile bade Alice and her brother farewell, and permitted both to kiss her.

Alice watched her till her little form faded in the darkness, and then set out on her journey—the longest journey which she had ever undertaken on foot, though from her childhood she had loved to ramble over the fields and among the woods. The whole night long she was on the road, and the morning found her weary and faint, and several miles from her destination. At length, and as the sun was rising, the little Pocosin halted the company, which he had been guiding eastwardly, and informed them that in the water to their right was an island on which his father lived.

He then drew from his pocket a whistle, which he blew several times, and in answer to which a shrill sound was wafted faintly back. After a short time a canoe glistened like a black speck on the white bosom of the waters, and soon the cheerful face of Pocosin Dan flashed back the rays of the morning sun. The old gentleman, however, as soon as he saw the number and character of his guests, returned for a larger boat, and thus his son and his companions were delayed for some time longer on the beach; a delay which, weary as they were, was hardly felt. The excitement of novelty had banished all sensation of fatigue; the breeze that met them seemed to be the perfumed breath of spicy groves, and to be laden with the varied fragrance of cinnamon, balm and myrrh; and the dark green foliage of a thick forest that fringed the waters on the farther side, presented a refreshing contrast to the naked desolation of the beach. The excited imaginations of Alice and her brother began to draw pictures of a terrestrial paradise, which they almost believed they were about to see; and flocks of birds, spangled with shining colours, and the cloudless skies of a bright and breezy summer morning, enhanced the pleasant illusion. No such country revealed

its ravishing beauties to their straining eyes; but they did land upon a shore which, though not an Eden, glittered with a gay carpet of a thousand tints, and was shaded by forests of cedar, cypress, pine and oaks, among whose branches hung immense clusters of purple grapes in arbours fit for the revels of Bacchus and his enamoured nymphs. The startled deer rose from his lair, and gazed curiously at the travellers as they passed near his morning couch; flocks of wild turkeys were feeding unfrightened among the flowers, and a bear galloped off to a covert of neighbouring bushes. It was now noon, but Alice walked beneath a leafy canopy that subdued and softened the rays of the sun, and her eyes and ears were drinking in the cheerful sights and sounds of the first natural forest she had ever entered. She was not in a mood to talk, and she heard little of what was said by others, feeding her half dreaming fancy on thoughts not to be uttered by mortal lips, until the spell of enchantment which bound her was broken by the recollection of mortal cares and mortal wants, awakened by the sight of a human residence.

The house of Old Dan Tucker, was a small and airy tenement composed of a frame of scantling, weather-boarded with cypress shingles, that were grey with age and moss, and shaded by a few live oaks, whose multitudinous arms were clasped together above the roof. The doors faced east and west, on which sides the view was bounded by the water; near the north end were the ruins of an old fort, and at the south a row of negro cabins, barns, and stables. The furniture in the house was not rich, but rare and curious, and the walls of the room were hung round with Indian relics, memorials of the chase, natural curiosities, and arms of an ancient fashion. The owner of this mansion, moving noiselessly about, made no bustling parade of hospitable desires, but in every line and feature of his face shone a quiet hearty welcome; his twinkling eyes showed that he quickly caught and sympathised with the varying emotions of his guests, as they rose in their bosoms, and his softly uttered orders anticipated all their wants. Those who rowed the boat had returned without landing on the island, and Dan and his guests were attended by servants, who

gazed curiously, but not impertinently, at the visitors, and whose respectful manners manifested a position in the household between that of slaves and equals.

Old Dan listened attentively, but with not much apparent astonishment, to the account of the recent occurrences on the beach, at Utopia; and when he had heard it through, remarked, that the danger was not yet over.

"You would be welcome to live at my house always," said he to Robert, "and I am sure I 'd never get tired of looking at the sweet face of your little sister there—she's a beautiful human blossom!—but there's a dark spirit at work, and you 'll certainly be followed here. There 's some devilish scheme at the bottom of all that fuss over yonder, take my word for it; and the farther off this innocent lady can get, the better."

"What makes you think so, uncle Dan?" asked Alice, laughing; "I can't imagine how I could have been the cause of Wild Bill's late outbreak, and bad as he is, I'm certain I never wished him any harm."

"And there's where you've sinned," replied Dan; "you're a most precious sinner, I tell you." Alice coloured at this reproof, and hardly knew whether to resent it or not, until Dan proceeded: "The truth is," continued he, "this is a curious world, any way you can fix it; and it 's past my comprehension. I 've studied it over and over; I 've taken it up one side and down another, and then end-wise, and length-wise, and cross-wise, but I can make nothing out of it. It 's cursed, that 's a fact; it's filled with all sorts of monstrous villains, and none but villains can get along comfortably in it. Sometimes a bright, smiling innocent creature—like you, Miss Alice—comes into it, and looks as refreshin' and sweet as a wild rose in the middle of the sand—and soon she becomes the centre of all sorts of schemes and rascally manœuvres. She seems to stir up all the evil passions of the world, and, poor thing, without meanin' any harm to a livin' thing, and wishin', as I know you wish, by your looks, that all the world was good and happy and at peace, she is the cause of endless strife and bloodshed."

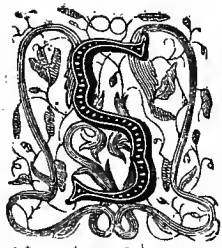
"I 'd better go and die at once, if that's to be my mission

here," said Alice; "but I can't believe it. You have lived in these lonely woods, uncle Dan, until your imagination has become diseased."

"I have a reason for livin' here," replied Dan; "and if you'll all listen to me while breakfast is preparin' I'll tell you a story about the old times, which will prove whether I judge the world right or not." Both Alice and her brother expressed themselves as desirous of hearing the old man's story, and carefully taking a violin from a drawer, and executing with a master's touch a soft and plaintive air, he sat for few minute in silent reverie, and then related the following tale.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE STORY OF OLD DAN TUCKER.



OME folks," said the old fiddler, "can't tell their own history without going into the history of all their forefathers. Now, for my part I never cared much about these things; we all came from Adam; and though I've no doubt the race of the Tuckers has always been honest and honourable, yet I don't consider that this makes me any better than other people. I'm bound to say, however, that I'm proud of my father; he was a good, and I may say, a great man, and a real philosopher. He used to live on this very island; and right back of my house in them woods you saw as you came up, he and my mother is buried; but my mother died first. When she died, father could n't bear to stay here; so he sold out, all except a few of his negroes, and moved away up the country, and settled on the banks of the Roanoke river. He loved that name of

Roanoke, and one of his greatest friends was an Injun by that name. He wasn't all Injun, but he was descended from one, and he was a noble old man. He and father used to be a great deal together: they talked philosophy and politics together, hunted together, and fished together. Father, as I said, was a philosopher: he had but two children, me and my little sister, a sweet and beautiful little girl.

"We were never sent to school, but were taught at home by father; and he took great pains with our education, instructing both of us in ancient history, and the science of government, as he used to call it. We lived very much to ourselves, father not allowing us to visit much among our neighbours. We were a family of fiddlers; father played on the fiddle—I played and sister played; and if we did live to ourselves, we used to make ourselves happy and merry, I can tell you. Old Roanoke was very fond of music too: he would come and stay with us a week at a time; and at last he sent his son, his only child, to live with us and to learn to play the fiddle. The lad was about my age—a generous, sharp, handsome youth; and as sister was his main teacher, they began to get very intimate, and, as I and father thought and hoped, in love with each other.

"Now we had one neighbour at whose house we used to visit; father was wont to say he was not a barbarian, because he could appreciate music, and used to bring his daughter to hear us. She was a monstrous sweet girl, that Sally Jones, but her father was proud and aristocratic, and like my father, would 'nt let his child associate with hardly anybody in the neighbourhood. She was mightily tickled at first when she saw young Roanoke, who still dressed and acted like the Injuns, though he was nearly as white as I was. She had never seen an Injun afore, and she stared at him and stared at him; then she examined his dress, and at last got to talking very familiarly to him, asking him a great many questions about his forefathers, their customs and manners. As for sister she had been used to Injuns, and knowed all about them, and so she and Sally became very intimate, visited each other, and told each other all their secrets. As young

DAN TUCKER IN LOVE.

Roanoke was always with sister, of course he was a great deal in the company of Miss Sally Jones; and as I began to like the girl, I used to send messages and presents by him to her. The truth is," continued old Dan, heaving a deep sigh, the truth is—yes I must confess it—I loved Sally Jones. I loved her with all my heart—I loved every article of dress she wore, and I remembered everything she said. But the more I loved her, the more I was afraid of her. I even got so that I could not talk to her; but you may depend upon it, I made my fiddle talk! I improved amazingly—I could almost make myself cry with my sentimental tunes; and when I was where she was, I always played these.

"After playing round her for a long time, and playing at her, and sighing, and looking sad at her, and hinting to her, I at last screwed my courage up to the point, and went to tell her my feelings. I took my fiddle with me: I played several of my most affecting tunes to her (we were all alone), and then I began to tell her my mind. I began a good way off, and stammered about mightily at first; but gradually I warmed up, and then such a speech as I did make her! When I got through, she looked at me so kindly and sweetly that my heart got right up into my throat; and, with a voice as sweet as her looks, she said, says she, 'I 'm very sorry for you, but you 're too late, Mr. Tucker; I 've already given my heart away.'

"It's no use to talk about how I felt, it 's all over now; but I must say that them words, 'You're too late Mr. Tucker,' have been ringing in my ears ever since. I composed a melancholy tune on it; and it got to be a by-word among all the young people of the country, 'You're too late, Mr. Tucker.'"

"But, who the deuce could she be in love with? I told over the whole matter to Roanoke; and he—he was a real gentleman—shed tears when he told me he loved Miss Sally Jones. He declared that he never had dreamed that I loved her; and that he never had told his own feelings to her, though sister had, and had talked to Miss Sally for him.

"'If it is not too late, Mr. Tucker,' said he, 'I 'll resign in your favour, and I 'll leave the neighbourhood, and never see her again."

"I then went to sister to chide her for trying to benefit another to my ruin; but she laughed right out, and said, 'Why did 'nt you tell me this long ago? You 're too late now; I 've done all I could for your friend, and Sally Jones loves him to distraction.'

"So she did, but her father did 'nt; but Miss Sally cried and fretted till the old man had to let them get married, though he never would give them one cent of property. The Injun was proud and high-spirited; he would 'nt let anybody treat him as an inferior, and so he took his beautiful bride, whom he loved very tenderly, and carried her off to his own country. My father was a little touched by my misfortunes; but he finally laughed it off, saying to me every day after this, "Daniel, my son, you are always too late." So I was after this; I went into a moping mood and noticed nothing, while father was too much engaged to pay attention to the visits of a strange character who came into the neighbourhood. This was a young scape-gallows who belonged to a race common in them days; he was a 'Frontier Wolf,' which was a kind of people without home, parents, or name. They were the children of runaways, thieves and adventurers; were born in the swamps and on the sands down in Arabia, and in such places, where they have no wives and husbands, or else swap them about or have them all in common. Their children generally have but one name, which we call the christened name, though certainly precious few of them knew what a christening was; and as they grew up, they took some other nickname, or else their companions gave them one. Thus I have known a Tom Shortlegs, a Bill Squint, a Jack Tearshirt, and a Jim Flatfoot; and thus it is, no doubt, that that bony rascal, Tim Ribs, got his name. I 've no doubt he was one of these nameless children of the desert; and his sirname of Ribs was given to him on account of his poverty-stricken body. Well, this fellow who used to come about our neighbourhood was called Sam Step-and-fetch-it; an odd name, but which suited him exactly. He was a light, spry, nimble-witted lad; had a good face and a straight leg, and sung a song remarkably well. He was a pedler of small

wares, and every sort of odd notion; was a merry-hearted fellow, and was amazing fond of talking to the girls. They were fond of him, too; and thus while I was in the dumps for Sally Jones, and father was engaged with his philosophy, sister found time to get well acquainted with the young pedler. She would make him sing for her, and tell her stories about his strange life and adventures; and the upshot of the whole of it was, she ran away with him, and married him. Poor thing! no doubt she loved him, and was afraid to tell father or me of it; this caused her to marry him secretly, and then she was ashamed to come back. Thus one folly follows another; and thus my dear sister disappeared, and I have never seen or heard from her since. God knows I would freely forgive her, and love her still, if she would return; but I shall go down to the grave without ever seeing again her bright eyes, or hearing the prattle of her gentle voice." The old man's eyes were moist, and there was a silence of some moments before he thus continued his story: "Father sent me out in search of sister, and for months I roamed over the country, always carrying my fiddle with me; and I'd often hear of her, and get on her track, but always too late. 'My son,' said father, when I came home, 'women are all weak, foolish creatures, always excepting your sainted mother. Do n't you see how they all like and run after foreigners? Sally Jones loved your rival because he was an Injun, and she had never seen an Injun before; and your sister would n't love him because she did know him, and loved that frontier Wolf, Sam Step-and-fetch-it, because he was an outlandish son of an outlandish race. I never knew but one woman that was a woman as a woman ought to be; and that was your mother. Get all our things ready and let us move back to Roanoke Island; I want to spend the evening of my days near my sainted Mary's grave.' Again I was too late; father sickened and died before we could get off; but I brought his body here, and laid it beside my mother's. That's all my history that's worth hearing now."

It did not seem to the company that they had heard all that was interesting in the story of Dan; they wished to know

whom, when and how he had finally married, and what had become of the mother of Walter. But Dan appeared disposed to be silent on these subjects, and his guests were too civil to ask him any questions about them.

CHAPTER XV.

MR. ZIP COON ARRIVES ON A VISIT TO POCOSIN DAN—POLITICS AND PREJUDICES. A WAR OF WORDS AND A CONTEST OF SWEET SOUNDS.

HAT evening, quite a sensation was produced on the premises of Pocosin Dan by the arrival of another guest. It was no less a personage than the famous Zip Coon, a hale and hearty old fellow; upon whom the weight of forty-five years hung as lightly as did the garments that encased his giant proportions. He was dressed in his Sunday apparel; his immense bell-crowned hat sitting like a pyramid reversed upon the crown of his head, and leaving exposed his curly black hair sprinkled with a few grey blossoms; his blue coat with its metal buttons, its long, peaked tail, and its high, stiff collar, had been carefully cleaned and brushed; and his loose buff trowsers were sufficiently short to show with what care his boots had been varnished. A huge ruffle ornamented the bosom of his shirt, the chain of his watch jingled with a bunch of seals and keys, and the small patch of whiskers under each ear had been trimmed and curled with the nicest eare. There was a constant frown upon the brow of Zip; his motions were violent, and his voice loud and sturdy; but despite the roughness of his manner and harshness of his words, it was easy to see that his big heart was as warm as his face was red. Equally plain was it that he enjoyed life with lively relish, though he affected to live only among the recollections of that remote and undefined antiquity known in all ages as "the good old

times;" nor did his looks justify the epithet which had become indissolubly connected with his name. In fact, the word old has often a different meaning from that of aged, an assertion proved by the case of Mr. Coon, whom his mother called "Old Zip," when he lay a burly infant in her lap, and who was thus ever afterwards known. He seemed to be an old friend of Pocosin Dan's, and of his servants, each of whom he shook cordially by the hand, while Dan conferred the same honour on Booker, the favourite slave and constant companion of Zip. As soon as these ceremonies were finished Old Zip cast his eyes towards a sideboard, and Dan understanding the hint, a flask of brandy instantly appeared, and was quickly emptied of at least one half its contents. Mr. Coon next looked curiously at Robert Bladen and his sister, and his host again understanding him, related what he knew of their history, telling them at the same time that his new guest was an old acquaintance of his, a Virginian, and a fiddler of note. The dangers and troubles of the young English couple furnished Old Zip with a text, from which he began a tirade against the Province of North Carolina, and against his friend Pocosin Dan, for dwelling among such people. Dan was not prepared to admit the truth of any of Zip's assertions touching these matters, and soon the two friends fell into a furious dispute, each one manfully contending for the honour of his Province and denouncing the country of the other, its institutions, its inhabitants, and their manners and customs. There was about Mr. Coon's manner a smack of the modern orator, for his gestures were a little pompous, and, though arguing with his host, he addressed himself chiefly to the bystanders. Dan, on the contrary, though he did not speak so loud, laugh so often, nor flourish his arms so furiously, spoke straight at his antagonist, emphasising each sentence by slapping his right hand into the palm of his left, and hurling a shower of pungent arrows, every one of which struck its mark. There was another point of difference between the friends. Old Zip was more ready to attack, but Old Dan the more tireless when the fight was begun; and thus, to the great relief of the spectators, he at last worried down his opponent, and the

strife for a while ceased. The Bladens now prevailed on them to tune their violins and engage in a more entertaining rivalry; butwhen Zip, after much blowing, spitting, and screwing, had got his instrument ready, the fiddlers could not agree upon a tune. Dan was for playing certain Scotch airs, which were favourites with him; Mr. Coon preferred the Virginia reel, and so they were soon in the midst of another dispute. Waxing warm in the strife, each struck up a different air, which he performed tastefully and accurately, without being in the least confused by the music of the other. Thus they continued, becoming more and more lively and animated, the one pouring himself out on "George Booker," the other carried away by "Killecrankie:" the one swaying to and fro, patting his feet and droning with his voice; the other sitting straight and motionless as to his body, his head thrown back, and his upturned eyes "in a fine frenzy rolling," till at last, in a perfect frenzy, old Zip threw his whole soul into that brisk reel which has been called after him ever since, while Pocosin Dan discoursed in the most ravishing manner that immortal tune with which his name is likely to be linked for ever. Having thus displayed their powers, their independence and their tastes, the rival fiddlers became extremely amicable and harmonious, and played in concert for the rest of the evening.

Their music, which had held in mute rapture the three young listeners, finally gave way to an anxious consultation, in which each one present took a part, and which concerned the future conduct of more than Robert Bladen and his sister. The siuation of the little Pocosin was an embarrassing one, for his father was satisfied, for some unexpressed reason, that it was improper to continue him longer with Ricketts, while he was too scrupulously honest to forfeit his word. The lad himself had no desire to return, for he was disgusted with the manners of the bankers, whose mode of life he could not endure. It was finally agreed, however, that he should for the present go back to the beach, though he was to delay his journey until his father, Zip Coon, and their English friends could start for New Berne,

TRIAL OF MUSICAL SKILL BETWEEN DAN TUCKER AND ZIP COON.

whither they intended to go by the first opportunity. The house of Dan was on Roanoke Island, not far from the great Occum river, or Pamlico sound, and it was not uncommon for vessels to pass within hailing distance. It was uncertain, however, when one would pass that way, and preparations were making for an overland trip, when on the second day after their arrival on the island, Bladen and his sister were rejoiced to hear that a ship was in sight. Walter was now over and over again secretly counselled by his father with regard to his future conduct, loaded with messages and presents by Alice, for her little friend Utopia, and for her mother, and kindly admonished by Zip to keep a "bright look out, and be a man." He himself said but little, but his eye grew a shade darker and more melancholy, and his voice sounded with a deeper and softer pathos, as he parted from his father and his friends. Dan himself, locking his house, and leaving it in the care of his faithful servants, shook cordially by the hand every human being that he left behind him, taking a silent leave of Walter, while the tears glistened in his mild blue eyes.

CHAPTER XVI.

SOCIETY IN NEW BERNE IN THE OLDEN TIME.

THE society of New Berne, gilded by the presence of the illustrious Susannah Carolina Matilda, shone with a lustre little inferior to that which blazed in the courts of royalty itself. Stars are the attendants of night; and thus, while the royal sun illumined with his unrivalled beams the precincts of St. James, his chastened rays were reflected in the fair and distant town on the Neuse, by a softer luminary, not dazzling enough to obscure or hide a host of lesser lights that gemmed the provincial firmament.

The votaries of pleasure and ambition flocked in from all parts of the adjacent country; the minions of fashion vied with each other in splendid equipages and rich costumes, and a spirit of devoted and generous loyalty animated the highest and the lowest. The streets were thronged with a gay and glittering crowd, a contagious desire for extravagant display seized every rank, and wild revelry, feasting and rejoicing, were the order of the day and of the night. It was in the midst of these festivities that the English strangers arrived in town, and found it so crowded that it was difficult to get accommodations. For the present they deemed it proper to conceal their names and rank, and as neither Dan nor his friend Coon cut a very distinguished figure, the party were rudely received at every fashionable house, and compelled at last to put up at the inn of Mons. Dufrong, a dapper little Frenchman, above whose door George the Third and Henry Quatre were shaking hands over a mug of foaming ale.

The house of Mons. Dufrong, the "Carolina inn," held a respectable position in the second rank, and was kept wonderfully clean and neat, though its dimensions were small, and though the same roof covered an inn and a grocery, both belonging to the same proprietor. The three men were all crowded into one small apartment, while the lady was installed in a chamber that looked as if it had been prepared for some Lilliputian queen; and it was, therefore, at once resolved by the English couple that they would pay their respects at court on the next morning. They took a friendly leave of their late companions, Alice exhibiting even more than usual warmth and frankness in her manners towards them, while the conduct of Robert, without being haughty, was sufficiently reserved to show that he had now assumed his superiority of rank.

"I tell you, friend Zip," said Dan, when they were gone, "there is something strange about them children, and I can't take my thoughts off them. Just think of it; here they are, poor things, without experience, and without parents, and far away from home, and as innocent and as frisky as two lambs, while some one may be preparing to slaughter them! What

did they run off for? why did they come here? Why I should a' thought, that all the young gallants of old England would 'ave gone into mourning when that blessed little creature came away!"

"There 's as good fish in the sea as ever came out of it," replied Zip; "and, for my part, I never trouble myself to account for the antics of the women. But when you talk about purty gals, you forget old Virginny, the greatest place for sich things, it's given up, in all the world. Why, sir, I 've seen at least five hundred that are no more to compare to Miss Bladen, nor the queen is to the wife of a sand banker. Alice, indeed!—if you think *her* a beauty"——

"I say she *is* a beauty," interrupted Dan, with animation; "I say she *is* a beauty; a sweet, tender, dear little creature, whose like is not to be found in all Virginny, and never was, and never will be, till the day of doom. I 've been in Virginny, and I 've been in South Carolina and Georgia, and I'm an old man to boot—older and more experienced than you, Mr. Coon, and I 've never seen such a girl before, excepting only one."

"And who was she?" asked Zip.

"Utopia," replied Dan; "you 've heard me speak of her"——

"Are de Messieurs zhantlemen Coony and Tuckaire in?" asked Monsieur Dufrong, popping his powdered head in at the door.

"In where, Monsieur Bullfrog?" asked old Zip.

"Vat, you call me Bullfrog, saire! hah, hah, goot—très-bien, Monsieur Coony is verrai much amusan, verrai! Bullfrog! hah, hah!"

"What do you want?" asked Dan.

"Noting, saire; I vant noting—but de quel dites? de Governaire, he servant call for you, Messieurs."

"Send him in here," replied Coon, and immediately a negro in livery entered, and announced that his excellency Josiah Martin, Governor, &c., would be pleased to see Mr. Tucker and Mr. Coon, at ten o'clock that morning, and to present them to the Queen's sister.

The heart of Zip throbbed at this announcement, and he was fully satisfied that his own consequence had procured him the honour; but Dan took a different view of the matter, and saw the hand of Alice Bladen in the whole proceeding. Proud he certainly was of such a distinction, but he was a modest man, and he felt a painful consciousness of his want of polish. Mr. Coon was not at all abashed, believing that he could cut a figure anywhere, and both knew that a request from such a source was equal to a command, and accordingly commenced making preparations. Tucker had with him an old pair of velvet shorts and a laced vest which he had worn in his youth; and these he donned, while his companion wore the dress in which he was introduced to the reader at Roanoke Island. Each had a servant with him, and these were busily engaged for at least one hour in giving a finishing touch to their masters' toilette.

CHAPTER XVII.

SOCIETY IN NEW BERNE * CONTINUED. — OLD DAN AND ZIP COON INITIATED INTO HIGH LIFE.—CHESTER ROWTON.—DR. RIBS AGAIN CREATES A SENSATION.

HEN the two fiddlers arrived at the palace, they found a sentinel in the yard, and were informed that only one of them could enter at a time. Zip took precedence, and the soldier marched him towards the entrance, calling out his name to the servant who stood at the door. Zip, at this, stopped and looked inquiringly at his conductor, who waved his hand, saying, "Go forward, sir." "Mr. Zippy Coon!" exclaimed the servant at the door, as he led the former towards

* What is said here of Society in New Berne is strictly true; there was none more elegant in the United States. Indeed the place was once a most delightful one, distinguished alike for its hospitality, its beauty as a town, and the moral excellence and intellectual eminence of its citizens. Here lived the Stanleys—

the audience hall. "You 're very familiar!" said old Zip; "what do you want?" "Walk on, if you please," replied the boy; and Mr. Coon strode forward, scowling furiously at the last servant, who ushered him into the presence of the Governor, and again repeated his name.

As Mr. Tucker ran this gauntlet of officials he felt more abashed than Zip, at the repetition of his name, but he held his peace till, at last, unable to stand it any longer, he cried out, "I'm not deaf, friend; what 'll you have?" When he entered, almost in a run, he found his friend quite at his ease, and relating to the Governor the impudent conduct of his servants; whom, he said, but for his respect for his excellency, he should have left with not an ear among them. Martin was too much a man of breeding to laugh at Zip's mistake, or to shame him by correcting it; and so, promising to look into the conduct of his dependents, he presented the fiddlers to his illustrious guest. She graciously permitted both to kiss her hand—a ceremony which Dan at least would have performed with considerable grace had he not caught the sparkling eye of Alice Bladen, from whose kindly-beaming face he could not divert his looks. Indeed, the old man was so overwhelmed by the beauty and splendour that surrounded him, that the sight of a familiar face was a relief to him; and though he had before thought her extremely fair, she now looked a thousand times more lovely than ever, seeming to him a vision of more than mortal sweetness. Fearful, however, lest he might violate some cardinal rule of etiquette, Dan renewed his acquaintance only with his eyes, and, in fact, stood perfectly mute, until the lady Susannah, seeing his embarrassment, with admirable tact undertook to relieve him.

"I am just informed, Mr. Tucker," said she to him, "that

magnum et venerabile nomen—than the head of which family, the late John Stanley, there was not a more accomplished gentleman or able debater in the Union: here lived also the late Judge Gaston, a man universally venerated in North Carolina, for his abilities and his matchless purity; and here lived the Shepards, the Bryants, the Washingtons, and other families old as the State and distinguished throughout it.

you and your friend, Mr. Coon, are musicians, and have acquired considerable fame by your skill upon the violin."

"We make some pretensions that way, may it please your gracious ladyship," answered Dan; "but we do not deserve such a compliment as your ladyship has paid us." "I am, myself, a poor judge of such things," returned the lady Susannah; "but you have a friend here who speaks highly of you. By the way, I take it on myself to thank you for your kindness to Alice Bladen, and I will see that you are rewarded in a more substantial way."

"May it please your gracious ladyship," said Dan, "I am already rewarded, and cannot think of receiving anything more. I would—if your ladyship will forgive me—I would only beg the favour of your ladyship that I and my friend might be permitted to hear the concert to-night."

"Certainly you shall be permitted," replied the lady Susannah; "and I will see that seats are prepared expressly for your accommodation."

"Chester Rowton!" cried the servant at the door, and the buzz of conversation instantly ceased, while all eyes were bent on the elegant stranger. Dan had looked with amazement and delight on the fine and stately forms that moved through the hall and his heart had swelled with pride as he thought of the impression the gentlemen of Carolina must make on his friend, old Zip; but even he, prejudiced as he was in favour of his native province, instantly awarded in his mind the prize of superiority to him whose name was last announced. His broad forehead and his eagle eye commanded the respect of the men; while his brilliant dress, his glossy curls, and his graceful manners, at once fascinated nearly every female beholder. The delight and wonder excited by his presence had not subsided, when another sensation was produced by the announcement of "Doctor M'Donald de Riboso!" Alice, who had suddenly become serious when Rowton was announced, now astonished everybody by a burst of laughter, as she beheld the phenomenon at the door. There he was, her quondam beau, the veritable Dr. Ribs, his shoulders covered with flaming red locks, his hugely-jointed legs tightly

bound in light-coloured shorts and silk hose, and an enormous rapier hanging by his side, and threatening at every step to trip him up. Pausing at the entrance of the hall, to fix the attention of every eye, he bowed lowly and smilingly towards each point of the compass, and then, advancing, knelt at the feet of the half-frightened lady Susannah, and, taking with both his hands the tips of her fingers, he kissed them with a loud smack, and then arose and stood before her. At this instant Alice, who was standing behind the object of the doctor's attentions, again exploded with a merry laugh; and the lady Susannah, as she looked up at the startling object before her, felt that she would give half her jewels to indulge in a cachinnation like that which was ringing near her. As she looked up with her mouth pursed, and her whole face showing the tortures of the laughing distemper which had seized her, the doctor again tried to overwhelm her with a look and a smile. Alice again gave violent vent to her felings, and the lady Susannah gracefully but precipitately left the room, touching Alice as she went, and being followed by her.

CHAPTER XVIII.

A CONVERSATION IN THE PALACE.

PRAY tell me, girl, what sort of gentlemen have they in Carolina?" asked the lady Susannah when she was alone with Alice.

"A rare species, judging by the specimens I have seen," answered Alice; "I have seen wonders enough to fill a book."

"All of which you must relate to me, my dear," returned her ladyship; "but first tell me who is this Mr. Rowton and his friend Dr. Ribs? What an odd pair they are—Hyperion and Satyr! Did you ever see either of them before?"

"I 've seen them in Utopia," replied Alice.

"Utopia? where is that? This is certainly a wonderful country abounding in still more wonderful people."

"Utopia is a name given by some philosophic wag to that part of the beach where we were wrecked," said Alice.

"And is that where you saw Mr. Rowton?" inquired the lady Susannah.

"Yes; I saw him there, and have seen him in England."

Her ladyship looked hard at Alice, as she continued, "Did he not come with you to this country?

"He was in the same ship," answered Alice.

"I thought it must be he," cried the Lady Susannah. I thought it was he, the moment I saw him. You must know, my dear, that report has preceded you here, and it is said you have behaved in a very naughty manner towards a kind old uncle and a handsome gallant. I defended you at first, but I think I shall have to turn against you, for I wonder how you could find it in your heart to refuse such an offer."

"I do not love him," said Alice Bladen.

"What a pity!" exclaimed her ladyship; "come, you must think better of this matter; but I must tell you what we have heard." And, hereupon, her ladyship related what had passed between her and the Governor, and the Governor lady, in regard to her; and Alice, who feeling bound to unbosom herself to such an illustrious lady, became confidential and briefly told the history of her life.

"I am a woman," said the lady Susannah, at last, "and I know how to judge a woman's heart; but still I wish you could love this gentleman, for he is a very proper gallant. You say you have a distant relation residing at Cape Fear?"

"We claim kindred," answered Alice, "but the degree is very far removed."

"In which case," said Lady Susannah, "you, while in distress, should not be the first to recognize the relationship. Believe me, this is good advice, but you shall run no risk, for I am going to Cape Fear myself, and you shall be one of my suite."

"I humbly thank your ladyship."

"Nay, Alice," returned the the lady Susannah; "is there anything to thank me for? In truth, my royal sister would hardly be ashamed of seeing such a gem among her jewels; but, tell me, my dear, think you the gallant Rowton will follow you?"

"It is not possible for me to say what are his designs," answered Alice.

"You must not be too harsh upon him," said lady Susannah; "the Governor is half disposed to send you back to England, and perhaps, while under his supervision, it would be well to appear to encourage Rowton. It might be dangerous to leave him behind. Do you understand me?"

"I do not think that I do," answered Alice; "it is impossible for me to disguise my sentiments, nor would I attempt"——

"Leave it all to me—let me manage it," replied her ladyship. "As soon as your gallant sees that I am intimate with you, he will approach me in regard to you, and you may be sure I'll manage all things for the best. Now tell me something of Dr. Riboso, or Ribose—who is he, what is he, and where did he come from?"

"He is a Utopian," said Alice; "a poor vain fool, whose real name is Ribs, who has had the effrontery to make love to me."

"Gracious heaven!" exclaimed her ladyship.

"You need not be so astonished," continued Alice, "for if you will permit me to tell you so, he has fallen desperately in love with your ladyship."

"Treason, treason!" cried the lady Susannah: "how can you say such a thing?—the monster!"

"He is certainly in love with you," said Alice, "and he'll tell you so. He is one of those vain, silly creatures, who imagine that all the ladies love them, when in fact, we make free with them because we do not respect them. What amusement we might have if your ladyship would take the right course."

"Hush, child, I see it all, but, mark me! when a lady who

is sister to the Queen condescends to such trifling, a discreet silence is becoming in her confidants."

"I understand you," said Alice, "and your ladyship may trust me implicitly."

CHAPTER XIX.

WALTER ARRIVES IN NEW BERNE AND EXCITES MUCH SURPRISE FROM HIS APPEARANCE AND MANNERS.—MEETS WITH HIS FATHER OLD DAN AND ZIP COON.—WALTER RELATES THE CAUSE OF HIS VISIT TO BERNE.—HIS AUDIENCE WITH THE GOVERNOR.

s Pocosin Dan and his friend Coon returned from their visit to the Palace, they were not a little surprised by an apparition that met them in the street. This was the little Pocosin, who carried a small bundle under his arm, a gun, a bow and arrows, his clothes stained with mud from his head to his feet. His appearance had excited quite a sensation in the town, and when he was met by his father, a troop of boys and negroes were following at his heels, and the windows along the street were filled with faces. The father, now moving in fashionable society in a fashionable place, was mortified at the plight of his son, who had become a spectacle; but the feelings of nature quickly triumphed over those of pride, and the old man shed tears of joy as he embraced the lad with affectionate fervour. He himself, and his companion Zip, were also objects of curiosity in the streets of New Berne; and thus the crowd which had followed Walter received constant accessions, until it swelled into a disorderly mob, upon whom Zip, ever and anon, cast a look of defiance, and sometimes bestowed a blessing in language more energetic than polite. Tucker held his peace, and mended his pace as the crowd pressed around him, laughing and hooting; and Walter, his lips compressed, and his dark eyes gleaming with

a deep and dangerous meaning, kept his right hand pressed upon the hilt of a dagger, which he carried in his bosom. In this way the three friends moved on until they reached the hotel, where they were politely received by Monsieur Dufrong, who, resenting the indignity which had been offered to his guests, harangued their disorderly followers in language that excited the most boisterous merriment. Old Dan now learned the cause of his son's sudden appearance, and heard, with no little interest, an account of recent occurrences at Utopia.

"After the Bladens left me," said Walter, "my employer began to treat his wife in the most cruel manner, and it was during their quarrels that I found out what a scoundrel he was. I found out that he was a most dishonest man; that he would steal and cheat whenever he got a chance, and that he was in the habit of holding out lights to deceive sailors and cause wrecks. He kept a horse for this very purpose, and no doubt in the world he was the cause of the loss of the ship which was wrecked on the night of the ball. All this his wife had heard from Ike Harvey, her other husband, and all this she told me, and warned me to leave as soon as I could. While I was thinking about how I might get off, there was another alarm about Wild Bill; and that night Utopia, the little daughter of Mrs. Ricketts, disappeared. During all the next day, there was a continual alarm about Bill; and on the night following, and while Mrs. Ricketts was absent on a visit, a company of robbers broke into the house, took old Ricketts out of his bed and murdered him, and then carried off all the valuables they could find. I slept in the store, which was broken open after the murder was committed, and I was tied and gagged, and left in that condition. I remained bound in that way until late in the morning, when some men who came over to trade released me. We found the body of old Ricketts lying in the yard, barbarously mangled, but we could get no clue to the murderers, for I did not know any one of those whom I saw. They were all black and had on singular dresses, and no man spoke a single word during the whole performance.

"It was known that the old man and his wife often quarrelled; she had several times been heard to throw out hints that Bill would some day give him his deserts; and on the very night of the murder she told the neighbour with whom she was staying, that she had come there to get out of the way. She was very merry that night, got nearly drunk, and often said that she felt sure something good for her was going to happen. Rowton, who took an active part in the matter, gathered up all these facts; and he is firmly of opinion that the old woman and Wild Bill had colleagued together. He thinks that the girl was sent off on the first night on purpose, and that the old woman expected to make her escape in a few days. He therefore had her arrested, and a large number of the bankers (for they are very much excited), are bringing her to this place. They say that they intend to bring her to the governor at once, and to have a reward offered for Bill, as well as vindicate their own neighbourhood from the charge of bloodshed. The old woman herself is anxious to be brought here, for she wants to see Miss Alice Bladen, but no one can imagine what is her object.

"I left immediately; and after going by home, have walked through swamps nearly all the way in hopes that I might come upon the den of Bill."

"And what would you have done with him, my lad?" asked Coon.

"I would have killed him, and brought Utopia away," answered Walter. The only reply Zip saw fit to make to this, was an explosion of laughter, so loud, so hearty, and so long continued and provoking, that Walter exhibited symptoms of the extreme mortification which it caused him. "Don't get angry, my boy," said Zip wiping his eyes; "don't get angry, but the fact is,"—and here he again gave furious vent to his risible inclinations. He finished at last, and extending his hand to Walter, bade him cherish his brave spirit, but not to be too sanguine of being a second Hercules, who, according to Zip, knocked a bull down with his fist, and choked sundry lions and tigers till their tongues came out. Walter took the apology in good part, and then went with his father

to see the Governor, who, as Dan suggested, might be anxious to talk with him.

His excellency had, in fact, just given audience to Rowton and his follower Riboso or Ribs, and, to gratify Alice Bladen as well as himself, was on the eve of sending for the little Pocosin. Walter had dressed himself in the finest apparel which he had with him, but still, when he entered the Palace, and beheld its splendid furniture, he felt painfully conscious of his own rusticity, and wished himself again in the woods. He expected to see a race of men corresponding with the house, and he felt an awe as if he were advancing towards the presence of some superior being. After all, however, in those like Walter Tucker, it is only the reflection of the soul that can awe and subdue; and hence, when the young man saw before him a face stamped only with common passions and common attributes, his fears entirely vanished. He expected, therefore, to be unconcerned when Alice advanced, but the moment he caught her eye, his own fell, his frame trembled, and his courage forsook him. He had seen her often before; he had talked to her, and been with her often at Utopia, and yet he did not then feel any embarrassment. Perhaps, since then, his thoughts had dwelt on her, and now she occupied a different position in his mind; perhaps it was her dress and the place; but whatever was the cause, his voice faltered and his manner became constrained and awkward. She, too, had altered in her manners, for, as he quickly saw, she had nearly forgotten him, and met him with reserve and hauteur that surprised and offended him. Her conduct increased his confusion, till, as he thought, he detected a covert sneer at some awkward expression, and his swelling heart at once threw off its tremor, his eyes flashed, and from his lips fell words that astonished every one who heard him. His story excited the deepest interest in the Governor, and Walter observing this, eagerly asked what reward he might expect, were he to bring Wild Bill, dead or alive, to town.

"I am afraid the council will not allow me to pay any thing," said his Excellency; "for the treasury is low and the people discontented. However, if you will—"

"May it please your Highness," interposed Walter, "you do not understand me. I did not allude to any reward of money, but, I thought—I thought—"

"You thought what?" asked his excellency, smiling.

"I thought, if your Excellency would recommend me, or get the lady Susannah to recommend me, to some place in the army, I'd try."

"Come, my son," said his father; "never ask for your reward till you've won it. I'm afraid, Sir, we've tired your Excellency, and if you'll excuse us, we'll now take our leave."

"You may be assured, young man," said Martin, "that if you do what you have impliedly promised, the path of promotion will be open to you: but mind, do not risk too much. This Wild Bill is a cunning as well as a valiant rascal, and I have heard many astonishing things of him."

"Suppose I get you knighted," said the lady Susannah, "what name would you take? Sir Walter Tucker sounds rather plebeian, I think."

Alice laughed—it was an innocent laugh, and perhaps excited by some odd fancy of her own, but it stung Walter, and he answered, "I'll take my father's name, and perhaps some day it will not be one to be laughed at." The laugh of Alice became more violent, and Walter left in confusion.

CHAPTER XX.

THE GRAND CONCERT.—ART AND NATURE.—DAN TUCKER AND ZIP GIVE OFFENCE AT THE CONCERT AND ARE ORDERED TO WITHDRAW.

HE concert given in honour of the lady Susannah Carolina Matilda excited, before it came off, a great deal of interest and no little gossip. The musicians were all foreigners, and employed at considerable expense: an amateur company of actors was to rehearse a play, and much management and ingenuity had been exerted to procure the honour of a bid. All the *élite* of the town, and strangers and visitors of distinction were invited, and the great hall of the palace was filled with seats expressly for the occasion; a tier of elevated benches in the back part being designed for those of the humbler classes who might be admitted. Walter Pocosin had received this distinction with less pleasure than that which it had caused to his father and old Zip, and he was still less inclined to prize the honour when he entered the hall and felt his social degradation. He had never before associated with any but equals and inferiors, and he became restive, and could hardly realize his situation, as he beheld a gulf fixed between himself and the brilliant array of ladies and gentlemen who sat below him. He became moody and taciturn, and his spirit chafing within him, longed for the wilds of his native forests, while, as he occasionally fixed his eyes on the bright face of Alice Bladen, his breast heaved with emotion it would be difficult to describe. He saw Rowton—he despised that man—and others crowding round her, and chatting and laughing with her, and when he remembered that he could not and dared not approach her, the world and society appeared to him in a new light, and deep and troubled thoughts and strange

resolves floated through his mind. The play which was prepared for the occasion consisted of three acts, in each of which the humbly-born hero performed some deed of honourable renown, and at last, and greatly to the satisfaction of all, received his promised guerdon, a wife of high degree. The applause was hearty, but tempered, for the audience was polished and fastidious; but there was one whose feelings overcame him, and who, forgetful of the awful presence in which he was, gave a shout that startled every one from his seat. The truth is, old Zip had become absorbingly interested; his sympathies had grown warmer and warmer as the play advanced, and when the crusty old father of the beautiful and tender heroine gave her away with a free good will, the big boots of the Virginian made the benches rattle, as he cried out, "All right now! Give us your hand, old skin-flint!" The house was astounded at this outburst; and Dan, covered with confusion, blushed and hung his head, while his companion seemed entirely unconscious of having committed any impropriety. In fact, his air and manner indicated that he felt himself at home, while his whole conduct was in every respect diametrically opposite to that of Dan, who looked and acted like one under bonds for his good behaviour, or that felt himself under obligations to pay a marked and deferential attention to every part and tittle of the performance. He was afraid even to whisper, or to permit any one to whisper to him: he smiled when the Governor smiled, and he kept his eyes constantly fixed upon the stage. He sat bolt upright, and as prim as a *preux chevalier*; but even *his* powers of endurance, as well as those of Zip, were greatly tried when the musical part of the entertainment began.

Neither of the fiddlers had what is called a cultivated ear; neither of them had been accustomed to any kind of musical composition but simple and melodious harmony, and, consequently, the orchestra had performed several preludes while Dan and his friend were still impatiently waiting for the grand symphony to begin, and were still labouring under the supposition that the musicians were tuning their instruments. A burst of applause awakened them from their delusion, and then it

was, as the band attempted more laborious and complicated pieces, that the nerves of the old fiddlers began to vibrate as intensely as the strings which discoursed to them such rude, shrill, discordant sounds. Every one who has been to an opera, will remember with what sensations he first beheld the antics and motions of the head fiddler, and what an important functionary he seemed to be. There he sat, his bald head glistening in front of the audience, his eyes fixed immovably on his music, and his right arm waving law to those around him, as if the whole solar system were regulated by its motions, and the sounding of a single semi-quaver out of tune would topple the universe into ruins. There he sat, forgetting the world, its cares, and its sorrows, forgetting life, and death, and man, and the objects of man's ambition, every thought of his soul fixed upon the dotted lines before him, his heart in his bow, his whole being but an abstraction of majors and minors, flats and sharps—politicians might rise and fall, battles be fought and won, empires lost and gained, and nations swept away; but what were these to Signor Squeakelli? —and what were heroes, statesmen, poets, and novelists, but unweighed trifles, paltry things, unworthy of a thought? There he sat, a sublime ideal, breathing himself away in minims, with the swing of his despotic bow determining the length and breadth of quavers and crotchets, the sovereign arbiter of a universe of sounds, *forte*, *mezzo*, and *piano*; the grand dispenser of tones, and semi-tones, chords and tetrachords. Such was the worthy who directed the band at the grand concert played before the lady Susannah; and like a thousand jagged instruments did the sounds which he awaked pierce the rustic islander and his friend. It seemed to them that the performers were evoking from their instruments the cries of a legend of tormented spirits, and the unfortunate Dan, struggling with his natural feelings, and his sense of politeness, sat like one who rested upon sharp points, his head screwed down upon his shoulders, his eyes bent wistfully upon the corner of the ceiling, and the muscles of his face ridged and twisted with spasmodic twitches. Mr. Coon, however, was not so fearful of giving offence, and his

indignation was plainly visible in the cloud which gathered and darkened on his brow. He seemed to be especially inflamed at the leader of the orchestra, upon whom he gazed with a fixed and stern frown, until, transported by one of the worthy's extra flourishes, "Oh, hush!" burst like a deep growl from his lips, and he turned impatiently in his seat.

The Governor's politeness had now been put to the final test, and a servant soon appeared and informed Mr. Coon and his friends, that their absence would be more agreeable than their presence. It was a cutting rebuke, and they all felt it, but even Zip could see that it was no time or place to show resentment, and he quietly withdrew.

"Mr. Tucker, I hope you 're not offended at me, are you?" asked Zip, after they had walked some time in silence.

"I was a little angry at first," answered Dan, "but it 's all gone now. It 's true you behaved rather badly, but the Governor was too severe."

"Entirely too severe," said Zip, "and I 'll take occasion to let him know my opinion of him, too, before all 's over. We Virginians are not in the habit of permitting people to treat us as inferiors."

"We Virginians! Confound you, man," exclaimed Dan, "this Virginia arrogance of yours has got us all into this trouble. I wish I may never hear the words again!"

"I think Mr. Coon is right about one thing," said Walter, "and I admire all the Virginians for this; they think their own State and their own people as good as any in the world, and when they go abroad, they do not go sneaking about, but hold up their heads, and challenge respect from everybody."

"That 's a smart lad of yours," put in Zip; "Walter, my boy, you must have some of the Virginia blood in you."

"I am a Carolinian," said Walter, emphasising the last word, "and I am as proud of my birth-place as you are of yours."

"That 's all very right, my lad," replied Zip; "but then you have not so many great things to be proud of. For instance, where have you such a river as James'?"

"You forget our Roanoke," said Dan.

"Roanoke?" exclaimed Zip.

"Aye, Roanoke," cried Walter; "I love that name," continued he with animation, "and it shall be immortal when James' river is forgotten!"

Conversing in this way the friends arrived at their hotel, where, in the more homely, but sweeter melody of their own violins, they soon forgot that to them piercing jargon which had grated so harshly on their ears, and caused their disgrace. Mons. Dufrong soon afterwards came into their room, and manifested the most extravagant delight at their music, and declared that he felt himself a boy again. He conceived a great reverence for his guests, and Zip, now in his proper sphere, with admirers around him, was fully himself again: so, too, was Tucker; but the latter's son was thoughtful and sad. The music set him to castle building, and before it ceased he had fought many famous battles and won for himself a bright name among men.

CHAPTER XXI.

DEVELOPMENT OF CHARACTER.—COURT ETIQUETTE.—A FEW WORDS BETWEEN ROBERT BLADEN AND WALTER ON TRUE NOBILITY.—WALTER LEAVES THE COURT IN DISGUST.

"FATHER," said Walter Tucker, on the morning after the concert; "I shall start home to-day."

"You *shall* start, my son? Why do you not ask if you *may* start?"

"Because my mind is made up," replied the lad.

"Made up without consulting me? Walter, Walter," continued the old man, "this is strange talk and very unlike you, as you used to be. My son, wherein have I done any-

thing to forfeit that respect which you owe me, and which you have always paid me until now?"

"You have not forfeited my respect," answered Walter; "nor will I ever cease to respect, reverence and love you. But it is not inconsistent with my duty to you to start home immediately, and as no one is interested in that matter but myself, I supposed you would not object."

"I might not have done so," answered Dan; "but it would have been proper to ask."

"Well, father, will you let me go?"

"Why can't you stay and go with me, my son? It is dangerous to go alone, and besides, as we are going by sea as soon as the vessel is loaded, you might profit by a trip on the water."

"I prefer the other way," said Walter: "I do hope you will let me go. I cannot stay another day in this town, for I am miserable here."

"I am sorry for that," returned Dan; "for I had some thought of getting you into business here."

The boy strode across the floor as he answered: "I have cut the clerk, father. I intend to be a gentleman; and never shall I see this hateful town again until I am the equal of the highest man in it."

"You are equal to any of them now," said Dan; "but they don't think so, and that makes the odds. Well, my son, here is some money; go as soon as you can get ready, and may God go with you."

"And may he bless you for ever!" exclaimed Walter. "My mind is made up on a certain course, but the chief end of all my aims is your honour as well as my own. I am going to make a call at the palace, and then I will leave."

"A call at the palace!" cried the old man; "why you forget, son, that we were driven from there last night in disgrace."

"I shall call, notwithstanding," said Walter; "you know what interest Miss Bladen takes in the daughter of Mrs. Ricketts, and how she shed tears yesterday, when she heard what had happened to the girl."

"I know all that," answered the father; "but what has this to do with your visit to the Governor?"

"I am going to see Miss Bladen," answered Walter.

"Take care she don't set the Governor's hounds after you," said old Dan, laughing

"I shall take care that no one insults me with impunity," replied Walter; and, taking an affectionate leave of his father, he went to pay his visit. He was informed by the servant at the door that his Excellency was not in, and that Miss Bladen was indisposed. Verily, it seemed to Walter that a sudden epidemic must have attacked the inmates of the palace, for nearly every one was on the sick list, and unable to leave his or her private chamber. Robert Bladen was also indisposed, quite unwell, said the servant, who was not in the least abashed, as that young man, the next moment, made his appearance. There was less hauteur in his manner than he had exhibited on the day before, and he inquired kindly the object of Walter's visit. The latter, softened and confused by the kindness of the Englishman, was hardly able to tell what he wanted, and answered that he was about to leave town: he wished to know if Mr. Bladen, had any suggestions to make, or directions to give, for the rescue of Utopia.

"I 'll go and consult my sister," answered Bladen; and after being absent for a few minutes he returned, saying, "that his sister was sorry she could not come out. She agrees with me, however," continued Bladen, "that immediate and untiring search should be made, and I need not tell you that our purses will be at your command, if you bring her in safety to us."

"I need not tell you that I am not a menial," returned Walter, proudly.

Bladen looked inquiringly at him for a minute, and said, "How do you mean, Walter?—did I offend you by an offer of money?"

"No, sir," answered Walter; "but—but, I do not like folks to talk to me as if *money* was the only thing that could induce me to do a good action."

"Then you seek honour, perhaps?" said Bladen.

"I wish to be understood as being governed by those principles which govern gentlemen," returned Walter.

"No doubt your heart is as good as any man's," replied Bladen; "but you must remember that it would not be discreditable to any one in your station to do things which would disgrace one in mine. Each rank is expected to be governed by certain rules which are peculiar to it."

"I don't know what the rules about rank are," said Walter, "but I know this: I know that honour, honesty, and a love of fame, are not inherited by any one class."

"Of course they are not," answered Bladen; "but they are applied differently in different classes, and have different rewards. But if you want to become the founder of a great family, I would advise you to persevere in some useful calling, and may be you will be knighted after awhile, especially if you can get the influence of the lady Susannah."

"I don't want anybody's influence," retorted Walter; "ain't it sufficient to do great deeds, and let these ennoble you?"

"How can you be ennobled except by the king?" asked Bladen; "nobody but his majesty can confer any order of nobility in these realms—and, therefore, I advise you to cultivate the good graces of her ladyship, the excellent Susannah Carolina Matilda."

"She may be, and no doubt she is, as good as she 's beautiful," returned Walter; "but the road to honour does not lie through her good graces, or those of anybody else. It runs through dangers and difficulties, and none but the virtuous and good can follow it; and when they do follow it, *their own deeds*, and not the king's parchment ones, will proclaim their nobility."

Bladen, surprised at this reply, was looking silently and curiously at the author of it, when Rowton and his foil, Dr. Ribs, came in. They had scarcely been seated a minute when Walter heard the rustle of female dresses, and, with a choking sensation, left the apartment just as Alice Bladen and the lady Susannah glided in. As he went, he cast back a

furtive glance, to assure himself that he was not mistaken, and immediately the evidence of his eyes was confirmed by that of his ears, in which rung the merry and unmistakeable laugh of Alice. Though clear, and sweet, and innocent, however, it sounded to Walter like the mock of a demon, and burned upon his brain like a wild delirium.

When Alice returned to her chamber she found in it an arrow, round the head of which was a paper, on which was written the following words:—

"To Miss Alice Bladen.

"Did I not serve you truly? You laugh at me because I have a humble name, and wear a humble dress. It 's very true that my manners are awkward, but my heart is the heart of a gentleman, while his whom you love so well is as black as the waters of the Dismal Swamp.

"Farewell. When you see me again, you will not laugh at the humble name of

"Walter Tucker."

The arrow which carried this paper missile was a curious one, and evidently had been made by an Indian, years before. Its head was shaped like a heart, and painted red; near this was a small and perfectly carved dove, with a dead viper in its mouth: at the other end was an eagle, and along the side were emblematic representations of victories and achievements. Doubtless, thought Alice, this has been the love messenger of some Indian warrior chief; and therefore, as a curious relic, she carefully put it among her valuables. Whether she deemed the note equally curious is not certain; but, judging by her conduct, it was hard to understand; for, after laying it aside, she again opened it and read it, and would even often leave company to go and examine it, and then replace it in its sacred place of deposit.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE SCENE SHIFTS—A FEW WORDS ON THE CERTAINTY OF UNCERTAINTY—UTOPIA'S ALARM AT THE APPEARANCE OF HEATTY, AND HER COMMUNICATION.

THE only thing certain in regard to the course of things in this world is its absolute uncertainty. Remarkable and pleasant reunions sometimes happen; but there is nothing more sure than that all associations must be dissolved, and that the streams of our lives must constantly diverge from those of the friends whom we cherish most. Excepting man and wife, it is rarely the case that any two individuals live together, or near each other, from youth to age; and hence, whenever we read of a number of characters grouped together, and kept together for any length of time, we may be certain that it is fiction only which we read; and fiction, too, for whose counterpart we shall look in vain among the chequered scenes of real life. However mournful it may be in some respects, it is nevertheless true, that dissolution and separation are the fixed laws of every society; and hence, even at this early stage of our history, the characters of whom it treats begin to scatter.

The counties of Tyrrell* and Hyde, in North Carolina,

* There is a beautiful little lake in Tyrrell county, called Lake Phelps; and the traveller can now be shown places which will exactly correspond with those mentioned in the text. He will at these places see a country and a people different from any he has ever seen before, unless he has been in the swamps of North Carolina. He will find in these swamps a peculiar race—white men and runaway slaves—who live by making shingles from the cypress and juniper, and whose houses are built on sleepers laid on the stumps of trees. These shingle-getters carry their boards to the nearest store or grocery, and exchange them for

were, at one time, almost entirely overspread by one continuous and dreary swamp, whose miry bed was covered with a tangled mat of reeds, bamboos, briers and brushwood, and over which frowned a dark forest of gum, cypress, and juniper. The shade of the immense trees that stood in serried ranks, the dark green foliage of the impenetrable undergrowth, and the black waters that covered the oozy soil from which sprang such rank vegetation, were blended into one picture of gloom, and the howl of the wolf and scream of the panther enhanced the horrors of the dismal scene. From near the centre of this swamp to Albemarle Sound extended a broad, still sheet of water, now called Alligator river; and from this estuary, and at right angles with it on the east, stretches a small bayou, nearly in the form of an L, with the top next to the river. In the angle formed by the bend of this branch of Alligator river was a house, in which the girl Utopia found herself on the morning after she had been spirited away from the beach. Not far from the house stood another small tenement: there was a boat in the creek close by, but no sound was to be heard, nor was any living thing to be seen. The girl was in a room by herself; the door was fastened on the outside, and she began to think herself lost, for the morning was now far advanced. She remembered well all that had happened on the night before—she remembered that she had been kindly spoken to, and assured that no injury should befal her; but when the long-expected light at last broke into her chamber, no human face presented itself, and the day wore on apace while yet no human voice was heard. At length the door opened, and the old negress of Captain Ricketts came noiselessly in, and seeming to the girl more hideous than she had ever looked before. Her frame, which had always been small, was now shrivelled to a mummy, and stooped with age; her coal-black skin was like

meal, flour, meat, clothing, and whiskey; and it is said that in former times men have made fortunes from the labour of fugitive slaves whom they would not question. These swamps, too, have been the scene of many wild deeds, crimes, and romances; and a volume might be filled with legends which could be gathered by a short sojourn in their vicinity.

a scroll of parchment, gathered in folds upon her sunken cheeks, and drawn tightly over her long, sharp and fleshless chin; a thick tuft of hair grew low down upon her narrow forehead, and the whites only of her deeply-set and bleared eyes seemed to be visible.

After the scenes of the night before, could Utopia be otherwise than alarmed in the presence of such a creature in such a place? She was not a bold nor a fearless girl, but she had a disposition which inclined her to be contented in any position; she tried always to think herself happy, and to think that those about her were innocent and happy like herself. She trembled when old Heatty first came into her room, but she soon threw off her dread, looked smilingly at the slave, and spoke freely and kindly to her. The more she smiled, however, and the more kindly she spoke, the more surly would the negress grow; still Utopia talked affectionately to her, and in the most respectful manner endeavoured to find out where she was, and the cause of her imprisonment. After breakfast, Heatty went to sleep, first desiring the girl not to wake her, and thus Utopia was left alone, in a most gloomy place. The door of the room being now unfastened, she busied herself in looking about the premises, gathered great quantities of wild flowers, and on her return decked off her room in the most tasteful manner. After dinner her spirits began to fail her; she thought of her mother, and so she betook herself to her couch, and there wept for hours. At last she rememberd that God was her friend, and kneeling, thanked him for all his kindness, and for having given her *another* friend. At night till a late hour she did her best to amuse her keeper, the sleepy negress; told her long stories, and anecdotes, out of number, but never excited a smile or a kindly answer. She was for sitting up all night, but old Heatty hurried her off, at what seemed to her an exceedingly early hour, bidding her sleep while she might, for that she would be married soon. The aged negress at this grinned a ghastly smile, and without giving her any explanation, hobbled off, leaving Utopia to loneliness and darkness. It seemed to the child, the night

UTOPIA AND OLD HEATTY.

would never end; but it did at last, and with the morning came a joyous disposition and lively spirits. On the next day, Heatty became more communicative, assuring her little prisoner that she would soon be very happy, and have a companion to stay with her, who would love her, and make a lady of her. The girl insisted that she was too young to marry; old Heatty declared she would not be in a few months, and Utopia, in the best possible humour, declared she would be for years. Thus they continued for several days, the old negress becoming more familiar and confidential, and endeavouring to make Utopia believe that she ought to be very happy at the prospect before her, as she had a lover whom any lady might fancy. The girl insisted that no such man intended to marry her in the right way, and that if he did she would not have him. One night as Heatty ushered her into her bed-room, her face collapsed with a horrid laugh, which rung with a sepulchral sound through the house, as she said "he 'll be here to-morrow—he-he-he—won't you be happy, my lark!"

Utopia trembled all over, and that night said her prayers with more than usual fervour.

CHAPTER XXIII.

A WORD FOR GIRLHOOD—UTOPIA IN THE WILDERNESS—PERILS BY THE WAY—THE POCOSIN TRIUMPHS OVER THE PANTHER.

ALBEIT many do affect to speak contemptuously of young girls of a certain unripe age even until "the boarding-school Miss," hath passed into a byword, importing a giddy young creature, I am not ashamed freely to express the delight which the sight and conversation of these guileless beings cause in me. And as the crudities of youth, and the effervescence of passion have passed away, and the mould of time bespeaks a sobered judgment, who can say that a wild or wayward fancy doth hold

my reason captive and fill the mind with its illusive phantoms? There be divers things, said to be fair in themselves, and images, or types of a more subtle, spiritual beauty, with the unexpressive essence of which they do, as it were, purify, delight, and illume the mind; and chief among these they do rank, the mother gazing on the features of her first-born, the virgin in her bridal robes of white, kneeling before the altar, and the love-lorn lassie as she sits at her window, in the twilight hour, thinking of a brave soldier lad who 's " o'er the hills and far away." I will not deny that such sights dispose me to pleasant contemplation; but by far the sweetest picture that ever I could look upon, was the fair, free, and blithesome girl, too old to be a child, and too young to be a woman. This is what you may call the maturity of childhood, whose motions are the unwritten poetry of nature, and whose tongues can now discourse the celestial harmony which God hath written on the infantile heart and mind. What a fragance they breathe around, like fresh amaranthine flowers gathered in paradise, and still glittering with ambrosial dew! Their lips are the lyres of angels, and their bright faces shine upon our aged and sinful hearts like the morning lights of heaven.

The above extract is taken from the work of an old author whose thoughts have become the thoughts of the writer of these memoirs, and whose name is held in too much reverence to be mentioned here. Like him, we have ever loved to look upon " the fair, free, and blithesome girl; " and as we picture to ourselves the bright face of Utopia, glowing with the fresh thoughts and hopes which the cheerful light of morning brought, she looks, indeed, like " an amaranthine flower just gathered in paradise." She had, during the night, thought much and anxiously on the words of old Heatty, and the more she pondered them, the more did they fill her with fear, until at last she came to a determination which indicated both her simplicity and her alarm. It was some time before she could be made to realise the dreadful truth; that this world contained some very bad men, and she would still keep asking herself the question, how can any one be so wicked as to wish to ruin me, when I have done no harm?

How he could be so wicked, she could not understand; but that some one was so depraved, her situation and the conduct of the old negress left her no room to doubt. In fact, she had a vague fear of something even worse than death, and she resolved to fly, not doubting but that she would soon come to some settlement of civilised people, and that the first one whom she might meet would be glad to succour her and send her home. She thought she remembered that she had come from the south, and in that direction she believed her home to be. But there was no river on the south, and she had been landed from a boat; how was this to be accounted for? The river was on the east, and ran north and south, and doubtless, thought she, by following along its banks, I shall be going in the right direction. Accordingly, she dressed herself in her best clothes, in order to deceive Old Heatty; found an opportunity at breakfast of providing herself with some coarse provisions, and took the guinea which Bladen had given her, and which she always carried about her, and so secured it to her person that it could not possibly be lost. Her course, she saw, would lie through the midst of the swamp, which was wet, miry, and covered with tangled brake and reeds, bushes and trees: still she determined to plunge into it, and expected soon to find dry land and a road.

Early in the morning, and while old Heatty was engaged at her breakfast, the girl with a beating heart and a beaming face, plunged into the thicket. For awhile, fearful of pursuit, she took little pains in picking her way, and hurried straight onward, heedless of the briers that rent her clothes and scratched her face and hands, and of the miry puddles through which she floundered ankle deep. At every sound in the woods, she looked fearfully behind her, fearing only old Heatty; and thus she struggled on through plashes and thickets, until her dress was spotted over with blotches of mud, and her limbs weary with exertion; and then, with a heaving breast and glowing cheek, she paused to rest and look round her. On every side the dismal swamp presented its interminable gloom: the black waters still glistened around her and not a rent in the woods, not a road or path,

was anywhere to be seen. When she looked back, her vision was soon quenched in the dark wilderness through which she had passed; and cheered with the thought that she was now beyond the reach of pursuit, she resumed her journey, more carefully threading her way, and stepping on the hillocks of dry grass, which she followed wherever they led. No longer apprehensive of pursuit on the part of old Heatty, a new fear now took possession of her, and her imagination began to people the dreary and obscure waste with grim monsters and beasts of prey. Ever and anon her heart would rise in her throat as some new and fearful sound would ring through the woods, and then she would be reassured by the cheerful songs of the birds, who were company to her, and who seeming not the least frightened themselves, would help to dispel her fears. At last and to her great joy, a light broke through the woods, before her, and she arrived at a dry glade, covered with stunted grass and a few scattered trees. It was a sandy ridge, running through the swamp, and must have been a grazing place for deer and cattle, for Utopia found a well-trodden path upon it, and made sure she was now near some human habitation. The sun was already considerably past the meridian, and feeling more easy, the girl sat down by the root of a tree, and made a frugal meal off part of the provisions which she had brought with her.

Again, with brighter hopes and stronger energies, she renewed her journey over the wild and lonely heath; but when the sun was near the western horizon, she was still in the wilderness. Night came; thick darkness curtained the forest, thousands of fire-flies sparkled in the gloom, the owls screeched and hooted through the woods, and myriads of frogs began their harsh and hideous minstrelsy. A stouter heart than that of Utopia would have quaked at the strange and deafening sounds and clamours with which the inhabitants of the swamp made a dismal serenade, and the poor girl, half dead with fright, hurried on till the night was far advanced, and she was worn down with fatigue. She had scarcely looked before her, and had kept her thoughts fixed on heaven, and on God, the father and friend of the friendless; and when she

came at last to an open place and heard a mocking.bird, she believed that her prayers had been answered. She here ate a scant supper, and commending herself to the keeping of an Omnipotent Protector, she lay down upon the grass and undertook to sleep. As she looked up, the stars seemed to smile kindly upon her; the mocking-bird came nearer to her, and seemed to make her the burden of its lively chatter, while she formed for it a strong attachment, laughed at its merry sallies, and felt half disposed to speak to it in return. Before she was aware of it, she was fast asleep, dreaming of that bird and listening to its long stories, and thus she continued until she was awakened by a cry of distress. The morning was breaking in the east, but she was filled with speechless terror by the sound which had disturbed her dreams, and which seemed to have burst over her head. She immediately resumed her journey, and again that cry which had disturbed her imagination, rang through the woods, making the girl's hair rise on end, and causing her to tremble in every limb. It was the sound of a human voice—she was certain it was—and the person seemed to be in the utmost agony. She stopped and listened; and though her fears were increased, her sympathies were excited also, for the cry now seemed to be that of a female. It was a fearful, a heart-rending wail, and the girl started, in a run, towards the place whence it issued, and as it was now broad daylight, she looked about in the grass for the poor suffering creature. The voice now shrieked behind her, and Utopia, who was close upon it, could distinguish it to be that of a child, who was screaming and moaning in the most pitiable manner. It was heart-rending to hear its wild and piercing cries in that lonely and savage place, and Utopia, with her breast aching for the desolate little stranger, quickened her pace, when suddenly a hideous yell froze her blood, and a huge panther leaped from a tree before her. For a moment terror took away her breath, and she was about to sink powerless to the ground; but her spirits and courage quickly rallied, and she began to run. She then recollected what she had heard about the danger of turning one's back on such creatures, and she

stopped and screamed at it with all her power. The great ferocious looking beast, which was advancing stealthily behind her, stopped when she stopped, and crouching down, stared at her with its wild and savage eyes, whining in the most dismal manner, and angrily lashing the leaves with its tail. She ran a few paces farther, and again stopped, and tried to scare the fierce monster away; but it mocked her with its dreadful cries, jumping about and rolling over as if to show its activity and power. Thus they continued for nearly an hour, the monstrous and frightful brute making the woods echo, and hushing every bird with its occasional screams and yells, and when Utopia would turn towards it, rolling over and over, and frisking about in a playful manner, as if delighted with the looks of the girl. Even its playfulness, however, made it the more terrible to look at, and the girl at last determined to face it until she frightened it away. It was now close to her; they were on an open sandy place, and Utopia shuddered as she got a fair, full view of her companion. It stared boldly and impudently at her, and she hesitated in her purpose, when she was overwhelmed by a sudden and terrific sound, as it seemed to her, and the panther, with a yell, bounded furiously at her. She fell half swooning, and the beast leapt over her—and grappled with Walter Tucker, who fell with his antagonist, and rolled over with it in the sand. The conflict was of short duration, for the point of the boy's knife touched the panther's heart at the first blow, and it lay gasping its last, and empurpling the sand with its blood. Walter lay beside it, his face and hands and clothes red with blood, and Utopia at first could hardly tell whether he was alive or dead. He spoke to her, however, assuring her that he was not dangerously hurt; but when he came to examine his wounds, he almost changed his opinion, while the girl was so alarmed at his situation, that she was nearly incapable of rendering any assistance. The panther had made a deep gash upon his left shoulder, and rent his breast with its claws, having torn away the flesh in two places nearly to the bone, and the blood was rapidly streaming out, and the young man becoming faint and sick.

UTOPIA ALARMED BY THE PANTHER.

He and Utopia stanched his wounds as well as they could, and bound them up, Walter never losing his presence of mind, and having considerable skill in the knowledge of simples. He was barely able to walk; and regretting that he could not carry with him his fallen foe, he contented himself with its scalp, which he took off as a trophy, and started with Utopia for the nearest settlement on Pamlico Sound. He told her, on the way, what had befallen her mother's husband and her mother, of all of which she had been ignorant, and advised her to go directly to New Berne, where in all probability, she would find Mrs. Ricketts. The girl, greatly distressed at the news, wished to know what would probably be done with her mother, declaring that she was certain of her innocence, and that it would so appear, and overwhelm her accusers with shame and confusion. Walter, smarting with the wounds which his sensibility had received in New Berne, was not in a mood to think highly of human nature, or the course of justice when administered by men, and he was yet too much of a boy to conceal his sentiments. He therefore drew the most gloomy picture of the probable result of Mrs. Ricketts' trial; a picture which caused but a momentary despondency in the breast of the girl, who was of an eminently hopeful disposition.

She readily answered Walter's predictions of ill, quickly devising a succession of schemes for her mother's escape, each one of which Walter would as readily knock down, until, at last, the girl burst into a laugh, telling her companion that she believed he was determined to make the world a miserable place.

"It is a wretched hole," said he; "an infamous place, where success is honour and might is right. That's the sum total of all law; it's all summed up in that single sentence."

Utopia looked at the speaker intently, as if she did not understand him, and replied: "There are some good people, I know; and I believe Miss Alice Bladen will help mother, and see that justice is done her." An equivocal smile wreathed the lip of Walter, as he answered, "Perhaps you'll find reason to change your opinion. She may be good

enough in her own way, but I doubt whether the misfortunes of the poor and the humble ever find much sympathy in her breast."

"Why, was she not kind to me and to mother?" said Utopia; "and Mr. Bladen was too."

"And how did Mr. Bladen show it?" asked Walter. "Doubtless he and his sister spoke kindly to you while they were your stepfather's guests, and dependent upon him and you for their comfort."

"He did more than that," replied Utopia; "he gave me this"—showing her money—"and said he was going to give me one like it every year until I learned to read, and write, and sing. I can read a little now."

"Yes; and there's something else he wished you to learn," said Walter; "and you did a foolish thing when you took that money. Now, I'll tell you my notions of the world. Some men by fraud and violence, and meanness, make fortunes and get into power; they then make laws, and make themselves titles, and are called the higher ranks. When they get into these ranks they become separated, in heart and soul, and feeling, from those who are just like them, only in a lower rank; they think themselves a superior race, and they talk about their blood as if we were not all descended from Adam, and as if they did not rise from the common people. If one of these is ever so mean, he is thought to be better than the best in a lower rank; and you might be as good as a saint and as beautiful as an angel, and still one of these nobility would be ashamed to marry you. They look on us as made for them; and when they condescend to speak kindly to us, they expect to make use of us just as we make use of horses and cattle, and feed them and use them kindly. When we were all on the beach, did not Alice Bladen and her brother seem like us? Were they not made like us, looked like us, talked like us, and acted like us? Were they any better, or fairer, or more mighty? Now when you get to New Berne they will act as if you and they were a different kind of beings—as if they came from some upper region, and you from the dust of the earth."

Utopia listened attentively to what Walter said, and he continued in this strain, entertaining her with an account of the splendid houses and fine people which he had seen, and not failing to give a dark tinge to all the pictures which he drew. She would occasionally smile at his warmth, and endeavour to answer his arguments; but she was a poor hand at metaphysics, and knew little of history or of human nature.

They made slow progress, but they were entertained by each other's company and by the scenes through which they passed. At noon they despatched the remains of their joint stock of provisions, and as the evening found them still in the swamp, Walter showed how used he was to a life in the woods, for he soon loaded his companion with the fruits of his unerring arrows, the gun which he now carried being seldom used by him. The girl was shocked at what she thought his cruelty towards unoffending creatures, but he laughed at her simplicity, and justified himself by texts from Scripture, and by the necessity of the case.

They were still in the swamp when night came upon them; they were both weary, and one was sick and wounded, and therefore, they kindled a huge fire in the driest place they could find, and there prepared to spend the night.* Utopia, much amused at Walter's awkward culinary attempts, found herself compelled to cook those animals whose death she had so much regretted; and while she was thus engaged Walter made for

* It may not be improper to say that the swamps of North Carolina are still the scenes of tragedy; the panther and the wild cat are still found among them, and they still furnish a shelter for thieves and fugitives from justice. It is sometimes dangerous to travel through them alone at night; and not long ago a daring highway robbery occurred in one of them and within a few miles of New Berne. They furnish a secure retreat for those who fly to them for shelter; and a single anecdote will suffice to show how difficult it is to traverse them. A few years since the balloon of an æronaut who went up from Wilmington, North Carolina, descended into a swamp within about four miles of the city, and from this time, which was about sundown, until twelve o'clock next day, he was floundering in the wilderness and finally emerged with his flesh lacerated, his clothes in ribbons, and covered with mud from head to foot. A party who went out to search for his balloon, were two days in finding it. On another occasion, a gentleman who was one of a party in search of a runaway, finding it impossible to make his way out of the swamp, felled a log into a creek, got on it, and thus floated down into the Cape Fear, and down the river to Wilmington.

her a bed of leaves, such as he could find, and then instructed her how to dress his wounds. They were both cheerful and happy till bed time came, and then the girl began to feel uneasy, for she now remembered with horror the manner in which her dreams had been disturbed on the night before. Walter assured her that he would keep watch until morning; but Utopia was unwilling for him to undergo such a hardship, and urged him to sleep first, and let her stay awake. This he would not agree to—declaring he could not sleep; and so at last she left him by the fire, and nestled in her couch of leaves.

CHAPTER XXIV.

A SURPRISE.—SUDDEN APPEARANCE OF WILD BILL—THE MERITS AND DEMERITS OF SLAVERY DISCUSSED BY WALTER AND WILD BILL.

UTOPIA was trying to persuade herself to go to sleep, and Walter was actually beginning to nod by the fire, when the young man thought he heard something crackling the brushwood behind him. He was not certain but that he had been dreaming; but he roused himself up, and raising his gun, strained his eyes upon the darkness round him. Utopia, who was watching his motions, became instantly alarmed, jumped from her bed, and running up to Walter, inquired eagerly what was the matter.

"Nothing," said he; "I thought I heard a rabbit or squirrel near me, but I must have been dreaming."

With this they sat down together, the girl keeping as close to her companion as possible, and he endeavouring to prevail on her to lie down again.

"There is not the least danger," said he.

"Not the least," repeated a hoarse voice, while a heavy hand was laid on Walter's shoulder.

Utopia screamed and her companion sprang to his feet, but both of his arms were held behind him, while the voice continued:

"Walter Tucker, you're in the hands of a friend. I could kill you easily, but I don't want to do it, and must insist that you promise not to hurt me. Will you promise?" continued the voice, its owner twisting the arms of Walter as if they were small reeds."

"I suppose I'm obliged to," replied Walter, "for I'm in your power."

"May you never be in the hands of a worse enemy," said the other, as he released the young man and approached the fire. "I'm cold," continued he, "but it is not the first time the night dew has been upon my locks. I'm Wild Bill."

Utopia shuddered at this announcement; but Walter, as he stared at the author of it, could hardly believe it, for his imagination had pictured a different sort of being from that which he beheld.

The wild man was, at first sight, an ordinary looking negro, whose face, though not entirely black, denoted unmixed blood, and whose features had an expression more intellectual than ferocious. An old hunter, however, would instantly have known him to be a man of the woods, for his skin had that reddish brown, rusty hue, which constant exposure to the weather produces, and there was about his look and gait an undefinable air that showed an untamed and untameable nature. He was rather low of stature, but stoutly formed, with great depth and breadth of chest, and a naked arm of immense size, and almost as hard as ivory.

"You gaze hard at me," continued he, addressing himself to Walter; "but it's natural, for I've no doubt you've heard a great deal about me. What's the last news?"

"News about what?" asked Walter.

"About me—Wild Bill;* have I done anything lately?"

* From the earliest times there have been, in eastern Carolina, remarkable runaway slaves, who lived in caves in the sand, and in swamps; and the exploits and crimes and stratagems of these black heroes have been, and are still, topics of wondering, and sometimes fearful interest, at the family fireside.

The swamps especially, are full of such characters; and some years ago, when the Great Dismal Swamp caught fire, and burned for several weeks, many of

"You ought to know better than I," answered Walter. "You know when and how you committed a most brutal and barbarous murder lately."

"I don't know to which one you allude," said the negro; "I've done so much of that business lately, that I hardly know the names of all the cases."

"You seem to make yourself merry at the recollection of it," replied Walter, stepping back and slightly raising his gun.

"Come, young man, don't disturb yourself," returned Wild Bill; "I understand you, and you may as well put down your gun. Would you shoot *me*; kill me in cold blood?"

"I will not kill you, if you'll surrender," said Walter, "and let me deliver you up to justice."

"To justice!" exclaimed the negro, his wild laugh startling his listeners. "*You* deliver *me* up to justice! Do you know what you're talking about? Don't *you* know what justice is? Don't *you* know that it is the will of the strong? the instrument by which great folk oppress, and rob, and beat down the poor and weak? Hah, *justice!*" cried he with a scornful look and tone, "how I hate to hear a canting hypocrite use that word."

"I know it is often misapplied," said Walter, "but that is no reason why a murderer and robber should not be hanged."

"And who will hang him?" asked the negro; "the liars, thieves, and murderers, who rob mankind of their rights, and make laws to sanctify their crimes? Young man, my hands are rough and hard, but there is no smell of innocent blood upon them; my skin is hard and ugly, but my soul is whiter than that of the whitest judge who sits upon the bench. What have I done? what is my crime, that I must be an outcast and an outlaw, hunted from swamp to swamp, with a whole nation for my enemies, and not a human soul to speak to me in the language of friendship?"

"What have you done?" exclaimed Walter; "why

these wild tenants of the wilderness were driven from their hiding-places. It is said, that one woman who had run off when quite young, returned to her owner with a large family of children.

WILD BILL, WALTER AND UTOPIA.

robbed and murdered peaceable and unoffending people, turning your hand against every man, and making for yourself enemies of all mankind."

"Let the great God of heaven and earth crush me this instant, if the guilt of a single murder or robbery lies heavy on my soul!" cried Bill

"Then you are greatly belied," said Walter.

"And so is he they call the Devil," replied Wild Bill; "mankind are fond of laying all their sins on some hated scapegoat. Young man, you know little of this world, and when you come to know it, your honest heart will sicken. Here am I, an unoffending, lonely creature, living on wild fruits, and the beasts of the forest, molesting no one, taking no part in the affairs of men, and desiring only to live in the wild woods, a free man; and yet, for that very reason, my name has become a bugbear to frighten children and old grannies, and a thousand weapons are aimed at my heart. And who are my enemies? who are my judges? Where are the red men who once roamed these woods in freedom? Swept away, root and branch, by those who are after me with the vengeance of the law! These woods, and rivers, and towns, and swamps, and fields, belonged to another race: a race that never visited foreign lands, and never carried civilisation and death to foreign nations. But the pale-faces and their red laws came here, and where are now the poor savages whom the Christians came to bless? Their bones are strewn with the dead logs of the forest and the swamp, and their souls are all gone to the Indian's heaven! And what did they get for their hunting grounds here? The sword and the bayonet—the justice of the white man!"

"There is some truth in that," said Walter, colouring; "I've often thought of the injustice done to the Indian, and sometimes fancy that from their blood will spring avengers to curse the land which has been so freely watered by it."

"And will not the wrongs of another coloured race call for vengeance also?" asked the negro. "Is the Indian who died on his native hills to be pitied, and no tear shed for the poor African who is torn from his home, his wife, children,

and kindred, and dragged in chains, like a condemned criminal, beyond the seas, to be beaten and driven like the brutes? Who is God and where is he?" continued the negro, his nostrils dilating and his chest heaving; "does he not sit in heaven and mark the unexpressed wailings, the inward prayers, and the heart sickness of those thousands of thinking, rational, and immortal souls, whom the white men drive and beat as they do their oxen and their horses? Do you know that the negro as well as the white man has an undying spirit that looks to heaven, and that it will meet its master's as an equal at the bar of God? *Master!* God only is *my* master?

"Our English ancestors did all this," replied Walter, "and I and my people are not responsible for it. Slavery is now a condition of our society, and it can't be helped; in fact, the negroes are better off than they would be if they were all set free."

"*I* am better off free, and woe be to the man that attempts to take me," returned Wild Bill.

"Your master has a right to you, and would be justified in killing you, if you would not surrender," answered Walter.

"*My* master!" cried the negro: "young man, who is your master?"

"No man," answered Walter.

"Not even the king?" asked the negro.

"Yes; that is, he is my sovereign, and I owe him allegiance."

"And ain't there a talk of throwing off this allegiance?"

"The people complain of his ministers," replied Walter.

"And do they not complain of oppression and tyranny?" asked Wild Bill.

"They do, and they do it justly!" answered Walter.

"And if the people were to unite to throw off the royal yoke and have a government of their own, would 'nt you join them?"

"That I would."

"Now, sir, can you blame my people if they unite to throw off the yoke of their masters?"

"The case is altogether different," said Walter. "In the first place they could'nt do it, and therefore it would be useless bloodshed; in the second place we are two distinct nations living in the same country, and one or the other must be masters of it. The Americans only wish to dissolve their connexion with a distant country; you wish to destroy a nation. We are, for your own good and ours, obliged to keep you in bondage for the present, and we are justified by the laws of God and man. I've no doubt that some day our people will do the best they can for the negroes, and try to set them free, when they can do so consistently with the safety of the whites and the welfare of the blacks. But if you excite an insurrection you will be guilty of the horrible crimes caused by a civil war, and you will rivet the chains of your race for a century longer. I believe all, or nearly all, the white people feel deeply the responsibility resting on them, and are truly sorry for the condition of the negroes; they are their best friends—I mean the masters. Those white scamps, with black hearts and forked tongues, who go about prating about the horrors of of slavery, and trying to cause rebellions, are the worst enemies of the human race; they are seeking their own individual interests, and care no more for the blacks than they do for the whites, and would sacrifice both to gain their ends."

"I have nothing to do with them," said the negro: "I was only talking of our right to rebel."

"You have no right to rebel unless you have reasonable hopes of success," replied Walter; "and if you rebel when there is no possible chance for you, you are a wholesale assassin, a pirate, and as such will be judged by God and man."

"You argue your side well," said Wild Bill, smiling. "I did not think to find an unpractised youth so expert with the weapons of logic."

"I can return your compliment," replied Walter, looking curiously at the negro. "I 've been surprised to hear such language from"——

"From a negro!" exclaimed Wild Bill, with an equivocal laugh. "I know very well what you mean, and you need

not apologise. My people were the lowest barbarians in Africa: they have been slaves here; and are, I know it well, vastly inferior to the whites. It is the mode of life that has caused this; we are all one people—children of a common father. *My* mother was a pet slave, and tolerably well educated. *I* was thought to be smart when a boy, and my mother and my young master took great pains in teaching me. May God rest their souls in heaven!"

"Your young master!" cried Walter. "I thought you had no master."

"I was living in the past, just then; the good old times that are past were before me. But, as I was going to say, I was carefully instructed until I was twenty. I read all my young—all the books of my master's son, and I 've been, for years past, a reader of nature, and a thinker. I can read and write, too; and, would you believe me? I write verses, and set them to music. You smile, my little friend," continued the negro, turning to Utopia. "It seems strange to you that the blood-thirsty Wild Bill should be a musician. Folks, when I am dead and gone, will tell long and terrible stories about me—they will tremble at the very mention of my name; and yet, as my master, God, can witness, my heart yearns with the feelings, the hopes, and fears, and sentiments that burn in the bosom of this innocent girl. I 'm a great, ugly-looking monster, ain't I, Utopia?"

"I don't know, sir," said the girl, o.usning, smiling, and hanging her head.

"I know I look so," continued Wild Bill; "but both o. you shut your eyes and listen to my song, and see if it sounds like that of a robber."

The negro insisted on Walter's obeying his wish, just to see what opinion he would form of him from the mere sound of his voice; and the lad, amused at the request, covered his face with his hands—as did, also, Utopia—while both listened with eager curiosity.

They were not kept long in suspense; nor could they realize that they were in the presence of a wild man of the woods, as, with a voice full of feeling and pathos, and to an

air plaintive and tender, he sang words which, though simple, and even rude, embodied, like all negro songs, a wild and melancholy tradition, and breathed, on that account, a sentiment homely, but touching and sad.

There was something in this song, and in the manner in which it was executed, that affected Walter Tucker to tears; and he sat for a few moments in deep reverie, to enjoy the fancies, sweet and sad, that floated through his mind. His opinion of the negro underwent a change; and raising his eyes to see if the singer had not actually changed from his colour, he found that he had vanished in the darkness. Utopia had, through her fingers, kept her gaze fixed on Walter; and when the latter rose, she rose also, her fears returning thick upon her when she found that Wild Bill was gone.

CHAPTER XXV.

WALTER TUCKER'S IDEAS OF SOCIETY.—UTOPIA ARRIVES AT NEW BERNE.—AN UNWELCOME VISITOR AT THE PALACE; AND AN UNEXPECTED REVELATION.

WALTER TUCKER conducted Utopia safely within view of the town of New Berne, and then prepared to bid her adieu. They had reached an elevated place on the western or north-western side of the city, from which they had a fair view of the town, and the glistening waters which surround it: but while the prospect seemed to fill Utopia with new and strange emotions of pleasure, the countenance of Walter grew dark, and his eyes beamed with an unpleasant meaning.

"Utopia," said he, stopping, "you are now safe: keep straight on until you get into the town, and inquire for Mr. Dufrong. There you will find father, and he will instruct you how to proceed."

"You're not going to leave me, sure?" spoke the girl, her face lighted up with more than usual expression.

"For the present," answered Walter. "Are you afraid to go into the town by yourself?"

"Oh no, sir," replied the girl. "I'm not afraid, now that I've got among civilised people; but I *am* afraid for you."

"For *me?* Why so, Utopia?"

"I don't know, sir," answered the girl. "You look so sad, I don't know what to think of it."

"Don't fear me, child," said Walter; "*I* can take care of myself."

"And you're determined to go back into the swamps," said the girl. "Oh, they are so gloomy, and so full of strange wild beasts! Please, please don't go back!"

"Utopia," said Walter, "*there's* the den of wild beasts you and I both should fear most. There," continued he, pointing towards New Berne, "there is where live my enemies and yours; there, among the gentry and fine folk of New Berne. I've made a vow not to enter that town until I can enter it as the equal of the greatest man in it, and *I won't!* Here we must part; and mind what I say, panthers and wolves will harm you less than would the fine people whom you are now going amongst."

The tears started into Utopia's eyes, and her voice sounded with an inexpressible sweetness as she said, "I hope we 'll meet again, Walter. Please take this; you 'll have more need of it than I will."

"That's the money you got of Robert Bladen," replied Walter, with a glowing cheek, "and I'll touch nothing of his: besides, you 'll have more need of it than I will. That's a god that your fine civilised people all worship; but we, who live in the woods and swamps, worship a greater Deity. Keep it, for you will need it: keep it, but beware how you receive gifts from him who gave it to you. Farewell; and may God be with you!"

"Good-bye!" said Utopia, with a tone that long lingered in the ears of Walter. She often turned to look at him, moving slowly forward, while he was in sight; while he,

with his bow on his arm, and a quiver of arrows on his shoulder, strode hastily away, and was soon lost in the woods.

As Utopia carefully threaded her way into the town of New Berne, her appearance drew a curious glance from all who met her. Her dress, though coarse, soiled, and torn, was arranged with a delicacy of taste not often manifested by those so poorly clad; and from her face there beamed a light that irradiated with a golden sunshine the breast of every beholder. She nodded her head, smiled, and spoke to every passer-by who looked towards her; and in this way she passed on, breathing around her an atmosphere of sweetness and purity. Some there were, however, in whose hardened hearts the sweet radiance of her countenance kindled no gentle emotions; and, strange to say, one of this very sort was the first whom she accosted with a question. In her simplicity she had supposed that the well-dressed people were all well educated, and therefore refined and good; and so, meeting a company of gay and elegant youths, she was tempted to stop and inquire of them the way to the "Carolina Inn."

"I'll show it to you, and go with you to it," said the young man, winking at his companions.

"It's a large, fine house, and the landlord is a very great man."

So saying, and followed by his tittering companions, he led her down one square, and then, turning to the right up a broad and beautiful street, he pointed out to her the house which she was seeking.

"By the way, what's your name?" inquired the young stranger.

"Utopia," answered the girl.

"Utopia what?" asked her guide; "have you no other name?"

"No, sir," replied the girl; "they never gave me any other." The answer caused a stare among the young men, and the girl observed that they laughed and whispered to each other.

"Here I must leave you," said the one who had spoken

before; "that large, fine building just a-head of you, is the 'Carolina Inn.' You see it extends clean across the street; and you must know that it is a very fine and curious place. A man will meet you at the door; tell him you wish to be presented to his Excellency, as you have something for him, (his Excellency is the landlord), and when you see him, the landlord, ask him if he can give you lodging."

"It's Mr. Tucker I want to see," said the girl, "and my letter is for him."

"Mr. Tucker will be sure to be there," replied the young man; "if he is not you can inquire for him. You must be very particular, and go exactly by my directions." "Yes, sir." "Don't forget to call for his Excellency, and when you find him, he will be sitting in a large arm-chair, in a splendid room—when you see him call Mons. Dufrong, tell him you want lodging at his house, and that you wish him to send for Mr. Tucker immediately." "Yes, sir," repeated the girl, as she passed on to the door of the Governor's Palace, through which, after some delay, she was admitted. The Governor was just then holding a levee, and the astonishment of the elegant and perfumed crowd may well be imagined, as a coarsely clad girl pushed her way among them, taking each one near her by the hand, and finally approaching his Excellency and saluting him in a similar way.

"Mr. Dufrong," said she, scarcely stopping to recover breath, "is Mr. Tucker in? I've got a"—

"Gracious heaven! what does all this mean!" said his Excellency, rising. "Who sent you hither, girl? By my life, they shall suffer who put this trick upon me. Here, carry her out, some of you, she soils the chamber."

"Will your Excellency permit me to interpose," said a gentleman, approaching the Governor; "the girl has been misled, and yet she may have business with your Excellency."

"Business with me!" cried Governor Martin, now furious with rage; "do you mean to insult me, Mr. Harnett?"

"Certainly not," said Mr. Harnett, coolly; "it strikes me that this is the girl of whom I have heard, and if so, she has a grievance—"

"*Grievance,* indeed!" exclaimed his Excellency, losing all presence of mind; "I say, sir, let me never hear that word again. I have a serious notion to have it condemned by statute, and the use of it made criminal."

"Perhaps if your Excelleney would listen to the word more patiently, you would not hear it so often," replied Cornelius Harnett.

"And perhaps your early attention to it, and appreciation of its meaning, may prevent your ears from being offended by harsher sounds," spoke a tall figure by the side of Harnett.

"Colonel Ashe," said Martin, sternly, "your words remind me that I had, just now, lost my own self-respect, and consequently that of my subjects; I command you," he continued, "to leave this presence, and never to return to it, until you have made a humble and suitable apology for the indignity you have offered to his majesty's representative."

"That is while his majesty has a representative here," said colonel Ashe, smiling.

"Silence, *Traitor!*" cried the Governor.

"For your life, colonel Ashe!" said several courtiers, taking him by the arm, "command your temper. Come, you should apologise," continued one of them; "and I 'll intercede in your behalf."

"Unhand me, gentlemen," said Ashe; "I am calm as a summer's morning, and know perfectly well what I am about. Josiah Martin," said he, drawing himself to his full height and extending his hand towards the person addressed; "I know well the respect which is due to the office of first magistrate of the people of North Carolina, nor would I willingly offer an insult to the Governor of the state—I do not now address you as such: I now denounce you as the tool of a foreign tyrant, and I defy you!"

"Does your head feel heavy?" asked one, as Ashe withdrew.

"It sits not so heavily on his shoulders as his Excellency does on this commonwealth," said Abner Nash, the friend of colonel Ashe.

"Fear not," whispered he to the latter; "you have a safe fortress in the hearts of the people."

These things, as may be supposed, were said hastily, and in whispers; the Governor and his courtiers, for a moment, overwhelmed with astonishment, standing silent and motionless.

"Will none of you arrest that man?" at length spoke his Excellency.

"By what warrant?" asked Harnett, calmly.

"A proper one shall be issued," said his Excellency; "let the room be cleared; I must be alone."

"But what of the girl and her mission?" asked Harnett, who all this while had held Utopia by the hand; "will your Excellency be pleased to send for Alice Bladen? I am satisfied she can unravel this mystery."

"I never saw a woman who could not make one," answered his Excellency; "tell Miss Bladen to honour me with her company," continued he, turning to a servant.

"She 's coming," replied the latter, as Alice, the lady Carolina Matilda, and a number of others entered the room.

"Do you know this girl, Miss Bladen?" asked the Governor, pointing to Utopia.

"Utopia, as I live!" cried the lively Alice; "my dear child, what on earth can you be doing here." And so saying, she took Utopia in her arms, kissed her, and asked her a hundred questions, not waiting for answers. "This girl," said she, at length, turning to Governor Martin, "is the daughter of that Mrs. Ricketts who was recently imprisoned in this place. She can give, I have no doubt, a faithful account of all the strange transactions at the beach."

"I am willing to listen," said Martin; "my mind has been deeply troubled, and I shall be glad to escape from its tortures, by this bit of romance, which comes in so opportunely. Come, my child, take your seat here, and tell us all about the death of Mr. Ricketts, whence you came, and how you came here."

"I 'd rather stand," said the girl.

"Well, stand, if you will," replied his Excellency; "but take off your bonnet, hold up your head, and speak out." As Utopia was in the act of obeying this command, her eyes fell

on Chester Rowton and Robert Bladen, who were entering the apartment, and she began to tremble violently.

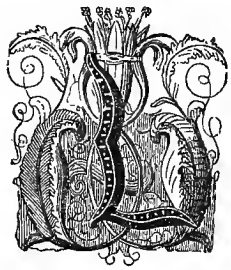
"Why do you fear, child?" asked Alice, who took her seat by Utopia, and put her arm around her; "you 're surely not afraid of brother? Come, begin your story."

The girl, after speaking to Bladen, who also took his seat by her, glanced timidly at Rowton, and began her simple story.

Gathering confidence as she proceeded, and forgetting those about her as past events took possession of her mind, she kept her audience in breathless silence for an hour, relating in a style simple and graphic, what she had seen and heard, and what had happened to her since the departure of the Bladens from the beach. She passed lightly over that part of her own history which was most mysterious, and it was only after repeated questions that she could be induced to tell the particulars of her imprisonment; but of her escape and wanderings, her meeting with Walter Tucker, his assistance and his conduct, she spoke in such terms as made an impression on the minds of her hearers. She now begged to be allowed to go to Mr. Tucker, firmly and respectfully refusing to remain with Alice Bladen in the palace; and Mr. Harnett, who had become interested in her fate, undertook to conduct her to the inn. She had, she said, but one favour to ask, and that was to share her mother's imprisonment.

CHAPTER XXVI.

A MIDNIGHT COUNCIL.—PLOTS AND STRATAGEMS.—"COMING EVENTS CAST THEIR SHADOWS BEFORE."



ATE in the night which followed the occurrences just narrated, sat two men in a private room in the Governor's palace engaged in anxious discussion. They were Josiah Martin and Chester Rowton, men dissimilar in every respect except one; but that one point of resemblance now united them in the closest ties of friendship and confidence. Each was ambitious, and each was revengeful; each had been stung to the soul by insult and opposition, and each was bent on revenge.

"Yes," said Rowton, "though we pursue different ends, our roads lie together; we can be jointly interested in each other's aims, and it would, therefore, be folly in us not to unite our counsels and our forces."

"Our *forces!*" exclaimed Martin, haggard and peevish. "To speak in royal style, where lie your forces, fair cousin?"

"Here, my liege," said Rowton, touching his forehead; "here, in the brain, and in

> ——The unconquerable will,
> And study of revenge, immortal hate,
> And courage never to submit or yield.

"I tell you, sir, there is the might of a thousand men in the brain of one wise counsellor; aye, sir, one great mind is worth ten thousand fools in armour."

"The wisdom of Solomon cannot save me or the royal cause in this accursed colony. I have been governor here four years, and I believe that a more factious, turbulent, and stubborn people never lived; they are all ripe for rebellion,

and I have long been sitting on the mouth of a volcano. From the highest to the lowest they are deeply tainted; even from the venerable and highly respectable* Samuel Johnston, the descendant of a noble house, down to the lowest among the regulators, all have caught the infection. The gentlemen about here, and Edenton and Wilmington, have their heads filled with the most treasonable notions: and as for the west, it is a nest of hornets. Witness that meeting in Mecklenberg, and its absurd manifesto or declaration; witness the treasonable proceedings at Cumberland, and the dangerous meetings that are daily held all over the province. And witness, too, how the Harnetts, and Harveys, and Nashes, and Moores, and Hoopers chuckled when that bold traitor, Ashe, insulted me in my own palace! I must challenge that man: yes, my honour bleeds, and, as I live! I 'll waive my rank, lay aside my dignity, and summon him to single combat."†

"May I be allowed to ask your object?" inquired Rowton. "Do you wish to kill him, or that he should kill you?"

"Of course I should wish to kill him," answered Martin.

"So I supposed," said Rowton; "and that being the case, it is absurd to place yourself in the way of being the victim. The thing can be easily managed another way."

"Man!" exclaimed Martin, sternly, "tempt me not! I will not tarnish my honour by a deed so foul as that you would name."

* Samuel Johnston was president of the first provisional council, or provisional government, in North Carolina. He was a gentleman of the highest character, and of a distinguished English family. His descendants, modest and unpretending, are citizens who would honour any country; and some of them are among the wisest and best people of the Union.

Cornelius Harnett was a gentleman of substance, a resident of Wilmington, and one of the master spirits in North Carolina in the troublous times of the revolution. The other persons named were patriots of note.

† Governor Martin had been a member of the British Parliament, and had wounded, in a duel, the celebrated John Wilkes, whom he challenged for an article reflecting on him in the "North Briton."

He was accused by the patriots of North Carolina of attempting to incite the negroes to insurrection; and this charge is supported by the transactions of the times. The plan for the subjugation of North Carolina, as recorded in the text,

"I only meant to make a suggestion," answered Rowton. "But to the object of our interview. You tell me what I knew before, that all Carolina is ripe for rebellion; we can crush these vipers at a blow. There are, as you know, three elements in the population of this country: the Highlanders, who have recently emigrated, the native whites, and the blacks."

"Would you stir up a servile war?" asked Martin.

"Hear me out," replied Rowton.

"I ask you," again continued Martin, "would you have me incite the negroes to insurrection?"

"Are not *your* subjects ready to rise on you," asked Rowton.

"Yes."

'Have they not insulted, and would they not depose and slay you?"

"It is too true."

"Is not self-defence the first law of nature? If you are driven out of the province, will you not be disgraced? If you subdue it by one sudden and bold stroke of policy, will you not defeat a rebellion organised throughout the whole country, save one of the brightest jewels of the crown, and become one of the greatest and most honoured friends of the monarch?"

"Proceed with your plan," said Martin, pacing the room.

"If you will please to be seated," replied Rowton; "I wish you to fix your eyes on this map. The Edenton country, as you observe, borders on Virginia, and trades principally with Norfolk. It is also filled with slaves. Now, Lord Dunmore, or some other gallant officer, with a few regulars, might advance from the north along this route, by the great bridge, in Nansemond; before he could get to Edenton, the whole negro population would be in arms. In the west, I know

may be regarded as history; and the author refers to "Martin's History," to "Jones's Defence of North Carolina," and to all the historical records of the State. The scheme was well laid. Lord Dunmore, who conducted the invasion from Virginia, was checked and driven back, and the other parts of the plan were defeated as subsequently described in the text.

from good authority, there are great numbers of persons who would delight in a civil war; desperate and greedy wolves, who, on a concerted signal, and with your excellency's approbation, would cut the throats of all the decent portion of the population. These will answer, in the west, for negroes; they will fight and murder for plunder, and in this way they can serve our ends. They can rise simultaneously all over the country; embody themselves, and march down to the south as auxiliaries of the gallant Highlanders about Cross Creek, all of whom are loyal and brave. They came here on account of the lingering distrust of the king, who still remembers their attachment to the Stuarts; you and your predecessor, Tryon, have made this attachment a pretext for exactions—excuse me—and thus they will be ready, when occasion offers, to show their loyalty to the house of Hanover, and their true Scottish courage and devotion in the hour of trial. Well, this Highland army, increased by its western auxiliaries, will start northward as the Virginia army starts south: at the same time, Sir Henry Clinton or Sir Peter Parker will arrive in the Cape Fear, just between these two divisions, cutting off the retreat of the rebels from both directions, and helping, by one grand swoop, to crush for ever rebellion in Carolina, and perhaps over the whole country."

"The plan seems good," said Martin; "but it is vastly complicated."

"But not impossible," replied Rowton; "all that you will have to do you can do easily and quickly. You must open a correspondence with Sir Henry Clinton in New York, and freely unfold to him all your plans; you must also give me commissions of Generals, Colonels and Captains, in blank, and a general power to employ such agents in the royal cause as I may think proper."

"I'll prepare the papers to-morrow," replied Martin: "but when shall all these operations commence. There is now no pretext for them."

"Let everything be ready; the time for active and open operations will not be long in coming. There is a spirit abroad which will soon engender a civil war all over the

country; do you, therefore, be ready to play a great and glorious part."

"I 'll not be wanting in my duty to my sovereign, at this trying crisis; to-morrow I 'll prepare the papers you wish. And now what say you to a night cup and bed?"

"The cup—that is, the wine—shall be welcome; but if your Excellency will bear with me a little longer, I would remind you that one of the causes or objects of our interview has not yet been touched upon. I wish now to say a word concerning my own matters."

"Certainly; proceed, I am ready to listen, advise and aid."

"I thank your Excellency; I must have Alice Bladen."

"She will never marry you," replied Martin.

"She shall be mine," said Rowton.

"As a matter of curiosity," said Martin, "I should like to know how you can love a woman—a vain, giddy, pert woman—who hates you and insults you."

"Perhaps I do not," replied Rowton; "perhaps—but I need not say *why* I wish to get her. I must not be thwarted in this—I 'm sure your Excellency will aid, as far as you can, a subject so good, and a friend so true, and a lover so constant."

"With all my heart; tell me how."

"First, you must know that I ask nothing that you cannot conscientiously grant. The lady's guardian and her best friends desire to match her with me, and you are requested by the highest authority in this matter to aid me. I will not ask you to act the tyrant; you have but to prevent the lad in question from rambling over the country. It is her purpose, I understand, to accompany the lady Carolina Susannah to Wilmington—"

"Say no more," interrupted his Excellency: "no loyal subject, whose actions I can control, shall go near that den of traitors. You shall have your wish."

"It will not be so easily accomplished," said Rowton; "the girl is wilful and wayward, and if your excellency does not keep strict watch she will give you the slip."

"Not she," replied Martin; "she shall form part of my household, and I 'll be surety for her appearance in this place, at any given time."

"Will your Excellency see that she has no secret interviews with one Tucker, a noted fiddler, whom your Excellency must remember to have seen?"

"I have seen him, but I supposed he had left the city."

"He still lingers here, for what object I know not," said Rowton; "he is, to my certain knowledge, a dangerous character, and cannot be too closely watched. I am of opinion that he knows more about the murder of Ricketts than he cares to tell."

"And if you think so, why have you not taken steps to have him arrested?" asked Martin.

"The fact is," replied Rowton, smiling, "I dislike to harbour suspicions, and I never meddle with matters that do not concern me. I was so shocked at the tragedy on the beach, that for a while I took a lively interest in the matter; my investigations, however, led me to suspect respectable people, and so I washed my hands of the whole matter. The foolish man who attends me—he who calls himself Dr. Riboso, and who is so devoted to my interest—knows facts which implicate Tucker, and I refer your Excellency to him. Pardon me, for making one more request; watch the interviews of the girl Utopia with Miss Bladen: she will be used by Tucker and this wilful lady as a messenger."

"You would have me become a spy in my own palace," said Martin, laughing: "but nevertheless I'll do as you wish. Let us be true to each other, and we shall both triumph."

"So I believe," replied Rowton: "I 'm sure *you* shall, if the brain of one faithful friend can save you."

Next day there came to the "Carolina Inn," an officer, who inquired for Mr. Daniel Tucker, *alias* Pocosin Dan. The latter happened to be the person accosted: and with a pleasant smile, he replied, "I am Mr. Tucker, at your service, sir."

"By virtue of this warrant, you are my prisoner, sir," said the officer, holding a paper in one hand, seizing with the other the collar of old Dan's coat.

"Your prisoner!" cried Dan, his countenance collapsing: "what do you mean, fellow?"

The altercation brought out Coon and the other occupants of the "Carolina Inn," all of whom were greatly amazed when they saw that process, on a criminal charge, had actually issued against Dan. They began alternately to abuse and entreat the officer, Dan himself assuring that functionary that he was as innocent of the charge brought as a child unborn. He was totally ignorant of law, and in his simplicity undertook to argue with the constable; the latter, however, like all constables, was a man of few words, and immediately conveyed his prisoner to the Court-house, there to answer before a justice of the peace. Coon and a great multitude of people followed, the former in a towering passion; and when he saw the accusing witness, he eyed him from head to foot, with a manner that made even Dr. Ribs quail and hang his head: In fact, the huge fiddler seemed greatly interested in the Doctor's appearance, walking round him, staring him in the face, and scanning his dress and his limbs with the interest of a virtuoso; and when the witness was called as J. Mc. Donald de Riboso, Coon turned from him, with a contemptuous expression, giving vent to his feelings in a deep-drawn emphatic sound which cannot be expressed by letters. As for Dan, the observed of all, he sat quietly and keenly watching his accuser, his countenance wearing a thousand different expressions, as the witness told his story; he answered briefly the questions put to himself, and then desired to be heard in his defence.

"I am making out your mittimus, Mr. Tucker."

"My mittimus!" cried Coon in a voice of thunder; "is this what you call law in Carolina? Is this—"

"Take your seat, sir!" said the magistrate, sternly, "take your seat, sir, or I 'll order you to jail instantly."

Old Zip seemed little disposed to obey the injunction, or heed the threat by which it was accompanied; but Dan and others, whose sympathies seemed to be with the prisoner, entreated, and the Virginian took his seat, scowling at the magistrate. The mittimus was made out, or rather the

prisoner was required to give bail, with two sureties, in the sum of ten thousand pounds, and being unable to do this, was committed. His friend Coon, who was refused admittance into the jail, accompanied him to the door of the prison; and there the two old fiddlers took an affectionate leave of each other. A single clear drop glittered in the eyes of Dan, as he extended his hand and raised his face to heaven: Zip cried like a child, sobbing most violently as the ponderous doors of the prison were closed, and the huge bolts turned upon Pocosin Dan. The latter was allowed to have his fiddle, his money and all his clothes: and that night his friend sat beneath his window until the dawn of the morning. Day after day, Zip remained in the city, still lingering about the prison: and at last, at the urgent solicitation of Dan, he prepared to leave. Late in the night of his departure, he tuned his violin for a final concert with his friend, and then, with no listeners but themselves, the lonely widow Ricketts and her daughter, they discoursed together a harmony that floated with a melancholy sweetness through the silent city. Brisk airs they also played, and at last, after a mournful tune, they parted. Zip, with his pack, then started on his journey; but ever and anon he would stop to listen to the violin of Dan, and touch his own in answer; and thus he continued till he reached a spot where he could barely hear the softened strains of the imprisoned Dan. There he halted, and executed a martial air with his utmost skill and vigour: the answering notes of Tucker's violin swelled full, rich and melodious on the air: and Zip, shaking his head as he concluded no guilty man could play so nobly, resumed his solitary journey. Arrived at the suburbs of the town, he halted again: the moon was just rising from the silver waters of the bay beyond, gilding the steeple tops, and tinging with colours light and dreamy the misty robe of night. With folded arms the tall Virginian stood contemplating the scene, and going over in his mind the history of the last few months: then slowly extending his clenched hand towards the city, muttered, "To think there should be such a moon and such a river in Carolina, and such a fiddler, too!" and then plunged into the woods.

CHAPTER XXVII.

ZIP COON HAS AN ADVENTURE.—SUDDEN APPARITION of WALTER TUCKER.—DISCLOSURES.—FRANK HOOPER.—MYSTERY AND PASSION.

o the Carolinians at least, it is known that there is a large swamp to the west of New Berne, and that it is traversed by a solitary road. This is Swamp Dover, some six miles long: and even to this day it is famous as the rendezvous of robbers and runaway slaves. This is the road which the ancient fiddler Zip Coon pursued; and familiar as he had become with the stories of the tragic incidents and strange adventures in the regions through which he passed, he began to feel somewhat uncomfortable. Brave, cheerful, and self-reliant, he certainly was: he was, also, well armed, and in excellent health; but still the dark gleaming waters around him, the sombre forests, with their myriads of strange minstrels, and the dead and spectral-looking pines, with their uncouth limbs and phosphorescent trunks, filled him with a mysterious sort of awe. Then he began to recollect stories of witches and ghosts and dreadful apparitions; the wind moaned dismally among the trees, and the owls screamed and laughed among the bushes. Zip whistled awhile, but his lips soon became rigid then he sang, but his voice echoed fearfully through the woods, and hushing the birds, and frogs, and insects, was followed by an oppressive silence. Finally he began to hoot and shout with the whole force of his lungs, and as he did so suddenly an apparition glided into the road before him. He was overwhelmed for an instant, dropping his pack and

mechanically raising his gun; the apparition, swelling to an amazing size, advanced with a terrific scream, and the appalled traveller fell fainting and muttering his prayers.

"In the name of all that is blessed and holy above, who are you?" said he, as he came to.

"I am the little Pocosin," answered Walter Tucker, sprinkling with water the face of his terrified friend.

"Was it only you?" asked Zip, greatly relieved; "I 'm sure I saw the devil, and he was as high as the tallest tree."

"People's imaginations always add to, or subtract from, the reality," said philosopher Walter; "if you will excuse me for saying so, it was your fear that made me so large."

"It all comes from being in this plaguy Carolina," replied Zip, now fully recovered; "if I had been in old Virginny I should not have been expecting to see the devil. We have no witches there—nor swamps either."

"Now you're subtracting," said Walter, laughing; "but I have no time now to quarrel about our respective States; I have important news to tell you."

"Walter," spoke Zip, "I hardly believe now it 's you; you have changed amazingly since I saw you; let me feel you, boy:" and he handled him as if he half expected to touch an unearthly substance.

"Some people," answered Walter, "never change; they are books of a single page; others change, constantly and rapidly. That is, they become developed; occasions call out their real natures, bring to light their faculties. I am what I always was; late events have only developed me."

"I always thought you 'd be a great man," returned Zip; "but tell me, what has made you great so soon, and what on earth are you doing here?"

"Utopia told you when and how I left her, did she not?" answered Walter. "Well, I plunged into the forest determined again to find Wild Bill: I could not; but by going in the direction from which Utopia came, I found the house to which she was carried from the beach. It is surrounded on two sides by a swamp; on the other two is a river or sheet of water which makes two parts of a square. I came in sight

of this place in day time, but I did not wish then to approach; however, I remained near until I became thoroughly satisfied that no one was at home, and then I stole up. The house is a low, dingy looking one outside; but never did I dream of anything so fine as the inside. It was arranged in the most convenient manner; the parlour was filled with the most elegant furniture, and one of the rooms was more like the chamber of a fairy than of a human being. However, I 'm a poor hand at description, and therefore I 'll not attempt one of this place; it is a real palace, and while I was roaming about from room to room, I heard a loud laugh, and looking out at the window, saw a boat, a beautiful little boat, coming up, filled with people. I thought I was lost; but looking about I found a great clock in the corner of the parlour, and I crept into that, putting the key in my pocket, and keeping my eye at the key-hole. Would you believe me? Among the company who came in, was Polly Dawson, the belle of Arabia, a girl I used to know on the beach; she was elegantly dressed, and with her were several fine gentlemen, and very handsome ladies. They all made wonderfully free with each other, talking, laughing, and romping; and I could gather that Polly lived there, that the place belonged to Chester Rowton, and that he was expected there that night. It was nearly sundown when I went into the clock; and, determined to see what was to be done, I waited till dark. In the course of the evening they had music and dancing, and finally was spread the most splendid banquet I ever saw. About this time Rowton, covered with mud, rode up; Polly Dawson ran out and kissed him in the most affectionate manner, and the whole company paid him the greatest attention. They had wines and liquors at supper, and in the course of the night they became very merry, and even drunk. Then it was that they let out their secrets; then it was that I heard things that will be of interest to the whole country. They talked very freely of crushing the rebellion in this country; they laughed immoderately at our meetings, and speeches, and resolutions, and declared that every leading rebel should be hung. Rowton laid open what he called his

grand scheme for the subjugation of North Carolina; said he intended to make Martin a great man, and himself his chief counsellor. "Yes," said he, rising and much excited, "yes, ladies and gentlemen, the good cause of King George and of his Paladins of the swamp, shall triumph; we 'll add to our number, and have thirteen to our holy brotherhood; and as for 'the voice of the thirteen States,' as one of their bombastic manifestoes has it, that shall be hushed for ever. Here 's success to the merry Paladins of the swamp, and perdition to the thirteen States!" I could hold in no longer, and as they were drinking the toast, I took the key of the clock from my pocket, and struck on the bell thirteen times.* I struck slowly and distinctly, till they all became silent, and when I struck the thirteenth blow, the women screamed, and the men started from their seats, uttering the most terrible oaths. I saw that no time was to be lost, and cried out, "Hurrah for liberty and the thirteen States!" jumping out of the clock as I did so, flinging it on the table, and knocking it, men and women, over with a tremendous crash. The next

* It is said that, during the Revolution, a party of British officers were dining and making merry at the house of the father of Judge Toomer, in Wilmington or vicinity; the owner, who was a distinguished Whig, being absent. When full of wine, some one proposed a toast reflecting on the thirteen States; and as it was drunk, the old eight-day clock in the corner struck thirteen times. The officers might have been deceived; but certain it is, they fell upon the clock with their swords, and cut it to pieces. The venerable time-piece, with the "scars" still upon it, is still in the possession of Judge Toomer.

The "Paladins of the Swamp" had their originals in real life. In remote times, there were many strange and some romantic adventurers in the Eastern Carolinas—some of them were of noble families, and led lives whose history would be stranger than fiction. The old histories are full of accounts of "gentlemen pirates," who, as it is said elsewhere, in the text, "braved and bribed" the public authorities; they levied a sort of black-mail on those along the coast, and in some *respectable* families they were received as guests. Of course, these entertainers shared in the plunder of their nondescript visitors.

One of the most celebrated of these—Edward Teach, commonly called Black Beard—was famous for his carousals on land, and his exploits on water, and for a long time escaped with impunity. He was at length taken and killed, off the coast of North Carolina, after a desperate engagement, by Lieutenant Maynard, who commanded two sloops of war, manned in Virginia. It is said that he had been married thirteen times!

instant I was through the window into the swamp, safe and sound. I found my arms where I had hid them, and here I am, on my way to see you and father."

"Boy," said old Zip, "I'm sorry, I'm truly sorry—but—but—How shall I tell him?"

"What do you mean?" said Walter; haven't you recovered yet from your fright?"

"I'm not thinking about that now," replied Zip; "that's a very small matter. It's true, I was a little scared, but it was because I was not in my right mind. No, no, young man, I've travelled at night before, and it has often been said of me, that Old Nick himself could'nt make me run. But I never was in such a state of mind before; I have been crying for a week or more, and my heart's all melted away. It's a child's heart now; I could'nt face a pop-gun, boy, I'm so nervous from sorrow."

"What on earth is the matter with you, uncle Zip?" asked Walter; "have you been in love, and been refused?"

"*I* be in love in this infernal Carolina!" exclaimed Zip; "*I* love anything in these low grounds of sorrow, and I from old Virginny, too! No, sir, no, sir, it's not love; boy, I'm more nor your uncle now—I'm your father."

Zip uttered this in a subdued tone, and Walter, dropping his arms, and his whole manner changing, cried, "Is he dead! is father dead?"

"Not dead," said Zip, "not dead, but in purgatory; he's in jail."

"Where?" asked Walter, fiercely; "who put him in? What did they do it for? The base dogs, they shall die!"

"Moderate your anger," said Zip, "and I'll tell you about it;" and so he did, but with such a vast number of parentheses, apostrophes, exclamations, and episodes, that we cannot afford to give his language.

"That base villain!" exclaimed Walter, gathering up his arrows and bow; "that fiend! I suspected him before. I'll break my vow; I'll go to New Berne this night. Will you go with me, old gentleman?"

"Old gentleman, eh?" cried Zip: "the boy's still im-

proving? Who's a villain, young gentleman? Who's a fiend?"

"Chester Rowton," said Walter: "will you go with me?"

"Let's consider on that," answered Zip; "let's consider first what's best to be done."

"I'm off," said Walter; "will you go?"

"What's that?" cried Zip, with a trembling voice, and pointing down the road.

"I see nothing but an old stump," replied Walter.

"Listen, listen," cried Zip, becoming still more agitated: "don't you hear something in the woods?"

"I do," said Walter, "and look, there's a horse, and as I live, two persons on it."

"Hallo there!" exclaimed Coon, recovering and becoming bold; "who the devil are you? Approach or I'll shoot," continued he, raising his gun.

"Is not that Mr. Coon?" asked a soft and boyish voice.

"That's my name," replied Zip: "who are you?"

"A friend, who has seen you in New Berne," answered the voice, and the horse with its burden now approached.

The new comers were a negro man, extremely aged, and a white boy, who dismounted in the woods, and came running up to Coon, as if much delighted to see him. Suddenly, seeing Walter, however, the lad paused and looked alarmed, when Zip said—

"He's not an Injun, boy, don't be afraid. It's only Walter Tucker, another friend. Who are you, and where are you going at this time of night?"

"I am a student," said the boy, "and my name is Frank Hooper. I am on my way to Wilmington, where I live."

"You've taken a strange time for travelling," said Zip; "and if it was not for your handsome face, I should feel disposed to fear some dark deed. But I see it all now: you've run away: yes, that's it—you didn't want to be whipped. I don't blame you, boy: you needn't be afraid of me; these schoolmasters and I were never sworn friends;

and in old Virginny the whole race of them stand in mortal terror of me. So just make a clean breast of it, and tell me all about it:—what a tarnal nice boy he is!"

"I have not run away from my teacher," said Frank Hooper; "he is a very clever man, and never treated me amiss. But I have run away from New Berne, or rather left secretly; and the cause is one in which this young man, Mr. Tucker, is partly interested. I am sent by the Patriots on secret and urgent business to the Patriots of Wilmington; and to keep from exciting the suspicions of the Governor, they have put out rumours that I have run off from school. The teacher is in the secret, and he is as strong a liberty man as any in the whole country."

"That's a redeeming quality in him," returned Coon, "and I'm surprised at it, for the preachers and teachers, in old Virginny at least, always side with the king."

"How am I interested in this matter?" asked Walter.

"I have letters from your father, who is in prison, to a great friend of his in Wilmington," said the boy.

"Will you let me see them?" inquired Walter.

"You are suspicious," answered the boy: "but you will see I tell the truth. Here they are," continued he, taking a packet from his pocket: "these two are from your father to Mr. Harnett, and you can see by the direction whether or not they are in your father's hand-writing."

"This is his hand," said Walter; "I could tell it by a darker moon. Do you know what he wants with Mr. Harnett? and can you tell me if one Chester Rowton is in New Berne?"

"Your father has written about himself, and about the troubles that are brewing in the country; he has great confidence in Mr. Harnett, and wants him to defend his case, and also, as he expresses it, to defend the causes of the country. I cannot tell you any more now of my business, which is urgent and secret. What do *you* know of Mr. Rowton?"

"I know him to be a villain," answered Walter: "but

we have no time to talk longer. I wish you a safe and speedy journey, Master Hooper, and hope Mr. Harnett will come up to father's expectations. Shall I help you on your horse?"

"I want Mr. Coon and you to go with me," replied the boy; "I am very young, and hardly know the road."

"Mr. Coon can go, if he wishes," said Walter; "my road lies in a different direction."

"Yes, but you *must* go with me," returned the wilful boy.

"And *shall* go," put in Zip.

"*Must* and *shall* are words which no one but my father can use towards me: for the present I am master of my own actions, and allow no one to dictate a course of conduct for me. Come, Master Frank, it is time for us to part."

"Won't you go with me?" asked Frank.

"No," replied Walter.

"Please do," said the boy, in a tone soft and tender; "I'm afraid to go, with no one with me but Uncle Job, there. He's very old and decrepit."

"Then you ought not to have started with him," replied Walter. "If you are afraid, you can easily go back with me to New Berne."

"Oh, what shall I do!" exclaimed the boy, beginning to weep. "If I go back, I am lost, and cannot travel in the dark by myself. I thought I should have found a house before now,—and—"

"I can't stand this," said Coon, interrupting the boy. "Walter, my son, you must go with the lad, and I'll return to your father. You cannot serve him better than by going to his friends, and interesting them in his case."

"He said you might go, if I found you," said Frank Hooper, "and told me to instruct you what to say to the people at Wilmington. He wished, several times, that I might meet with you. I have a purse of gold, sir, and if——"

"Whom do you take me for, boy?" interrupted Walter, sternly "You belong to the fine people, and, like them, think, if you cannot command, you can bribe. I am not a

slave, nor the son of one; and I do not serve from fear, nor for money."

"You 'll serve for love, though, won't you?" asked the boy, approaching Walter with the frank and tender manner of a child.

"Perhaps so," replied Walter.

"Then I 'll love you all my life, if you 'll go with me," said the student. "I 'll love you, and all those that like me shall, and will treat you as they treat me."

"So you think now, while you are a child and in danger," returned Walter. "Mr. Coon," continued he, "go back immediately to New Berne—let no one but father know that you have seen me, and tell no one but him what I have told you. You must be cautious and wise, and tell father to be so: let him know where I am, give him my love, and tell him that I will reap a rich harvest of vengeance for this indignity which has been put upon him."

"God Almighty bless you, my boy," replied Zip: "here's my hand, and my everlasting friendship! And here 's the same to you, my pretty boy!"

"Take care of ghosts," said Walter, laughing.

"Come Master Frank, let me mount you behind uncle Job."

"I 've become cold," answered Frank, "and had rather walk with you."

"I 'm fleet of foot," replied Walter, "and it will be impossible for you to keep up with me."

"I walk a great deal, too," said the student; "and I am willing to try a match with you for a while at least."

"As you will," answered Walter; "but you must not blame me if you are troubled with sore limbs to-morrow. Come, uncle Job, lead the way."

Coon was now nearly out of sight on his way to New Berne; but for some time afterwards, Walter Tucker and Frank Hooper could hear his stentorian voice loud ringing through the woods.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL.—WALTER TUCKER AND FRANK HOOPER, TYPES OF TWO CLASSES.—UTOPIA'S ACCOMPLISHMENTS.

ANY person who looks upon the map of North Carolina, will find that Wilmington is in a south-westerly direction from New Berne, and about eighty miles distant; but it must be known that in North Carolina roads do not run straight from one place to another. The barriers of Nature, not yet overcome, have caused the State to be divided into a number of distinct communities, and these communities differ as widely from each other in manners, habits, and feelings, as do the inhabitants of Florida and Nova Scotia. In the west, the mountains, the grandest and highest in the Union, divide neighbourhoods as far from each other as are Charleston and New York; and in the east are rivers that spread out into shallow seas, and immense swamps that are yet the abodes of savage beasts, and of equally savage men.

Different races, too, have peopled these comparatively obscure regions; New Englanders and Virginians, with many aristocratic and some noble English families, founded the settlements on the Cape Fear River and Albermarle Sound; the Baron de Graffenreidt, of Berne, in Switzerland, was the founder of New Berne on the Neuse River, and near the head of Pamlico Sound; Highlanders who "were out in '45," or were related to those who were, formed a settlement at Cross Creek, now Fayetteville, in the southern part of the State; the Moravians, a peculiar religious sect from Germany, settled a colony in the central part of the State; and in the

west were emigrants and adventurers from different places. These races, or settlements, separated from each other by the barriers to which we have alluded, long preserved their distinct national characteristics; and in adjoining counties might be found people speaking different languages, and differing widely in religion, dress, and modes of living. About the frontiers of these settlements were adventurers from all nations, religious fanatics, desperadoes and robbers; in the swamps were runaway slaves and fugitives from justice; while the sounds and rivers along the coast were infested by buccaneers, some of whom were of high descent, lived in splendour while on land, and braved and bribed the public authorities. In such a country, the authority of the mother country, always feeble, was virtually at an end before the revolution had properly commenced; and in various sections there were meetings and formal declarations of independence similar to that of Mecklenberg, and prior in point of time to that national one of the fourth of July, 1776. The people, growing up in the woods, were essentially free thinkers; and many of them, unfortunately, were at all times free actors. The celebrated insurrection of the Regulators, in 1771, was an indication of the spirit of the people before the Revolution; they were all Regulators; and some of them, partly from causes mentioned, and partly from the unsettled state of things, regulated themselves according to their own notions, submitting to no law but that of their own will. During the period of which we now write, the whole State or Province was in commotion; the elements of revolution were everywhere at work; and though they were all approximating towards one grand result, yet these elements, in different places and among different races, assumed different aspects and operated in different ways.

Such was the condition of things at the time Frank Hooper, accompanied by Walter Tucker and an old servant, undertook a journey from New Berne to Wilmington; and these two youths, between whom a warm friendship began to grow, were types of two of the races of which we have been writing. In one we find the stern, sad, philosophical plebeian, educated

it is true, and of fine sensibilities and vaulting ambition; but a tenant of the woods, a follower of the chase, and taught by nature. Accustomed to meditation and a solitary life, his thoughts were slightly tinged with gloom; his sentences were brief, sententious, and full of imagery borrowed from the wild solitudes o'er which he roamed; and, though gentle in nature and not uncouth in manners, his polish and his gentleness were those of a young and fearless son of Nimrod. This was the *Regulator;* and with him was a scion of one of those noble houses who early espoused the cause of freedom in North Carolina. The name of Hooper is illustrious in the annals of the State; and the men who bore it, like many of their compeers, had everything to lose and nothing to gain by a revolution. They lived in splendour not surpassed in any part of the American colonies: they were educated, refined, and surrounded by all the luxuries and elegancies of life, and, though of aristocratic blood, respected by the people. Frank Hooper had, for one of his age, read much, and thought much, too; but, though a lover of freedom, and deeply imbued with the philosophy of the times, his air and bearing, his dress and language, were altogether different from those of his companion. His loose velvet pantaloons were gathered tightly round a slender waist, and were not too long to hide a delicate ankle, and still more delicate foot, cased in morocco shoes, with shining silver buckles. His blue jerkin was fringed with lace; ruffles, white as snow, adorned his wrists, and his wide, open collar was of the finest cambric linen. His cap, which was adorned with tassels and a scarlet band, was pulled low over his head and cheeks, to protect them from the dews of the night, and was carefully fastened under the chin with fillets of velvet; but it did not conceal entirely a face extremely fair, and eyes that sparkled with intelligence and sensibility. Walter, it is true, wore a green hunting-shirt of fine material, and fastened round the waist by a broad belt of polished leather; but his feet and ankles were in red mocassins, and his cap, though becoming, and indeed picturesque, was not of cloth, but of the undressed skin of the wild racoon. At first, there-

fore, he felt somewhat ashamed of his own costume, especially as young Hooper would compel him to view him as a friend: he was often glancing at his own dress and that of his companion, while the other never seemed to take the slightest notice of any but his own habiliments. He was, too, so gentle in his manner, and so frank in his conversation—so full of harmless wit and entertaining gossip—that Walter became, insensibly, lively and confidential, often giving utterance to sallies and sentiments that caused his friend to stretch his eyes with wonder. The subject of greatest interest to both were the intrigues and characters of the intriguers about the Governor's court. Concerning these Walter had many questions to ask, and Frank Hooper was ever ready to answer.

"But the strangest person I have yet seen," said Hooper, in the course of the conversation, "is your friend, Utopia."

"Why do you call her my friend?" asked Walter, quickly. "We have been thrown together by accident, and I felt bound——"

"Make no apologies," replied Frank Hooper. "Her acquaintance, I assure you, will not disgrace any one. As I have told you, my connexions enabled me to be a great deal about the palace, and throughout the whole household that little girl has been, for weeks, the chief subject of conversation. I say, little girl; but she cannot now be called exactly a girl, though it would, perhaps, be equally improper to say she is a woman. I am told that, a few months ago, she seemed much smaller and more girlish than she is now: in fact, it is astonishing how she has grown since I first saw her; though, perhaps, a change of dress may be one cause of the difference in her appearance."

"How has she changed her dress?" asked Walter.

"Your father and Miss Alice Bladen have bought her a fine wardrobe," said Hooper; "and it is surprising to see how gracefully a rustic like her wears her neat dresses, and how discreetly she conducts herself. Her mind, too, they say, has improved amazingly."

"Has she learned to write yet?" asked Walter.

"Learned to write!" exclaimed Hooper; "why she is now taking lessons in drawing and music. Knowledge of books and sciences seems to come to her by intuition; and in six months she will be a lady, and the most intelligent one in all the country. No, I'm wrong in saying she'll be a lady; it don't seem natural to call her so."

"You fine folks, I suppose, think no one is a lady or gentleman that is not high born," said Walter.

"That's not what I mean," replied Hooper; "I mean that Utopia is too good to be called a lady. The word *lady* suggests notions of a mere finely-dressed woman, with a woman's whims, vanities, and frailties; Utopia is not such. And would you believe me? She spends all her nights in jail with her mother; yes, she comes out of that horrid place looking as innocent, as cheerful, and as sweet as if she were risen from a bed of down, in a royal palace. She carries her purity and her goodness everywhere; and she is the same Utopia in jail, in a hovel, in the woods, and in the fine houses of the rich and gay."

"Truly," said Walter, "you are eloquent in her praises; but this is because she is a sort of curiosity in New Berne. It will be fashionable with the fine people there to pet her for awhile, just as they would a monkey from Africa, or a parrot from the Indies; but their monkeys and parrots will retain their popularity longer than Utopia. I see that Miss Bladen has a great fancy for her; it will not last long, as the poor girl will find to her sorrow."

"You never lose an opportunity of being severe on Miss Bladen," said Frank, laughing; "you must have a spite against her."

"I harbour no spite against women," returned Walter.

"Then you dislike her?" said Frank.

"I do not like her ways," replied Walter.

"Did she ever offend you?" asked Frank, kindly.

"No matter," said Walter; "perhaps I have already said too much."

"Very well," replied Frank, pettishly; "if you do not choose to trust me with your secrets I have no right to complain."

CHAPTER XXIX.

BOYISH CONVERSATION.—LOVE TROUBLES.—STRANGE COMPANIONS.—AN OLD ACQUAINTANCE IN A NEW GUISE.

FRANK Hooper, the student, though too proud to acknowledge it, began before the dawn of morning to manifest symptoms of fatigue; still he stoutly refused to take a seat with Job on the horse. At last he confessed that he would like to ride, but declared his dislike of being seen behind the old negro; and finally, that all parties might be mounted, it was agreed to borrow, hire, or purchase a gig, and harness Job's animal to it. Morning came, but Frank found it no easy matter to get a vehicle to suit his purpose. The first house at which he inquired was a rude log hut, in a small patch of cleared ground, and surrounded by a wide waste of sand; the wall of the hut was covered outside with the skins of squirrels, racoons, and wild cats, and inside were found a woman and some half a dozen nearly naked children, all of a sickly, ashy hue, and one of them, a girl of some thirteen, sitting in the sun shivering with an ague. The good woman hardly knew what a gig was, but proffered her cart; and in answer to a question about the health of the neighbourhood remarked, that they had very little sickness in those parts, though she had heard it said there was a good deal higher up on the river.

"There's an instance of the benevolence of Providence," said the student, as they left the hut on the sandy desert; "the human system will adapt itself to any condition of life, and become comparatively happy in it. I almost believe that there is no difference in the happiness of different ranks."

"I do not," said Walter; "are you not tired?" continued he: "well, would you not be more happy if you were in a gig? Just so I would be, if I were elevated to that circle in which I ought to move."

"It is well enough to propose to ourselves some worthy aim," replied the student; "and the higher our aim the better we shall be. This is the reason why, in my opinion, Utopia will be so perfect; her heart is naturally good, and she was born and bred in a state of society where she had no human examples to copy. The instincts of her nature tell her that those are depraved people among whom she lives, or has lived; she, therefore, will shun whatever they do, and copy some exalted model she has formed in her pure imagination. Girls born in good society do not always try to be better; they are satisfied when they come up to the usual standard, and will, without compunction, practise follies that are canonised by custom. You have, I understand, had an opportunity of knowing Utopia intimately; and if Miss Bladen speaks the truth of her, you must have witnessed a delicacy and propriety in all her conduct, a serenity of temper, and a purity and sweetness of sentiment, which women do not often find in each other, nor husbands in their wives. Still, you imagine that the higher ranks are better and more refined?—you will be sadly disappointed when you marry among them."

"Who told you I wanted to marry among them?" asked Walter. "You must think I am in love with Alice Bladen."

"I think she has made an impression of some sort on your mind," answered the student; "you are constantly alluding to her."

"And you," replied Walter, "are eternally harping on Utopia. I see how it is; you love Miss Alice, and you want to keep me from suspecting you."

"*I* love Miss Alice Bladen!" cried the student, bursting into a merry laugh; "what strange suspicions get into your head! Pray tell me why you think so, and I'll tell you with equal candour whether or not I do love the English beauty."

"You seem to know her very well," said Walter.

"Well, so I do."

"You say, also," continued Walter, "that you are very intimate at the palace."

"True, again," exclaimed the student; "now, how does it follow that I am in love with Alice Bladen? *You* know Utopia very well, and you once lived in the same house with her——"

"I do not love Utopia," said Walter, dryly.

"And I am not a suitor or lover of Alice Bladen," said the student, pettishly.

"I never tell stories about these things," returned Walter.

"Nor do I," answered the student.

"Some people try so much to make everything a joke, that you never know what they mean," spoke Walter, and began to whistle a melancholy air.

"And some cannot bear to be joked about such things without getting into a furious rage," said the student, who answered Walter's tune with a very lively song. Walter turned to his companion, whose voice began to charm him, and extending his hand, said, "Master Frank, I am a fool; you must forgive the oddities of a country bumpkin."

"You're a strange compound," replied the student, "but I like you all the better for it. I'm eccentric myself; but I make it a rule not to look cross at a near friend, nor to use harsh language towards him: these things cut more deeply than we are aware."

"And that's the case with your words now," said Walter, "but the reproof is wholesome. But, tell me, how can you, on such a short acquaintance, profess to be a near friend to me?"

"Haven't you bought my friendship at a heavy price?" asked the student. "Besides, I have often heard of you, and I find you such as you were described."

"I'm an awkward hand at kind professions," said Walter; "but, Master Frank, *you'll* never find me wanting in action."

The truth is, Walter Tucker, who had never before conversed with an equal of his own age, was from the first, and

despite his strong dislike of the aristocracy, greatly taken with Frank Hooper. The latter, from his size, seemed to be several years his junior; but Walter soon discovered in him traces of a thinking, well-educated mind. Then the youth was so full of charming vivacity, so delicate, so gentle in manner, and so refined in feeling, so perfectly well-bred, and yet so wayward, frank, and simple, that Walter was entirely fascinated with him; and when he seemed to throw himself on Walter's protection, and to claim the assistance of his superior strength and activity, the latter felt proud of his privilege. Indeed, he often gazed at his slender companion with a serious, thoughtful countenance, and could the latter then have read his heart, he would have found him wishing that he had just such an one for his little brother. Walter could not keep this wish out of his mind, and he was about to give utterance to it, when they found themselves suddenly in view of a human habitation. The sun was now some distance above the horizon, and while both the friends were hungry, the younger was nearly exhausted by fatigue, and, therefore, though the house was a gloomy-looking one, they determined to try the hospitality of its tenants. The building was long, low, and dark-looking, with a rotten porch in front; in the small windows was not a pane of glass, nor was there any barn, kitchen, or other outhouse attached. The house stood close by the edge of a wide, shallow, stream, whose waters were of a pitchy colour, and was in a dark grove of pines, and near a wide and sombre-looking pond, filled with a luxuriant growth of black gum and cypress. There was no bridge across the stream; and as the student looked wistfully at his thin shoes and fine silk stockings, Walter proffered to take him on his back. The student, however, resisted, declaring that his feet were hot and blistered, and would be the better for a cold bath; and so, doffing his shoes and hose, Walter the while gazing admiringly at his small and snow-white feet, he plunged into the stream. Walter, who could not but wonder why the youth seemed so diffident of showing his feet, took him gently by the hand, and led him across; but hardly had

they touched the bank when the youth began to tremble violently. Walter feared he had been chilled; but the student, doubtless, felt uneasy as he approached the house before him, and from which were now issuing oaths, songs, and boisterous laughter, commingled together. With the assistance of the old negro, he dried his feet and dressed them, while Walter reconnoitered the premises; the latter, after an observation, hastily whispered to his protègé, and advised him to mount with the old negro, and leave as expeditiously as possible, while he made further note of what was going on within. The student would not listen to such a proposition, but urged Walter to leave with him; but Walter was too fond of wild adventures to heed such counsel.

"If you will go in with me," whispered he to the student, "take care of your letters—perhaps you had better give them to me."

"They are in my stocking," said the youth.

"Good!" replied Walter, tapping him gently on the chin; "I'll make a soldier of you yet. Halloo there! Who's within?" cried he, rattling at the door.

"You seem very anxious to know," said one, partially opening the door; "one, two, three," continued he, "and only one armed—all right, come in;" and with this he flung open the door, revealing some eight or ten fierce-looking men, with swarthy faces, and sitting round rude tables, by a blazing log fire, near which was a stack of arms. There was a jug and glasses on each table, a pack of cards, and several pistols; and strewn about the room, on broken stools and crazy tables, were the remains of a feast. A number of fox-hounds were stretching themselves on the floor, and at the end of the hall farthest from the fire were several small and very dirty-looking beds.

It took Walter but an instant to make an accurate survey of the whole room, and of all its contents animate and inanimate; but the student manifested his curiosity more openly, and for a longer time, some of the inmates staring at him in silence, and others listlessly packing the cards on the table, or draining the contents of their glasses.

WALTER TUCKER AT THE SWAMP INN.

"We are hungry, gentlemen," said Walter; "cold, fatigued, and hungry; can we rest ourselves a short time, and procure a little plain refreshments?"

"You can rest yourselves, of course," said one of those handling the cards, and without taking his eyes off the table; "but as for vittles," continued he, slowly and carelessly, "I guess you'll find them dry pickin'."

"Young man, won't you have a seat?" said one of those standing, at the same time jerking the stool from under one of his companions: "sit down, sir, and I'll see what can be got for you."

"I am willing," spoke the student, who at that instant was nudged by Walter, while the latter said: "You can see who we are. One is a negro, one is a runaway school-boy, and the other a hunter from a child; any sort of fare will, therefore, do for us."

"I'm willing," said Hooper, quickly catching the cue, "I'm willing, for my part, to take a piece of bread and meat."

"And if you wasn't willin' you could n't get no more," spoke one of the men, laughing; "you 're a runaway school-boy, eh? However, we 'll let you feed first, and then we 'll try you. Come, lads, here's some refreshments in these jugs that 'll soon make you think you 've been flyin' instead of walkin'. Come, you must drink some," continued he, forcing the glass to the mouth of the student; "take a sip, honey, and if it don't make you natrally crave for more, you need 'nt drink any more. Halloo, old sinner!" shouted he to the negro, who was still sitting on his horse at the door; "why don't you 'light, and come in?"

"Thank you, master," answered he; "my horse is monstrous scary, and won't stand when I'm gone."

"He's a very sorry-looking crittur to be so wild," replied the white, examining the horse's head and mouth. He's monstrous little, but he's loud," returned the negro, bursting into a great laugh.

"I'll see that he don't run away," said the other, pulling at the negro; "hitch him to the door, old man, and you can keep your eye on him."

As the negro came in, Frank Hooper in vain kept his eyes on his wrinkled face; the old slave never looked towards him, while the latter was wondering, with no easy feeling, what had become of his valise.

"Give us a toast, old man," said one of the company, winking at the others, and handing the white-headed Job a brimming glass: "Give us a patriotic sentiment."

"Gentlemen masters," answered the old man, bowing lowly, with his hat in one hand and his glass in the other; "gentlemen masters, I 'se an old nigger, and has seed a heap of scatterments, and topseyturvies: here's hoping dat you all may swim smoofly along the briny waves of sacrificin' time, and ford the Jordan of destructive equinoxes, while fiery billows roll beneath!"

"Whoorah!" cried one of the men, closely eyeing old Job as he drank his liquor at a gulp: "where did you get all that from, old patriarch?"

"*Whar!*" cried the negro, gazing at his questioner with a drunken and stupid stare; "whar did I git all dat from? Jest show me the bottom of another glass, and, by golly! I 'll make a more obfuscated catalogue nor dat!"

"So I think;" said Walter, slapping him on the shoulder and taking the glass from his hand; "you old fool! take your station in that corner, and behave yourself."

"Oh, in course," answered the negro, bowing lowly and hiccoughing; "I'll do just adzactly as you say, master John," and he flung himself against the chimney jamb, and in five minutes was snoring furiously. While Walter and Frank were making a hasty meal, one of the inmates of the house, lounging up to one of the beds, began to kick it, exclaiming, "Bones! Bones! eh, Bones, you snorin' bison, get up here—I say, do you hear me, you bag o' rocks?"

"Eh," yawned a man, half awake; "is it you, your celestial highness?"

"No!" cried the man, "it's me, you infernal squat! I say there, git up, we want you right away."

"Away, eh?" yawned the man; "is there robbers on the road! Umph!" cried he, as he received a violent

kick, "what's the matter, what's the matter? Are we attacked?"

All this while Walter and the student were eyeing the bed; and the latter, young and inexperienced as he was, could scarcely conceal the emotions with which he was agitated, as he beheld, emerging from under the dingy bed-clothes, a grisly head, and a face covered with a huge and portentous heard.

Slowly he gathered himself up in bed, gaped, and straightening himself, jumped on the floor, while Walter, with a start, discovered in the bony apparition the veritable and unmistakable Dr. Ribs.

"Well," said the latter, rubbing his eyes, "this is a nice dress for a court gentleman to be in! What would the Queen—I mean her imperial highness the Queen's sister—think if she saw her beloved de Riboso in this court suit, covered over with straw and moss? I say, Jack, Jim, or whoever else is landlord of this distillery," continued he, stroking his whiskers, "have you got a mirror? Hah! the Little Pocosin, as I live! Here, where's my sword, pistols?"

"I'm not on a hostile mission," said Walter, advancing; "how do you do, Dr. Ribs."

This being considered a sally, was applauded, when the doctor, with a frown, cried, "Base-born son of the swamps, call me not Doctor, nor that other infernal name!"

Walter's eyes flashed, and he felt for his dagger, when Hooper caught his arm, whispering, "He's beneath your contempt; for my sake let him alone."

"I will," said Walter, aloud.

"You will what, swamp Jack?—feel for my—eh—my heart, eh? Attempt it if thou darest! Know, boy, presumptive boy, that I have been made a Spanish Amazon, and should not be surprised if her ecclesiastical highness has me appointed a full Armada! Yes, tremble, thou pale face," he continued, pointing his finger at Hooper, who was standing behind Walter, and shaking violently; "tremble, smooth-chin, and puff out your jaws, you can't look fierce enough to alarm T. McDonald de Riboso, the accepted lover of her royal

highness' donna, or I should say, prima donna, Carolina Susannah Matilda, sister to the Queen, and heir apparent to the throne of Great Britain;" and with this he performed several new ballet steps on the floor, to the imminent peril of his own shins and of those about him. "Yes, Great Britain; I love thee still, though oceans roll between us! The integrity of the empire shall be preserved, and not a hair of its head injured; George the Third will be my brother, and I his fortification of defence in this rebellious land. Varlet," turning to Walter, "what brought thee hither? Who is that lad with thee, and who is this old ebony," said he, shaking the unconscious Job out of his slumbers.

"Murder! murder! fire!" cried Job.

"Silence, coward!" continued the Doctor, still shaking him; "who are you all?"

"I'm Uncle Job," answered the negro, quickly. "I'm Uncle Job, and dese are—let me see—dis is young master Hooper, who's been to school in New Berne, and I'm takin' him home, cause as how his mother's very sick. Dis todder gentleman is Mr. Tucker's son—"

"I know him very well," interrupted the Doctor: "you are your own uncle, are you? who was your father?"

"Old master Adam," answered Job.

"Nonsense, man!" exclaimed one of the men, pettishly; "tell us at once who these lads are," said the most intelligent looking of the revellers. "Cease your rant, and tell us, if you know the youth, who he is, where he is from, and what is his present business?"

"Will you let me speak a word with you in private?" asked Hooper of Doctor Ribs; "I'm not armed, sir," continued he, smiling.

"Oh, pshaw!" cried Ribs, "I care nothing for that—I'd walk with you if you were armed like a knight," continued he; "but mind, we must not go out of view. Come here to the end of the saloon, and sit on this couch. Heavens, how sweet his breath smells—I know you are from the court," continued he; "yes, you look and smell like the very rose-bud of the court."

"Do you know Rowton, Chester Rowton?" asked Hooper.

"I have the honour of being his particular friend," answered Ribs; when I marry her highness, I'll make him a knight."

"He sent a message by me to you; he told me, if I saw you, at just such a place as this, to slip these ten gold pieces into your hand for your fidelity, and to request you to speed me on my course. You must not let these men see your money, or they 'll make you divide."

"Never mind me," spoke Ribs; "I'm close and honourable. And you say," spoke he, in a louder tone, and rising from the bed, "you say, Master Cooper—I forget your name—you say Colonel Rowton wished me to hurry you on as fast as possible?"

"He did," answered Hooper, "and I'll tell you what I want; I started with only Uncle Job and that horse, and overtook Walter Tucker a few miles from town. He's desperately in love with Miss Alice Bladen, an inmate of the palace, and you may judge what sort of understanding exists between him and his Excellency, who wants brave and prudent officers."

"I see into it all," said Ribs.

"*I don't* though," thought Walter, in whose cheeks the red blood seemed as if it would burst through the skin. But he tried in vain to catch Hooper's eye; and the latter, to his great amazement, continued: "this youth has tendered his services to go with me; but we 've walked till we are broken down, and we wish to get a gig, to which we can harness our single horse, letting Uncle Job ride behind."

"A capital idea!" cried Ribs; "and I'll tell you where you can get a gig just such as you want. About five miles from here is a great camp meeting now going on—it is right on the road to Kingston,* and there you will find every sort of conveyance."

* Kingston is a little town in Lenoir County, on the Neuse River. It was in the time of the Revolution infested with tories; and since the Revolution, the republican sentiments of the people induced them to change the name. Accordingly, the G was struck out, and to this day the town is called Kinston; a name which puzzles the traveller not a little.

The Camp Meeting. It is not intended to cast ridicule on the proceedings of

"Shall we meet some of our secret friends at Kingston?" asked the student.

"Abundance of them; and, by the way, I must give you something to them, for fear you might need their aid. I say, John, have you paper, ink, and sand here?"

"Here's paper and a pencil," spoke Hooper, offering them.

"Never mind," returned Ribs, "I'll send some more honorable and knightly token. Confound it, that dear witch, her highness, has got all my rings; however, by the powers, I'll send a lock of my whiskers, the very thing—they all know *them*. Cut them, boy, and don't spoil them."

"That would be a sin," answered the student; "there is a great deal of gossip about them in the palace."

"I suspected that, lad—you're a sweet boy, and would do for my page. What do they say of me?"

"A great deal that is fine; and it is said her highness sighs very much when she misses you; won't you go with us to Edenton, or at least to the camp meeting?"

"To Edenton!" thought Walter, with indignation; "I'm over-reached—and by this boy!"

"Bless your soul, I must hurry back to my fond lady love; come," (Walter breathed more freely) "and as for these men, a camp meeting is the last place they wish to be seen at." (Walter felt still better.)

"Very good, we'll go alone; and as we are in a great hurry, we'll dispense with ceremony. Come, Mr. Tucker, let's be off; adieu, de Riboso—adieu, kind sirs, we feel grateful to you all." Walter was still less ceremonious, heeding no one's remarks; and the two friends started off, when Dr. Ribs, running after them, cried: "One word, Master Hooper; did they speak of the colour of my whiskers?"

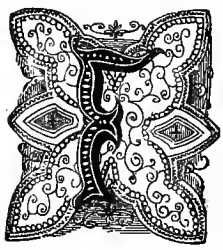
"They did," replied Frank; "adieu again!"

"Bonos noctes!" cried Ribs; "that's a sweet boy," continued he, as he returned into the house.

any denomination of Christians; the object is simply to give a faithful picture of the characters and manners of the times. Those who think that religious revivals or excitements are here introduced at a period too early, are referred for an interesting account of a singular sect of religious fanatics, to Wm. Husatt's account of the Rise and Progress of the Colonies of South Carolina and Georgia.

CHAPTER XXX.

CONFIDENTIAL DISCLOSURES.—WOUNDED VANITY AND INCIPIENT LOVE.—SUDDEN DISAPPEARANCE OF UNCLE JOB.—THE CAMP MEETING.



RANK HOOPER, you are my brother for life," said Walter Tucker, as the two young friends left Swamp Lodge, the name by which the house was known where they had breakfasted. "You are smarter than I am," he continued, "for my poor wit never would have got off so safely."

"I thought you very smart at such things," answered the student; "such at least is your reputation."

"You were mistaken," returned Walter; "you have misunderstood me. I *am* fond of tracking wild beasts, and of watching the stratagems of an enemy; I like adventures and all that sort of thing, but I have not a cunning tongue. I am a rough-hewn rustic; you are a diplomatist."

"In other words," said the student, laughing, "you are a soldier, wise, quick, and strategetic; I'm a lawyer, ready only with my tongue. Is that the distinction you mean?"

"You do yourself too much injustice," said Walter; "but tell me, what put it into your head to say I was in love with Alice Bladen?"

"And are you not?" asked Frank.

"I, a poor, friendless, awkward child of the forest, in love with such a fine lady!"

"Why not?" asked Frank; "you say you aspire to move in such society as she moves in: besides, the romance of the thing would be delicious! She's very romantic, I know,

and if it would not get you into trouble, I almost wish you did love her."

"It would get me into trouble, though," said Walter; "and that you may see it would, I'll tell you some things, in confidence, and you must never breathe them to a living soul. Do you promise?"

"I am so curious about such things, that I will promise all you ask," replied the student; "but it is dangerous to make many confidants. I hint this to you because you have not seen as many intrigues about court as I have; a lover, a politician, or a suitor, at court, is generally ruined when he places himself in the hands of confidants."

"That I believe," said Walter; "but I tell you I will make no confidant but you."

"Will you promise me never to make any other but me in this matter?" asked Frank.

"Certainly I will, and I'll be as good as my word."

"Then you shall find me a true and faithful confidant," said Frank; "I'll talk of your secrets to no one but you, and I'll take a great interest in them too."

"I expect you to act precisely as you say," replied Walter; "and now I'll tell you of the whole intercourse between Alice and myself."

And so he did, and in very few words; and when he finished there was a pause in the conversation for several minutes.

"Do you really hate her as an enemy," at last asked the student.

"I told you once, women are not my enemies," answered Walter.

"Then why treat her so?"

"Because she treated me badly."

"But why did you not laugh it off? You say you intend to do something great, and that when you are distinguished and honoured you will approach her; will you do this to mortify her? If so, you regard her as an enemy."

"I thought her a very sweet lady once," said Walter, "and I would have been willing to have died for her; but she scorned me."

"And then you hated her?"

"No; then I resolved to be what I always thought about."

"And that is to get knighted, is it?"

"Pshaw! pshaw!" exclaimed Walter—"you don't comprehend my thoughts at all, Frank. I've had visions, boy; visions when wide awake. When I was smaller than you, I used to puzzle father by asking him questions about government; I could not understand why whole nations of men should bow themselves down before one man, and call him *sire, master, gracious majesty,* and all that, as if he had come down from the sun or moon. I wanted to be equal to the highest; but as father said, and I knew, I would have to rise by getting favour at court, I determined to live a free man in the woods. I never could kneel to man, even to be knighted. I never could pronounce those words I have quoted. I thought a great deal about these things; my nature revolted at the whole system of civilised government as ridiculous and degrading; it all looked like child's play to me. I could not understand it. The Indians, or the savages as we call them, seemed to me to act more like men, and I became very anxious to go among them. Father watched my feelings closely; and fearing I might turn savage, he undertook to get me in business. I knew nothing in the world about trade—I hated trade, traders, and pedlers; and father knew this. To try me awhile, and give me a little insight into business, where no one that he or I cared about could laugh at me, he placed me with old Ricketts on the beach. I was to take a few lessons there, and then he intended to carry me to some town. That arrangement was knocked in the head—and so will that Indian one of my own, I think. There will be—there *must* be a revolution—the king can reign no longer here. I must take a part in this fight—it will be a glorious struggle! I have always wished to be engaged in such stirring scenes—and when it is for liberty! I tell you, I can hardly hold myself!"

"It is a generous impulse, and thousands of noble hearts share it with you," said Hooper; "I almost wish I was in a condition to be a soldier myself."

"You are too young and tender," answered Walter. "You must stay at home, and when I'm marching through swamps, or careering in battle, I'll think of you, my little brother, and of how I'll entertain you with accounts of my adventures. But you'll forget me—there'll be nobody to remember me but my lonely father."

"I'll never forget you, Walter, indeed I won't," said the student, tenderly: "I'll always take the liveliest interest in your welfare; and, in proof of my friendship I beg you to accept this token," saying which the student took from his pocket-book a beautiful and costly ring, and put it on the little finger of Walter's left hand. "Wear that in memory of me, and whenever you are in distress enclose it to me, to the care of Cornelius Harnett, and you shall promptly find what my promises are worth."

"Is your father dead?" asked Walter, feasting his eyes on the gem that glittered on his finger.

"He is," answered the student; "and, by the way, Miss Bladen is going to Mr. Harnett's, where I'll not fail to speak a good word for you."

"When is she going?" inquired Walter; "I thought she was captivated with New Berne."

"Not she—she longs to get away, but they say the Governor has forbid her going, and she is now in honourable imprisonment."

Walter stopped. "Did you say, he is confined?" asked he.

"It was said she and the Governor had high words, and that a strict watch was put on her, and that Rowton was at the bottom of it."

"Frank," said Walter—"could not you and Uncle Job now go alone the rest of the journey?"

"Mercy on us!" cried the student, "where is Uncle Job?"

That was a question neither could answer; both had forgotten him, and neither recollected to have seen him since they started. The student was greatly agitated, indeed was almost ready to cry; but he would not listen to Walter's proposition to return. He was in a dreadful strait, feeling that he was responsible for the negro's safety; and then the

loss of his clothes added to his grief, and caused him such distress of mind that Walter's heart was sensibly touched. He readily agreed to do as his young friend wished; and this was to hurry on to the camp meeting, and there endeavour to get some men to return on horseback with them. So they hurried on, each blaming himself for his carelessness, until they began to hear in the distance a confused sound of many voices blended into a melancholy sort of wail or chant. They instantly stopped to listen, but could not decide whether it was a song, or moan, or shout; sometimes it seemed to be one, and sometimes another, and sometimes all together as it swelled and died fitfully on the breeze. The face of the student grew a little pale, but Walter took him kindly by the hand, and hurried him on, the noise becoming louder and more mysterious; and very soon they were able to distinguish voices, though even Walter was totally at a loss to make out what kind of cries they uttered. The sound now became a roar—the roar of a great multitude; now sounding like the shouts of a victorious army, now like the wail of the wounded on a vast and bloody field; while ever and anon the tumult would be lost in the notes of a triumphal song that swelled rich and harmonious above the cries and groans of the furious combatants. Louder, more fearful, more awe-inspiring became the uproar of, as it seemed, ten thousand human voices; some groaning piteously, some, as it seemed, sweeping onward, with a terrible shout, and others, heard high above the general din and clatter, urging on the combatants with lungs of brass, and hurling, in tones of thunder, defiance at their foes. And yet not a gun was heard, nor the clash of a sword; the woods were still around, and not even a riderless horse came rushing from the dreadful fray.

To both the young men it seemed strange and solemn, and they almost held their breaths as they journied on; and soon sights, stranger still than the sounds that they had heard, began to attract their attention. At first they observed an occasional straggler wandering through the woods; then they began to pass groups of both sexes, some chatting and laughing loudly and gaily, some surrounding persons who looked

sick and ghastly, and were uttering feeble cries, and some sitting in the woods quietly eating and drinking. These groups became more numerous at every step, while occasionally they would pass a woman with her bonnet off and her hair streaming in the wind, hurrying from place to place, clapping her hands, shouting, crying, and laughing by turns; sometimes they would meet a man led off by his friends, uttering as he went subdued moans, and falling from side to side against his supporters, as if he had lost the use of his members, and often they would see others, stretched by themselves beneath a tree, rolling over and writhing their bodies with convulsive twists and contortions, pulling their hair and flourishing their hands like maniacs. At last they came in view of a vast multitude, who were seated in the woods on seats made of rough boards or logs of wood, while in their midst, on an elevated platform, with a back of common planks, and a covering made of the tender branches of pine and oak, sat a row of grave and venerable-looking men, one of whom was just rising to dismiss the people for "intermission," as it was called, as Walter and Frank came in view. These latter, knowing from the vast number of white tents and little cabins scattered through the woods, that they were at the camp meeting alluded to by Doctor Ribs, and not caring, from what they saw, to remain long, addressed every respectable looking man they met on the subject of their wants. They were recommended to go from one to another; and thinking their best chance among the cabins and tents, they directed their course accordingly. About these latter there was quite a cheerful appearance; fires were burning, pots and dishes rattling, hens cackling, and all those other cheerful sounds indicating the approach of dinner. As good luck would have it, the two boys found an open hospitality at the first place they visited; their story was listened to with some interest, and they found themselves guests at the first table, at the head of which sat a venerable minister. This latter, simple-hearted and unsuspicious, at once offered his gig, and ordered it to be got ready, saying that he would not want it for a week at least; and the young friends, with a feeling they had long

been strangers to, discussed the good things before them in a manner that seemed to please their attentive hostess. They had not yet finished, when a trumpet sounded from the pulpit or platform we have described, and quickly there set in towards it, hundreds of streams of human beings. The benches were soon all filled, and still the crowd pressed in, and soon a vast area was covered with one compact mass of human beings, some sitting, some lying and kneeling, and some standing, some crying as they came up, some laughing gaily, and some even making a mockery of what was going on. Our young travellers, impatient to be off, were mortified at finding the parson's orders neglected; and as that gentleman's horse and gig were at a house some half a mile off, they thought it useless to go for them themselves, without an order from him. When they applied for it, he said—"My young friends, tarry with us a day or so, and it may do you good. There is just now a great outpouring."

"But," interrupted Walter, "our servant may be murdered. We *must* return for him, and then maybe we'll stop a day or so."

"You speak well," said the old man; "here is the order, if you find any one at home, and if not, take the horse and gig."

After giving them particular directions, the old man dismissed them with his blessing, and the young friends, with cheerful spirits, hurried off to get the gig, intending first to secure that and then look for a few attendants.

When they returned with the horse and gig, one of the reverend gentlemen in the pulpit was holding forth in a manner that had fixed the attention of the whole of his crowded auditory. He was a low, thick man, with a short neck, a full face, and a pair of fierce grey eyes; but he had a voice like thunder, and was never at a loss for words; nor were his words without effect. There was soon a low, tremulous moaning sound heard among the crowd: it grew louder and louder as he advanced, and when Walter and Frank approached there was a loud wailing, swelling from the midst of the agitated mass, the confused symphony of commingled

groans rising a key-note higher at every terrible sentence uttered by the preacher. He now lashed himself into a fury; he flung himself backwards and forwards, and stamped with his feet upon the board before him until even the outsiders began to tremble, the stragglers in the woods paused to listen, and the gay watering parties came hurrying in.

CHAPTER XXXI.

UNCLE JOB IN HIS CUPS.—WHICH IS THE DUPE?—DR. RIBS PERFORMS AN EQUESTRIAN FEAT WHICH IS ANYTHING BUT SATISFACTORY TO HIMSELF, AND VERY AMUSING TO UNCLE JOB.

UNCLE JOB, it will be recollected, made a plain manifestation at Swamp Lodge of his stupidity and his fondness for ardent spirits. These traits were not unobserved by his entertainers and by Dr. Ribs; the former resolving to probe the old negro for farther information, and the latter for plunder. Accordingly, as Walter and Frank left, a sign was made to Job, which he well understood; and making a feint of leaving with his young masters, he gradually fell back, and then hastily returned to the lodge where a brimming glass awaited him.

"Now, for another toast, old friend," said one of his seducers: "give us a smasher."

"Ke-heah-heah-hah!" laughed, or rather bellowed uncle Job; "anoder toast, masters? Let me look at ye—good," and he held up his glass, turning it round, and eyeing it with reverence; "he's sweet and sour, cold and hot—hot, hot. Whuh! how he's eyes shine. Well, here's to de old dog what treed de raccoon, de raccoon what bit de fox, de fox he caught de mink, de mink he stole de chicken—cuckoo! Whuh!" Saying which, with extreme rapidity, and with a sort of chant, he swallowed his whiskey, smacked his lips, and began a rigmarole which greatly tickled his auditors.

"Come, old man," said one of them at length, "here, take another drink—now tell, don't you know something about these patriots—eh? Don't be afraid; we'll protect you; and besides, nobody shall know what you tell us."

"I does know something," said the old negro.

"Very good, now's your time to make something by your knowledge."

"I may sit down, I s'pose? Wall," continued he, sitting with his hands on his knees, and speaking low and seriously, the dark tenants of the lodge squatting close around him, "you all knows de little Pocosin, down on de Trent, jist dis side of Master Hasel's big field—wall, todder night I was hunting de raccoon in dat swamp by my lone self, only Bose and Driver, my dogs, was wid me—we hunted, and hunted, and hunted,—'booh!' says Bose, arter a while. 'Sick him, pup!' says I—'boo-oo-o!' says Driver. 'Sick him, pup!' says I again. 'Boo-oo, booh, booh, boo, oo-oo!' says bofe togedder, purty brisk. 'Find him out, my puppies!' says I. 'Boo-oo, booh, booh, boo-oo-o, booh, booh, booh!' cried bofe, monstrous fast and quick—'hold on to him, darlins, hold him fast!' I hollered, thinking they had treed a coon, and off I went through de mud: gosh, how it flew! I flew, too, and by and by, Bose and Driver barkin' like mad, I run up to an open, dry place, and bless a nigger, Masses!" exclaimed he, raising his hands, and stretching his eyes; "gosh, Masses, what you reckon I seed? A great big patriot half as big as my hoss, a sittin' back dar on his hind legs, wid his forepaws reared up, and a grinnin' and growlin', sayin', 'Come on, my darky, if you want a wrastle.'"

"Why!" exclaimed the crowd, "you old fool, that was a bear!"

"To be sure he was, Masses," said the negro in a firm voice; "and aint dem what you call patriots in high larnin'?"

"Let him off, let him off," said the crowd; and old Job, wondering why his story took so badly, took another glass and prepared to leave.

"Massa," said he to Ribs, "come, gib me up my bundle.

I seed you when you picked it up from behind dat log, where I hid 'm. Come, Massa."

"Give it to him, give it to him, and let the old fool off," cried several.

"Well, here it is," said the Doctor, producing the valise; "come, old fellow, I'll help you on."

"However, old boy," continued he, "I must try your horse—if he's a good one, I'll give you a trade. Mine's in the shed at the back of the house here. Hold on here, till I pace him a little and try his mettle."

"Oh, no, no, no," cried the negro, seizing the bridle, while the Doctor mounted; "no, no, massa Doctor, I can't let go my crittur."

The Doctor, who had kindly intended to take only the horse, now resolved to have horse and baggage both, and to drop the negro far in the swamp below.

"Well, if you can't trust me, get up behind me," said the Doctor; and old Job, after some hesitation and blubbering, obeyed. "I'll carry the bundle," continued the Doctor, and to this Job also assented. When mounted, the horse, to the infinite amusement of the bystanders, began to kick up behind, and to turn round in the most ludicrous manner imaginable. Old Job, greatly alarmed, only increased the difficulties by pressing his legs under the horse's flanks, and hugging the Doctor tightly in his arms. Ribs, no ways loth to show his gallantry and his horsemanship, became also fond of the sport; and for some time he and the old negro were carried through a variety of evolutions, no less fatiguing to them than to the horse. At last the animal trotted off, and the Doctor rode him up and down the road, the tenants of the lodge still enjoying the fun; and as the hats of both riders were off, and there was such a disparity between the length of their legs, and such a difference in the colour of their bushy heads and bearded faces, they did present a show picturesque as well as entertaining. At length the Doctor winking at his companions, struck up the road to Kingston, at a brisk canter, the negro bellowing in vain for his hat, as the horse's speed increased. The horse, now hot and chafing,

UNCLE JOB CARRYING OFF DR. RIBS.

still kept increasing his speed, and soon he was in a furious gallop, the Doctor and old Job both screaming in concert, while the fiery animal sped like an arrow beyond the view of the lookers-on behind. "Wo, wo, wo!—oh, I'm lost!" screamed the Doctor, at the top of his voice, letting go the bridle in his fright, jerking his feet out of the stirrups, and endeavouring to fling himself off. In vain he flourished his arms and legs—in vain he screamed at the horse and at Job: the latter now held the reins, and held, too, his writhing victim with the grip of a vice. On, on they sped, like the wind—over creeks and ponds, ditches and bridges. Trees and houses flashed but an instant in the Doctor's view—spectators and passers-by saw them with wonder and amazement but a moment, and the dreadful apparition vanished like a shadow. When they passed any one, old Job, as well as the Doctor, screamed for help; but this did not deceive the latter, who now firmly believed himself in the hands of the Evil One. On they went—the ride of John Gilpin was nothing to theirs—the whole country was alarmed, and even brutes ran frightened from the road.

It was just as Walter Tucker and Frank Hooper were returning to the camp ground with their gig and horse, and as the preacher for the day was fulminating at the zenith of his powers, that this frightful apparition came in view.

"Woe, woe, to you, lost sinners!" exclaimed the preacher; "wo, wo, wo," was answered back, and the speaker paused. "Wo, wo, wo, oh, oh!" swelled louder and more terribly through the affrightedcongregation; they rose simultaneously, and the preacher shouted, "Lo, he cometh, he cometh like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour! Oh, God, deliver us!—let us pray." But it was too late for prayers; the furious riders were now in the skirts of the camp, causing the most awful consternation. Women fainted, men clung by their elders and preachers, children screamed, and all ran to and fro, wailing and wringing their hands; many fell swooning and were trampled on by others, who made for the woods as fast as their heels could carry them. "Wo, wo, wo!" and the terrible riders swept through the camp, and

in an instant vanished, leaving the multitude in speechless awe, to speculate upon their character and mission. As for Walter Tucker and Frank Hooper, they saw at a glance, and with unmixed delight, though with no little amazement, that Ribs had been taken captive by the venerable-seeming Job; and without waiting to make an explanation to any one, they dashed after at the full speed of the parson's horse. Their absence was some time afterwards observed; and it was a subject of thankfulness with the whole crowd, that only these two graceless youths had been carried off by the great enemy of man who that day appeared among them. The parson thought he might have spared his horse and gig—but on the whole, he was happy to have escaped on any terms.

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE CHASE.—PERILS BY THE WAY.—DR. RIBS FAIRLY CARRIED CAPTIVE INTO THE ENEMY'S QUARTERS.—RECEPTION OF THE YOUNG ADVENTURERS BY COL. ASHE.—WALTER CONSIDERS HIMSELF SLIGHTED.—A METAMORPHOSIS.

HEN Walter and his friend Frank left the camp ground, they were in sight of the flying Job and his terrified captive; but these latter were mounted, while their pursuers were on wheels, and could not consequently put their horse to his utmost speed. Still the parson's animal showed that he must have come in for a share of his master's popularity; he was mettlesome, and sure of foot, while the lads behind him, full of life, fun and frolic, were no timid drivers. Walter held the reins and Frank applied the whip, and off they shot, exhilarated by the rapid motion and delighted with the chase; while just before them was the white head of old Job, glittering in the sunbeams, in strong contrast with the sandy locks of the Doctor. It was amusing, too, to witness the

position in which each rider sat; the venerable Job looked like a man of steel, sitting straight and firm in his seat, while the half demented doctor seemed as if he would fall to pieces, his long, bony legs jerked out, his head thrown forwards and falling from side to side, and his arms dangling about as if loosely hung to a lifeless corse.

Thus they dashed onward, the Doctor still hoarsely bellowing for aid, and old Job uttering an occasional howl or scream that startled every tenant of the woods; while Walter, catching the wild enthusiasm of the strange being before him, added to the terrors of every beholder, by uttering at frequent intervals the wild war-whoop of the Indian. Wagons, carts, gigs, and carriages, that were met or overtaken, were suddenly upset, their horses taking fright, and dashing off through the woods; foot passengers fled in terror, some in their confusion climbing trees with the nimbleness of squirrels; travellers turned back affrighted, and thus sometimes there would be a long cavalcade, all charging furiously down the road, and these, in their turn, turning others back and helping to increase the confusion and to spread far and wide the panic. Thus, the terrible Black Rider, as he was afterwards called, passed unquestioned by any one; gradually, too, he gained on his pursuers, until, at a sudden turn of the road, he passed out of view. They were now in the county of Duplin; the sun was far down among the trees, and the young men found themselves at a river, the name of which they did not know, but which turned out to be the Northeast Fork of the Cape Fear. Their road passed right across, but they did not know the depth or direction of the ford; and while they hesitated what to do, they were hailed by a voice down the stream, and turning, saw old Job beckoning to them to follow. The negro had abated his speed, and as there was a sort of road along the banks of the stream, the young men followed, though they were not allowed to come within speaking distance of the fugitive and his captive. Presently the sun went down; but old Job, at a brisk gait, still held on his course, which was now on a "blind road," through a dark and heavy wood; and this forest still con-

tinued until the moon rose, and was in fact far up in the heavens. They then came on what seemed an impenetrable swamp; and there Job was seen to take the strange precaution of bandaging the eyes of the semi-animate Ribs. Considering the time, the events of the day, and the black and dismal-looking scene before them, this act of Job's created some strange feelings even in Walter and his companion; and when the old negro beckoned to them to be silent and to follow, Frank at least felt something like a shudder come over him. The negro pointed towards the swamp; but his followers strained their eyes in vain for a passage, even the slightest aperture, or thread of dry ground into the dark abyss whither they tended. Still they saw old Job had entered, for he disappeared from their view; and when they arrived, they found he had taken a creek, and that they must also follow it. The student now began to shiver in earnest; but Walter spoke kindly and cheerily to him, and being now sole driver, plunged fearlessly into the water. At the first plunge the horse was up to his flanks in water, and it even reached to the foot-board of the gig; still Walter drove on, though expecting every moment to find himself afloat. The course of this stream was so extremely crooked that the party in the gig were seldom in sight of Job and his companion; but the old negro now guided them by his voice, while the groans of the Doctor also served to distinguish their position. The stream was of one uniform depth, and barely wide enough for a gig to pass in it; but as stated, it was extremely crooked, and, as Walter began to think, without beginning or end. Hours on hours they remained in it, until finally it lost itself in a broader one, straight across which old Job, to the great joy of his followers, was seen to pass. They ascended from the water upon a dry, sloping ridge, and this again terminated in a high, rocky, and precipitous bluff. There was here the roar of a waterfall, and there were, too, huge cedars and mighty oaks, covered with pendant moss; but Walter and his companions had little time to speculate on the scenery around them. In answer to a shrill whistle from the negro, light came glancing from out the jutting rocks; and the next

moment the young men were ushered through a low, narrow door in the rock, as it seemed to them, into a handsome chamber, well, but not luxuriously furnished, and warmed with a cheerful fire. In a few minutes more, to the great surprise of both, and recognised by both, Cornelius Harnett made his appearance; he kindly welcomed the young men to Rock Castle, and the next instant was in the midst of a letter handed him by Frank Hooper. Having read it, he looked still more kindly at the carrier; and then, in a most playful and affectionate manner, made many inquiries of the student in regard to his adventures on the road.

"Our accommodations are but rough here," he said, "for we have but one servant, and he has just returned with the strangest bag of game I have ever seen. You must know, Mr. Tucker," continued he, raising his voice, "that this is a place which my friend Colonel Ashe has fitted up for retirement and study. In other words, we anticipate troublous times; the Colonel especially (who is an impetuous man), has set his house in order for a civil war; and this in the last emergency is to be his fastness. The jutting rock that hangs over us on the west shields the place from the view of those beyond the river, which river is the north branch of our brave old Cape Fear. On all the other sides of us is a swamp, which it is impossible even for a footman to penetrate; indeed, could he make his way through the briars, bamboos, canes, gall-berries, and vines that are woven into a solid net-work, he would be swallowed up in the miry depths of the oozy and spongy soil beneath. The creek, which the uninitiated would never think of following, is the only road through the swamp; and that creek, joined by a larger one, tumbles down a precipice into the river just above us. In the morning, however, you and Frank can gratify your curiosity to the fullest; at present we will find you something to eat, and a bed for this poor boy, who looks not a little worn by his travels."

So saying the speaker left the room, and soon after returned with Colonel Ashe, the latter of whom apologised briefly for his late appearance to do the honours of his house, and again

retired. In a short time he returned, bringing in coffee, biscuit, and cold meats; and when the young people had sufficiently refreshed themselves, Frank Hooper was conducted to the only vacant bed in the house, while Walter was requested to keep himself awake, as they wished to talk with him further before the morning.

His cheek flushed as he saw that he was not treated as the equal of Frank Hooper; and his proud heart swelled and throbbed against his bosom as if determined to force its way from its prison, and confound its enemies with a view of its bleeding sensibilities. In vain did Mr. Harnett use his most soothing language; in vain did Colonel Ashe profess his esteem and friendship, and beg the young hunter to become one of his military family.

His entertainers apologised for their conduct by assuring Walter that they had but one bed to spare, and that was a single one, and the one which Mr. Harnett had occupied; that Ashe had none, and that the two intended to lie on blankets before the fire. They found it impossible to put their strange guest into a pleasant humour; he stoutly refused all sleeping accommodations, and they, tired of his whims, recommended themselves to sleep.

"May I be cursed, if ever I sleep upon the bed or break the bread of a house where I'm regarded as an inferior," said the young hero to himself as he noiselessly opened the door and walked out, for what purpose he hardly knew, except that of escaping from the roof of one of those aristocrats whom he so much disliked.

The night air was cool and cutting; and yet the youth would have trusted himself in it had he not met an acquaintance, who was as anxious to see Walter as Walter was to see him. This was no other than the venerable Job, whose locks had suddenly grown wonderfully black, and who appeared to have lost at least one half his years; and as he had conceived an admiration for Walter, he was delighted when that youth readily consented to accompany him to his humble quarters. There he had a rousing fire, and something besides, to warm the heart: and there he and Walter sat gossiping

till the gray peep of dawn. The latter gathered from him his own and his master's history; and now for the first time knew what Job, or rather Peter (which was his real name) had been doing in New Berne. His master, as the reader will recollect, had been rudely banished from the court; and being of a fiery, impetuous nature, he had resolved instantly to prepare for arms. The leading patriots all over the country had become thoroughly convinced that a long and bloody civil war was inevitable; and they had been making their calculations accordingly, and cautiously watching the progress of events. As for Colonel Ashe, he was one of those bold, John Adams sort of men, who was for bringing on and meeting the crisis at once; and hence his conduct to the Governor, and his immediate flight to his residence on the Cape Fear. Among the people of that region, his own immediate neighbours, he went as a fire-brand, passionately exhorting the common people, arguing with the leaders, and preparing himself for the coming struggle. Old Peter was his faithful friend, companion and confidant; and he had been sent disguised by him on an important mission to the patriots of New Berne. It was by these, who knew his fidelity and his discretion, that the boy Frank Hooper had been committed to his care; the result the reader already knows. He now informed Walter that Dr. Ribs was safely lodged, and was to be questioned in the morning; and it was with unfeigned sorrow that he heard of the young hunter's determination not to tarry at the castle till the rising of the sun. The latter procured, by means of his companion, pen, ink and paper; and with these he prepared two letters, one to Mr. Harnett, giving him a full account of the plans of Rowton and the Governor, and one to his friend Frank Hooper. In the latter he was brief, but more than usually tender; he thanked the lad for his kindness, declared his own friendship, and his regret at parting. "But," continued he, "if we would be friends we must part without another meeting—we should not meet, in fact, as we met in the wild woods before. You are among your people now, your proud, aristocratic people; *they* look on me as not your equal, and

so too might you. I'll remember you, dear Frank—in my rambles and wanderings, I'll remember you, and wish you were my little brother; and won't you sometimes bestow a kind thought on—*Walter?*"

Walter was now ready to leave, having deposited in the letter to Harnett a small sum for Colonel Ashe, for his supper, and carefully sealed it up; and having dried his mocassins, prepared his quiver, and tried the priming of his pistols. In vain the negro begged, persuaded, threatened, and even cried; the young hunter sternly demanded to be shown across the river, and finally started alone with the determination of fording it. Of course Job could not consent to this; and so he led the little Pocosin to a canoe hid among the reeds and bushes by the river's edge, and in a few minutes landed his charge on the other side. Here he tried to force money and provisions on him; but Walter would take nothing, briefly, but affectionately bidding farewell to the generous-hearted slave, and then fearlessly plunged into the dark forest of pines before him.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE CLUB.—DOCTOR RIBS IN JEOPARDY.—MAKES A CLEAN BREAST.—CONSTERNATION OF THE REBELS.—"THE CAPE FEAR REPUBLICANS" ORGANISED.

HEN the morning came, great was the astonishment at Rock Castle, when it was found that Walter Tucker was gone. Greater still was the surprise caused by his letter to Mr. Harnett, though the whole company burst into a loud laugh at the postscript; a laugh in which Col. Ashe himself heartily joined, though it was at his expense.

"The boy is worth his weight in gold," he said, "and freely do I forgive the cut dictated by a proud heart, smarting with a supposed indignity."

"His soul is of the right stuff," spoke Harnett, "and I would not for a thousand pounds have wounded its sensibilities. I hope we shall yet meet him, and then he will be welcome as the equal of the noblest of us all!"

As for Frank Hooper, he retired to read his letter alone; and as he ran his eyes over it, he burst into tears and even sobbed aloud. He became sad and taciturn, and kept his kept his chamber during the day; nor could even the appearance in public of Dr. Ribs draw him from his retirement.

The doctor, who had been well cared for during the night, was now to undergo an examination before a tribunal which, had he known its character, he might well have dreaded. Many of the leading gentlemen of Wilmington and the Cape Fear country were then at Rock Castle, having been invited there by Col. Ashe, on a sort of country frolic; and in those days, as well as now, man was not a growth that dwindled on the Cape Fear.* Here, at all times, have lived some of the brightest ornaments of the State; and in the Revolution there were men there who would have been giants anywhere. Cornelius Harnett, who was one of the guests of Col. Ashe, cut a distinguished figure in the councils of North Carolina, during

* From the earliest settlement of the State, the people of the Cape Fear have been remarkable for their liberality and public spirit—for the feudal splendour of the rich planters, and the elegance and refinement of society. These characteristics they still retain, and on the banks of the Cape Fear may be found some of the fairest and the sweetest living blossoms that adorn and shed a fragrance over this cold, bleak earth. Wilmington, the largest city on the river, is now a place of considerable trade. From Wilmington to its month, some twenty miles, the river is very wide, justifying its ancient appellation of "Brave-stream;" and at its mouth, on a small peninsula, is Fort Caswell, formerly Fort Johnstone, and one of the most pleasant places for sea bathing in the Union. The banks of the river up to Fayetteville, one hundred miles above Wilmington, have been the scenes of many romances: and a volume of entertaining legends might be founded on its still wild and lonely-looking shores. It is proper to state, that Fayetteville is the modern name of the Cross-Creek mentioned in the text; the ancient name being derived from the supposed crossing of two creeks in the vicinity. These creeks meet at right angles; and it is asserted that even yet the waters sometimes cross. The descendants of the loyal Highlanders mentioned in the text are among the best citizens of the State.

the war of the Revolution. He was a gentleman of fortune and education, fitted by nature and study to shine in any society; and yet, fond of retirement, modest and unceremonious, he was not conspicuous, except in troublous times, and then he was the master-spirit. He may be said to have been the head of the patriot cause on the Cape Fear; and associated with him as co-labourers, were the Ashes, the Hoopers, the Mc Rees, the Howes, the Quinces, Hills, Lillingtons, Moores, Waddells, Nixons, Maclaines, Swannes, Joneses, Walkers, Toomers, Blythes, Bloodworths, and a host of others whose names are still esteemed in North Carolina. Several of these persons were now with Ashe, at Rock Castle; and it was before them in council that the strange adventurer from New Berne, or rather from the beach, had to appear. He had, as yet, seen none of his judges, as he supposed them to be; but he had had long conversations with his captor, and from him had learned many terrible particulars of the men of Cape Fear. Old Peter had in this matter acted entirely on his own authority; and he had, during the night, practised extensively on the fears and credulity of poor Riboso. He related many surprising exploits of the patriots; more than insinuated that they had marked the name of de Riboso with red ink, and would have found him in the farthest ends of the earth. The captive heard also of the relentless cruelty and severe justice of those who had, as be believed, sent special agents after him; and at last he began to tremble in every joint, to cry and lament his unhappy destiny. Peter was moved both to pity and to laughter as his prisoner began a doleful soliloquy, one time apostrophising, in the most ludicrously tender terms, her Imperial Highness, the lady Susannah, to whom he conjured Peter to send a lock of his whiskers, in case of his being beheaded; and at another, cursing Rowton, the Governor, and his sacred Majesty, George III. Peter at last volunteered to be his friend; promised to intercede for him, and declared his belief of being able to save the doctor's life on easy conditions. The conditions were these, to wit: that the doctor should make a clean breast of all he knew concerning the secret movements

of the royalists, and also concerning the murder of old Ricketts. The doctor promised a faithful compliance; and it was stipulated that Peter was to stand by his side and touch him whenever he thought the prisoner had angered his judges, or was in imminent peril of his life. He was to be led out blindfolded, the object really being to prevent him from learning his way to Rock Castle; but this object was concealed from him, while Peter, of course, gave a different and more alarming reason for the proceeding. The council was held in the woods; and at the rising of the sun, Peter led out the captive, the latter stepping as if he walked on hot embers, and trembled so violently that Peter feared he would fall to pieces. Cornelius Harnett spoke as he advanced: "Your name, sir, I understand is——"

"T. McDonald de Riboso," answered the doctor.

"Sirrah!" exclained Harnett, "we want no foolery here. What is your name, sir—the name your father gave you?"

Peter nudged the doctor, and he replied: "I never had a father, excellent sir; I was born a frontier wolf."

"What name did your mother give you?"

"She called me, sir, she called me T." Peter nudged the Doctor, and Harnett spoke sternly—

"T.? what does T. stand for? What's your Christian name, man?"

"I never was a Christian," returned Ribs; "I never was a Christian, but I will be one, sir; I'll join immediately, if you'll let me off."

"Fool!" cried Ashe, losing all patience, "who are you, and where did you come from?"

Peter whispered in his ear, the Doctor shook violently and said, "Tim, sir, my name is Tim"—

"Tim what?" asked Harnett.

"Tim Ribs, sir; that is, sir, they nick-named me Ribs, but my real name was Tim, sir."

"Very good, sir," said Harnett: "now, Mr. Timothy Ribs, we wish to question you a little concerning some important matters, and it will be well for you at once to tell the truth—

the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. Will you do so?—speak quickly.'

Peter gave the Doctor a violent pinch, and he cried, "Yes, I'll tell," with a choking voice, and began, as requested, with the transactions on the beach, and told a dark tale of crime, hypocrisy, and ambition. He unravelled the whole plan of the murder of old Ricketts, declaring that it was planned by Rowton, and executed by him and his few confidants, he having in view a double object: to spirit away both Alice Bladen and Utopia, and to get at the great treasures which he supposed the deceased to possess.

He declared also, that the same Rowton was in correspondence with a band of robbers all over the country; and that these men, when the war broke out, under pretence of aiding the royal cause, were to rob and plunder the patriots, and to divide their gains with Rowton. He unfolded, too, the whole scheme of attack on the part of the governor and the royalists; and in this confirmed the statement of Walter Tucker and repeated what the reader already knows. The patriot chiefs who listened to the story were amazed at what they heard; and when the Doctor was withdrawn, they gazed at each other for a while in silence.

"The country is lost," said one, at length; "there is no hope of escape. The Scotch, the negroe's, and the tories all over the country will be in arms, will drive us from our homes, murder our families and burn our villages; and in the midst of these horrid scenes an English armament will appear in the Cape Fear to finish the work of destruction begun by their allies."

"I think you are desponding," spoke Colonel Ashe; "let us arm and prepare; and for one, I'm ready to meet the storm."

"Gentlemen," said Harnett, "the crisis is great, and it is now on us; nothing but the Providence of God and the utmost wisdom, energy, and courage on our part can save us and our cause from utter and total shipwreck. Here, on the Cape Fear, the contest is to be decided—here, on this brave old stream, which we and our ancestors have loved so much.

And now, the first thing to be done is to see to our own household; to try it and purify it. There must be a test oath; and every male inhabitant of the whole Cape Fear region must be required to take it and subscribe to it. There must be a committee of vigilance in every neighbourhood; and every man's name must be recorded, and every man's motions watched. Our wives and our daughters, too, must be prepared to endure hardships and to encourage and assist the cause in every way that women can; and the sentiments of our servants must be probed, while the first law of nature, the law of self-defence, will justify us in hanging instantly every rebellious slave."

These sentiments met with general approbation; and they were immediately embodied into constitutions for associations, resolutions for public meetings, and instructions for committees and agents.

A gentleman who had not hitherto spoken, now rose and said: "Mr. President and gentlemen, I have been, up to this time, a silent spectator of and participator in the interesting scenes that have, within the last ten hours, made this spot one that will hereafter be consecrated in the minds of the people—I propose to make it still more famous; I propose that we, who are the leaders and instigators of rebellion on the Cape Fear, here take a step, enter into a compact that will fix us irrevocably to the cause to which we are now inciting the people."

"And how would you propose to do this, Colonel Lillington?" asked one.

"I would suggest," said the Colonel modestly, "that we here form ourselves into a society, or club, to be called the Cake Fear Republicans."

"The Cape Fear *Republicans*, Colonel Lillington?" said one of the company.

"Aye, sir," said the Colonel, warmly, "the Cape Fear Republicans. Here, sir, on this high hill that overlooks those fair plains below, the happiest, the best and dearest country on earth—that overlooks a proud old river, whose bosom bears the teeming products of a bounteous land, and of one where

the human heart puts forth its sweetest and its fairest bloom—here, in view of our fields and our homes, and beneath the shadow of these Druid oaks, in this fair temple of nature, where the foot of the tyrant has never been—I propose that, under the name of Cape Fear Republicans, we make a solemn dedication of ourselves and our fortunes to the sacred cause of liberty!"

"Agreed," cried Colonel Ashe, rising; "with all my heart and soul I enter into the proposition of Colonel Lillington; and I farther move that this club continue its meetings and its labours until North Carolina is a sovereign State."

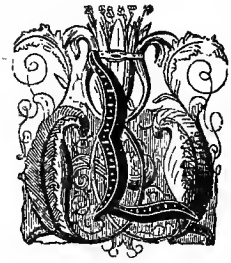
"Say until America is a free and sovereign Republic," said Mr. Harnett—"until the hope of the philanthropist and the dream of the wise is fulfilled, until the glorious days of Greece are restored, and her institutions and her children, her arts and her literature, shall people these western wilds, where it is more than poetry to say

Time's noblest offspring is the last!"

The club was established—the solemn vow was made, and hands were clasped upon it—and it was farther agreed that each one should, before the aniversary of that day should roll round, strike some important and some memorable blow for liberty. A president, secretary, &c., were elected, and after the transaction of some farther business, the club adjourned.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

WALTER ENTERS NEW BERNE IN A NEW CHARACTER, AND FINDS A NEW CHARACTER IN AN OLD ACQUAINTANCE.



ATE in the winter Walter Tucker found himself once more in the vicinity of New Berne. What were his feelings it is needless to say; indeed, no one can describe them. Tender he was by nature, full of affection and tender sensibilities —and he was also generous, just, and brave. He had a heart formed by nature to love and confide; and his education had been such, that the object of his regard was an idol, at whose shrine he made no selfish offerings. He was born to love—and to love as men in the days of Saturn were wont to love, with a fervent devotion, a singleness of heart, and an entire forgetfulness of self. With such feelings did his nature yearn towards Alice Bladen—they were scorned and turned to bitterness. Still he had to love on, it was a part of his being—until he saw the boy Frank Hooper, and then he lavished the affections of his heart upon him. This some will call platonic affection, Walter knew no name for it, but he knew that the boy had twined himself about the tenderest chords of his heart, and had resolved that he would,

Hating no one, love but *him*.

His proud heart would not permit him to form intimacies with those in his father's sphere of life; nor would it permit him to desire or accept the friendship of those who considered themselves in any respect his superiors. His feelings, his

education, and his aspirations were above the rank in which he was born; and thus he stood isolated, alone, without society, companions or associates. It seemed likely that he would pass through the world, a generous, refined and tender being, unloved and unloving, unknown and unknowing; a link cut from the chain that binds his species together, and all his gentle affections withering away within him. But he had found at last a friend, a companion and intimate, and one in every way worthy of him; his heart had found a prop on which to lean, and its tender foliage was again beginning to put forth, in this the first spring time of his being. It had been always winter to him before; but clouds and darkness and wintry cold no longer reigned within his breast—he became cheerful and conversational, and above all he became animated with a desire to shine with those accomplishments which so graced his adopted brother. He therefore no longer dreaded to enter New Berne—its gay people and its poor people were nothing to him; he had a world of his own, and that world was Frank Hooper, and the thoughts, fancies, and feelings of which he was the cause. Such was Walter Tucker when he entered New Berne for the second time; and this joyful mood was enhanced when, on going to the Carolina Inn, he there found his father. The old man and his friend Coon were amazed and delighted at meeting "their mutual son," as they called him; they hugged him by turns, Zip, with the vigour of a bear, but Dan more tenderly, and with a more yearning and lingering embrace. The trio were, for one night at least, as happy as mortals can well be; at least Dan and his friend were, the latter of whom signalised his joy by getting tipsy, kicking over all the tables in the house, knocking down Monsieur Dufrong some half-a-dozen times, and disturbing every one at the inn.

Dan, from the interest which he had excited among the leading patriots, had been bailed out of prison; and among his sureties was Robert Bladen. What cause had induced the young Englishman to take this step was not known; but Dan had his suspicions, and those he would not breathe to any one.

That very night Bladen called on Walter, and greeted him very cordially, and spoke in the most contemptuous manner of the governor. Of his sister he said nothing, not knowing, perhaps, that Walter felt interested in her fate; and Walter, who never unbosomed himself, except to the student Hooper, made no inquiries concerning one whose name he longed to hear.

Even his father, when they were alone together, made no mention of her; in fact, the old man seemed to have forgotten everything except Utopia, the political controversies of the times, and his own difficulties. Walter at length ventured to ask for Alice, and in answer to his question, old Dan spoke rather evasively. "She's gone," he said, "from here —some say she's hid in the town, and some that Rowton has carried her off, and forcibly married her. My son, my son, sit down. I see it, I see it! I suspected you loved that lady—don't say a word. I suspected, and now I know that you have been guilty of a foolish thing. She's beautiful, it's true—aye, and she's good, or *was* so—but haven't I told you that all women are alike? Thy sainted mother was the only woman that ever lived, who was a woman as a woman ought to be. No, I'll except one—one who loves you."

"Loves *me*," exclaimed Walter, "who can love me? I know no woman but Alice——"

"You ought to be ashamed to say so," said Dan; "and yet she was not a woman when you left her. While all the others are stark mad after furreners, she likes only those she knows—and she will never like any other but you. Don't you remember Utopia, my child?"

"Certainly I do," replied Walter, much confused.

"You laugh," said the old man; "well, well, if you despise her you'll sorely rue it some day, that's all. You'll never find her like out of heaven."

"Indeed, I do not despise her," rejoined Walter. "I know how good and beautiful she is; but, father, she is but a child, and I have regarded her only as my little sister."

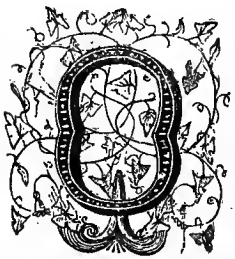
"She's not a child, nor so small either," answered Dan. "She's old enough to love, and she does love. My son, sit

down, and listen to me attentively. I've seen through this girl's heart—it's as transparent as that window, and as pure as the light of heaven. She has a soul, boy, an immortal soul—there is no doubt in the world about it, although I do not know five other persons that have. She has a soul, and its thoughts will grow brighter and brighter through all eternity; and one of its eternal images is the picture which she has painted on it of you. No, God has painted it there. As Milton said of Eve about Adam, she sees God through you, and you, in her eyes, are his image. You are her Adam—sit still, and listen—and if you were no more, this world would be to her like a paradise would have been to Eve without Adam. The angels may still whisper to her—she may still adore God, and see his great works. She will be mateless, solitary, alone, a stranger here; thus she would be if you were to die. But if you were to love and marry another—God only knows what would happen! Her heart would wither within her—her soul, disgusted with this world, would leave it. But oh, if you would but marry her! if you would try the experiment, you'd not come under the curse! The angel that guards the gates of Eden, would let you pass with her, for she's allowed to enter! Now, think of this, my son; ah, I see how it is! I've thought on it a long time, and I've lately found it out; the flaming sword that keeps us out of paradise, is the devil who stands in our hearts! We would not go to heaven if we could; we would be miserable there with old Satan in our hearts. You prefer this worldly woman—you have set your heart upon her; and may be, when you find her, she may be the gay mistress of a villain she once hated! Mind, boy, I do not say she is—she may be run off, or hid, to avoid Rowton; but there ain't two women in the world who would not hate to-day and love to-morrow."

That night was a troubled night to Walter—who can describe his thoughts, as he lay meditating on his father's words?

CHAPTER XXXV.

UTOPIA—EXCELSIOR.—WHILE THE PURE BECOMES PURER FROM HER TRIALS, THE TEMPTER FALLS.



N the next morning after Walter's arrival in New Berne, he was called on by another old acquaintance. He had retired to his chamber after breakfast, to write a letter to his friend Frank Hooper; and while he was thus engaged, Mons. Dufrong informed him that there was a lady in the parlour who wished to see him.

The memory of Alice Bladen flashed through his mind, and with a rather palpitating heart he hurried down the stairs. "Have you forgot me, Mr. Tucker?" said a soft voice; and turning, he beheld close by him the radiant face of Utopia. For an instant he felt vexed and disappointed, but it was only for an instant: she who now stood by him was no longer the silent, bashful girl of the beach. Her gently rounded form showed that she was just budding into womanhood, and that form, moulded by the plastic hands of nature only, was clad in a neat and closely-fitting habit, that looked also as if it were part of the quiet being which it enveloped, so tasteful, so natural did it seem. Her face was not a girl's face, nor was it a woman's, nor, as it seemed while Walter gazed at it, was it that of a human being. It was not pale or bleached, or unusually white, and yet there was a softness, a transparency, an ethereal tint, a purity gleaming in it, that made it look as if it contained not the gross materials that make up ordinary beings; and her eyes shone with a clear, soft, tender lustre, in which there was not a ray of passion

or of sensual feeling. And yet there was feeling beaming in those hazel eyes; there was feeling in the tremulous touch of her small white hand, and feeling as well as melody in the subdued tones of her voice. She met Walter with a cordial greeting, a hectic glow burning in her cheek; and she stood, too, permitting him to hold her hand, and meekly returned his glances. But her manner had become more timorous, though not more cold; and there was a sweet propriety, a gentle dignity, a modest veiling of her thoughts, which struck Walter as much as did the improvement in her appearance. The longer he stayed in her company and the more he conversed with her the less did he feel at his ease; and at last he was awkward and constrained, like one who feels the presence of a superior being.

"Mother would like to see you very much," said Utopia in the course of the conversation—"that is," she continued, smiling, "if you are not afraid to visit her in her parlour."

"Her parlour!" exclaimed Walter, "where is that? Has she got a house?"

"She receives company in the jail," said the girl, laughing—a laugh that rung in Walter's ears like the subdued and softened sound of distant melody.

"I'll visit her," replied Walter, "as soon as I can; in fact, I'll call this afternoon. But tell me, do you stay there?"

"I spend my nights and most of my days with mother," said the girl; "I used to come out to take lessons, but now I can study very well by myself."

"What do you study?" asked Walter.

"I read part of my time, and part I spend in drawing," answered Utopia; "there is some of my work. I don't show it because it is handsome or well done, but I brought it to remind you of old times. Do you see anything there you know?"

It was a history of which she spoke; the history of her acquaintance with Walter, up to the time they parted at New Berne. This was executed in a series of spirited, life-like and beautiful sketches; and there was not one in the book which Walter did not recognise the moment he saw it. There

was a view of the beach, the naked, desolate beach, and of the ocean — of the old house of Ricketts, and indeed of every place which the girl had seen, and of every event which had happened to her, and in all of these the most prominent object was Walter himself. In return, she now modestly hinted that she would like to hear of Walter's late travels; and he told them over, with perhaps more embellishments and a much greater relish than he was conscious of. Indeed, he felt more than ever a desire to be the hero of Utopia's fancy; and he was but in the middle of his narrative when Robert Bladen, to his great mortification, made one of their party. The presence of this young man made Walter cut his story short; and in fact, it seemed also to have an unpleasant effect on Utopia, for she now prepared to leave.

"Well, Utopia, I've caught you at last," said Bladen, when Walter finished; "I've caught you, my prude young Miss."

"I don't know what you mean," said the girl.

"I've caught you visiting your beau," replied Bladen, taking the cigar out of his mouth, and tapping the cheeks of Utopia.

"Good morning, sir," said she, rising—"good morning, Mr. Tucker; you must not forget to call and see mother."

Walter Tucker now began to see what he had not observed before, that Robert Bladen had changed as much as Utopia. The cheeks and eyes of the young man bore plain indications of an attachment to strong drink; he was dressed more gaudily, conducted himself more jauntily, and puffed his cigar in a more careless and listless manner.

"I say, Tucker," he drawled forth as Utopia left, "she's a devilish pretty girl, is n't she?"

"I think she 's extremely handsome," said Walter; "and that is not all, she is as good and pure as she is beautiful."

"Chaste as an icicle," replied Bladen: "I *know* it, for I've joked her occasionally. Still, I believe she is virtuous, and will always remain so."

"Woe be to him who tempts her!" exclaimed Walter as he

left the room, to shake off his companion. In the afternoon he visited the jail, and there it was that he was more than ever impressed with the worth and character of Utopia. Her mother's room she had decorated until it did, in fact, resemble a parlour; and there, in that receptacle of the infamous and the wicked, of thieves and murderers, sat Utopia diligently engaged with her drawings, and as happy, apparently, as if in the most sumptuous boudoir. The old woman was as glad to see Walter as if he had been her son; indeed, he and her child Utopia were the only persons that shed a light on her desolate heart, or connected her with the human family. She had for him a vast number of presents, the handiwork of herself and child; and from their number, variety, and beauty, it seemed as if they had been engaged on them during the whole of their imprisonment. It was here, too, that Walter learned all the news of the town; that Alice Bladen and the Lady Susannah had lately left it, and that the former, it was supposed, had been carried off by Rowton, with the knowledge of the Governor, and even of the queen's sister. At all events, she had disappeared in a mysterious manner; and nothing could be learned from her brother, who was extremely intimate with the dissolute English gentleman. These facts were afterwards confirmed by Walter's father, who informed him that young Bladen had been led astray, and was gradually losing his own self-respect, and the esteem of the good people about New Berne. "The fact is," said the philosophic old man, "if I was a painter I could make some moral pictur's out of that young man's history. He had, by nature, a good heart, and he was edicated in correct principles—but he was taught some false notions. Like the other nobility, and big folks, he was taught to consider virtue as belongin' only to their class—he would be ashamed to tempt a lady, while he would think it no sin to make a fool of any poor girl thrown in his way. Utopia was thrown in his way; he was kind and gentle to her, and this should be the first pictur', headed, 'First Meeting of Humble Beauty and Gay Gentility.' But he thought Utopia had not, or ought not to have, any virtue, and so he began to

to make hints to her, and to take little liberties with her when she was dependent on him, and obliged to visit him, and this should be headed in a paintin', 'The Tempter and the Tempted.' She resisted him, timidly and good-naturedly, and this made him take greater liberties; then she got shy of him, and this set his passions to work and made him follow her up more plainly. This would be the pictur' of 'The Tempter's Progress.' But it was a progress to his own ruin; Utopia only got better and better, and Bladen grew worse. He had taken several steps down, stepping down shyly, and cautiously, and looking anxiously back as his conscience checked him; then he got bolder and bolder, and his passion became stronger and stronger, until it is his equal; and this I would make into a paintin', and call it 'Temptation Conquering.' After awhile passion will be the master of the unhappy youth; and as Utopia rises, he will fall, and this will make the pictur' of 'Conquered at Last.' These are the notions of a foolish old man, who's been speculatin' about such things; but I hope the affair won't turn out as I look for. He really loves Utopia, but it is love mixed with passion—he has set his desires on her until they have made a half madman of him, and he has even offered to marry her, or promised to do it. Rowton saw his failings, and played on them—he has led him on by degrees, and although Bladen pretends not to be a royalist, he is completely in the hands of this dangerous Englishman. These facts I have picked up by keeping my ears and eyes open; do you the same, my boy, but keep your tongue still."

CHAPTER XXXVI.

FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF CHARACTER.—PROGRESS OF A UTOPIAN.—THE END OF A UTOPIAN DREAMER.—CAPTURE OF WILD BILL.

o the great surprise, but not regret of his father, Walter Tucker began to cultivate those arts, to be skilled in which, in those times, was considered as a necessary accomplishment in every gentleman. He had been shocked — more shocked than he could have expected to be—by the strange surmises in regard to Alice Bladen; but the society of Utopia, and the recollections of Frank Hooper, occupied, for the present, his more tender feelings, while his mind was absorbed by a new train of ambitious views. To tell the truth, he did not believe that Alice was lost, and so he wrote to Hooper—in fact, he was certain that she was held in bondage at the palace, and pleased himself with fond dreams of being some day her deliverer and benefactor.

Mons. Dufrong was forthwith installed into the double office of dancing-master and fencing-master; and with Coon he daily went out to practise with the rifle, while he also endeavoured to make himself an accomplished horseman.

Utopia he saw every day, and she was happy, and growing better and more beautiful; and young Bladen, whom he closely watched, was at that turning point, that last station between respectability and dissipation. Rowton he could not see, nor could he hear from him, though it seemed that he still exerted a fatal influence over the Governor. This latter was now continually embroiling himself in disputes with the citizens of New Berne—his popularity was daily diminishing, and all over the country were heard the

notes of preparation for a conflict of arms. John Harvey, a highly respectable and patriotic citizen, and one of substance and influence, had been publicly abused by his Excellency, and expelled from the privy council on account of his liberal principles and conduct; and this had thrown the people of New Berne, and the surrounding country, into a violent ferment. Secret organizations were formed, and tests prescribed; committees were appointed, and the militia armed, and prepared for action. The patriotic authorities, at this crisis, cast their eyes on Walter Tucker; and after an examination, he was thought to be eminently worthy of an important trust, and one which exactly suited his inclinations. He was, therefore, duly commissioned as captain of a company of mounted rangers intended for secret and active service; but after a week's labour he found himself at the head of Coon, his first lieutenant, and of Mons. Dufrong, his only private. With these, however, and attended by old Dan, as a sort of supernumerary, he scoured the country, and made himself extremely useful, by picking up information, and keeping the patriots aware of all the movements over the country.

It was while engaged in the active discharge of these duties that the jail at New Berne was broken open in the night, and the prisoners released. It was late when the affair happened; and so noiselessly was it done, that the event was not known until the jailor paid his morning visit to the prison. To his surprise and horror, he found his boarders gone; and in the room occupied by Utopia was a note with the words—"*This* is the hand of Wild Bill; *he sets his name to his deeds.*"

The absence of Utopia and her mysterious fate left a gloom in the city, where she had become known to every one; and the dreaded name of "Wild Bill," lent an additional horror to the strange transaction. Criminations and recriminations took place between the Governor and the citizens, each charging the other with being privy to the matter; and the whole country was alarmed with dreadful rumours of plots, and counterplots, of murders and insurrections. As for Walter Tucker, he had but one notion in regard to the matter—he saw in the whole affair the hand, not of Wild Bill, but of Rowton

and Bladen, and of this opinion was his father. Lieutenant Coon, of course, believed with his captain; and Mons. Dufrong had too high a regard for Coon to differ with him in anything. An expedition was, therefore, immediately planned; and in a few days the landlord of the Carolina Inn disappeared, and with him Walter Tucker, his father, and his father's friend. He was thus engaged for at least a month; and then turning his face southwards, he hastened towards the swamps of Tyrrel. He reproached himself for not having gone sooner to the rescue of Utopia; but private interest had to give way to the exigencies of the public, and Walter considered himself as one of the trusted servants of the letter.

Walter Tucker left New Berne for the purpose of visiting the cottage of the Paladins of the swamp; but being intrusted by the patriots with a mission to the whigs of Halifax* and Bertie, he felt himself bound to discharge it.

Never having been so high up before as the county of Bertie, the young soldier once or twice lost his reckoning; and though his journey was not a long one, he was some time in accomplishing it. At length he passed the beautiful little sheet of water called Lake Phelps; and as he was now near his destination, he halted to instruct his followers, and to wait for the shades of night, under cover of which he could best execute his plans. He was now on one of the little ridges of sand, or islands, common in the swamps; a space of dry ground thinly covered with leaves and grass, and affording a residence for the dwellers of the wilderness. The day was far advanced, and the evening coming on; but there was a full moon rising in the clear east, and the tall trees were already beginning to display their elfin shadows in her rays.

* Some of the most prominent and active Whigs resided in this region, and several Provincial Assemblies, &c., were held at Halifax, the Court House of Halifax county. This whole region of the "Roanoke" is a pleasant one. Roanoke, by the way, is generally supposed to be a Virginian name; it is not, however, but belongs to North Carolina. The Dan and Staunton, which form this river, are streams of Virginia; but the old river with the euphonious name, is in North Carolina. The very name calls up images pleasing and romantic; and a sojourner along the Roanoke will find his fancy has not deceived him.

Walter, thinking it advisable not to approach the cottage of Rowton until towards the middle of the night, had a fire kindled, and prepared to make himself and his companions comfortable. He himself superintended the culinary department; and as he did so, assisted by his father, lieutenant Coon and Mons. Dufrong were sent out to look for clear water.

They had not been gone long, when the sonorous voice of old Zip rang loud and terrific through the woods; and in a minute afterwards the water party came tearing back in a state of great trepidation, the Virginian uttering an occasional yell as he ran, and the Frenchman clinging to the skirts of the former's coat, and mingling oaths and prayers in all the modern languages.

"Another swamp devil!" cried old Zip, in a deep bass, as he approached the fire.

"Le Diable seconde! Ze dam fantome swoompay!" exclaimed Mons. Dufrong in a squeaking tenor.

"Another Carolina witch!" continued Zip in a higher key.

"L'esprit mauvais du Nord! Vitch du Caroline! Dieu me preserve!" chimed in the Frenchman.

"What, what, what!" cried old Dan, losing all patience, "are you bewitched, or are you fooling?"

"I'm bewitched!" exclaimed Zip, "I've seen a dreadful ghost, Walter, a real ghost, as high as one of these pines, and with eyes like a saucer!"

"You've seen a rotten pine stump, a deer, or a cow," said Walter laughing, "but I'll soon try its mettle. Which way was it?"

"I'll show you," said Zip; "come on and see if I'm not right this time. Come on, Monseer, and friend Dan; let's all go together and stand by each other."

And so they did go all together, and each with his weapons; Walter a little in advance, with Zip holding his arm and old Dan pulling along the terrified Frenchman. "Look! look!" cried Zip, halting and placing himself in the rear of Walter.

"Look where?" asked the latter. "Look there!" shouted

Zip, pointing over his shoulder towards the swamp—"look there! oh, dear, it moves!" There was a slight crackle in the brushwood, and the next instant, Walter's hair rose on his head as a vision glided from a clump of trees and stood confronting him. The whole company stood silent for a minute. Coon and the Frenchman shook violently; and a cold chill ran over even Walter, as he looked at the strange figure before him. It was that of a tall female dressed in flowing drapery of the purest white; a veil of the same colour floated from the back of her head, over her shoulders, and her long, loose tresses glittered with gems. Garlands of wild flowers hung in festoons about her neck and waist; and as she stood with her face to the moon, her features shone with a spectral whiteness, while the glare of her eyes, and the sparkle of the jewels in her dress, gave her the appearance of a female Argus.

"Woman, who are you?" cried old Tucker, advancing to the head of his companions: "Will you not speak? You need not think to fright an old hunter," he continued, with all your ghostly paraphernalia. Tell me who you are, or I will shoot you." To all this the apparition returned only a silent stare; and Dan, with a slight trembling in his limbs, moved slowly forward. "In the name of truth, who are you?" asked Dan, again halting. There was no answer, and the fiddler advanced still farther, creeping rather than walking, using his gun as a staff, and ever and anon stooping to gaze up into the face of the spectre. At last he stood close by the vision; and as he again stooped to look into its face, it waved him back and spoke—"Who am I?" cried the mysterious woman; am I not the moon, the queen of the night, and the stars my maids of honour? Where is he, my beloved, the sun that shall scatter the darkness from my soul? He is gone—he is gone"—she continued in a wilder tone—"he's a traitor—he's the foul fiend and a villain," she fairly screamed; "you are one of his imps, and shall follow him!" As she spoke a dagger gleamed in her jewelled hand, and she darted at old Dan with the ferocity of a tigress. The old hunter was, however, on his guard, and seizing the hand

raised to stab him, a sharp scuffle ensued; and then his strange opponent falling on her knees as he still held her by the wrists, besought him in the most piteous manner to spare her life. Dan lifted her gently up; but the moment she was on her feet she uttered a wild shriek and darted into the swamp. She was soon retaken; and Walter, to his surprise and horror, recognised in her the belle of Utopia, and mistress of Rowton! During the intervals of her delirium her captors learned that her lover had at last tired of her charms, and that she, in one of her jealous moods, had threatened to expose him by giving information of the manner in which old Ricketts had been slain. Of that dark deed of blood, Rowton, according to her, was the author, aided by a band of pirates and outlaws; and he, fearing that she might execute her threat, had determined to put her to death. Knowing his designs, she had escaped into the swamps; and for days and nights she had been hunted through them by the blood-hounds on her track. Her reason gave way, and in one of her paroxysms she had approached her lover's cottage and found only old Heatty at home, and she fast asleep. Arraying herself in the dress which she had worn at the carousals of Rowton, when he was wont to call her the Queen of the night, and taking all the jewels in the house, she set fire to it, and left it in flames, the negress in it and still asleep.

Walter and his companions found that her words were true; and they arrived just as the house fell into a heap of smouldering ruins, the unhappy woman who had once been its pride and glory screaming with delight as she beheld the funeral pyre of old Heatty, and wildly dancing round what she called this blazing den of the fiend.

The poor maniac belle of Utopia was intrusted to the care of old Tucker and the host of the Carolina Inn, who now started back to New Berne, intending to visit on the way the residence of old Dan, on Roanoke Island. It was thought that with care and kind treatment the fair victim of love might easily be restored to her reason; and in that case, she was to be a witness for Tucker, and against his enemy Rowton. As for Walter and his lieutenant, they continued to

scour the country in search of Utopia, Polly Dawson knowing nothing of her; and in this vocation they were engaged for weeks. In the course of their explorations they discovered the plan of an insurrection among the negroes in the counties along Tar River, and near the Virginia line; and they were mainly instrumental in causing it to be nipped in the bud. This plot was of wide extension; but its premature exposure and its immediate and total discomfiture was a grand blow for the Whigs, while it fatally weakened the course of Martin and his adherents. One important link in the chain of his intended operations was thus broken; and the whole system now seemed likely to prove a failure. At least so he feared; but the republicans were greatly alarmed, and the whole country was thoroughly aroused.

It was during the excitement consequent upon this outbreak, that as Walter and his faithful lieutenant rode into a small country village, they saw great crowds running to and fro, all in the highest state of agitation. As they neared the multitude, they could distinguish the name of "Wild Bill" often repeated, and in such a way as seemed to indicate that that noted personage had been taken at last. Walter's heart misgave him; but hastily dismounting, he rushed into the throng, elbowing his way through it until he found himself near the spot whence the clamour proceeded. And there, sure enough, the young hunter instantly recognised the wild man whom he had met in the woods months before. He had been taken and identified, and was now on the way to his execution, to expiate by his death the many crimes of which he had been guilty. As he was led by the spot where Walter and Coon were standing, he recognised them, and turning unperceived to Walter, handed him a small parcel, saying, "Take that, it is the history of my life. Utopia," added he, in an under tone, heard by no one else, "Utopia is safe. In the midst of the Great Dismal Swamp is a lake. On its banks you will find her." Walter would have questioned the negro farther, but he could not. The crowd, with the criminal, hastened towards the place of execution, and that was the last the travellers ever saw of Wild Bill.

WILD BILL.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

THE GREAT DISMAL SWAMP AND ITS TENANT.—A VISION OF BEAUTY, AND A CONFLICT.

AVING left the village, Walter and his lieutenant directed their steps northward. It was now in the hot month of July; when they had reached the woods they dismounted, and throwing themselves on the grass in the shade, they, or rather Walter, eagerly opened the manuscript of Bill the runaway. It was a long and tedious history, containing a minute account of the writer's adventures during his predatory life. From this manuscript, however, Walter learned to his surprise that the negro had belonged originally to the Tucker estate, and that having been sold while young to a master who had treated him harshly, he had subsequently run away. In the course of his wanderings, he found Mrs. Ricketts, then living with her second husband, Ike Harvey; and in this woman he recognised the long-lost sister of his former young master, Walter's father. He made himself known to her, and hence the interest he ever after took in her and her child.

Mrs. Ricketts had not become absolutely depraved; indeed she still conducted herself as a moral woman, though by her first fatal, false step, she lost her own self-respect, and was plunged into a career which kept sinking her lower and lower in the social scale. So far down in this respect had she fallen, and so much had poverty and trials humbled her pride, that for her second husband she espoused the good-natured, good-for-nothing Ike Harvey, the banker; and Ike, as is known,

driven by his passion for drink, afterwards sold her to old Ricketts. Thus had her experience been a strange, eventful one; married first to an adventurer without a name, and dragged by him from place to place, and left in poverty and want by his death; then a banker's wife, by him traded off like a chattel, then accused of the murder of the purchaser, imprisoned, forcibly rescued by a negro, and her second and kindest husband, and now living in the middle of an unknown swamp. Yet through all her chequered career, she had preserved certain cardinal virtues; and above all, she never forgot how she had fallen, and endeavoured so to raise her child, that the latter might be worthy of claiming kindred with her mother's family. If Walter was shocked at finding himself the nephew of this wretched outcast and wanderer, he could not but admire her extreme delicacy in keeping from him and his father, and even from her own child, the secret of her birth; and he was, too, not altogether sorry to find a cousin in the gentle Utopia. Indeed, he was in a whirl of feeling, hardly knowing whether he preferred to love the fair, sweet child, of the desert as a cousin, or as something nearer; or whether, in fact, he loved her at all or not. Certain it is, he took a very great interest in her fate; and so, attended by Coon, he hurried off in the direction of Virginia.

The Dismal Swamp, or as it is properly known, the Great Dismal Swamp, is even now a *terra incognita;* even as yet it is the domain of the wild-cat, the rattlesnake, and the panther. There is a canal and a road now running through it, linking the commerce of Virginia and Carolina; and on this road, midway in the swamp, and just within the Carolina line, there is a tavern house. The keeper of this is now the sole civilized occupant of the Great Dismal Swamp; but in former days there was not this road or canal, and nothing was known but by tradition and rumour of this dreary and obscure region. Then, too, above its thick masses of shrubbery, vines, and briars, loomed a dark forest of cypress and juniper; and bold was the adventurer who would undertake to explore its solitudes, where at noonday there was the gloom of midnight.

Lieutenant Coon was not fond of this kind of sport; and though he was now near the borders of his own state, and though the swamp was partly in it, he was not, for that reason, in a very pleasant state of feeling, while at a house on the outskirts of the wilderness, he prepared to follow his reckless captain on foot, through this obscure waste. The truth is, old Zip was superstitious, and it is said that during the whole of this perilous journey through the bog, especially while crawling on his hands and knees, he was devoutly whispering his prayers; though as a bamboo would rake his thighs, even through their buff covering, or a twig slap him in the face, he would often suddenly terminate his devotions with an expression anything but pious. To his immense satisfaction, however, and after his clothes and his flesh had been torn in a hundred places, and after wading, and plashing, and crawling through miles and miles of bog, he found his journey at an end; and even he, bleeding and panting as he was, and rude as he was by nature, felt now a thrill of pleasure such as he had never before experienced; while Walter, fond of the varied face of nature, stood entranced in an ecstacy of delight.

A circular sheet of water, of a shining black, and as smooth as glass, now lay placidly at their feet, and though six or seven miles in diameter, was so perfectly still that not even a ripple disturbed its surface; and throughout the whole extent there was not a tree, a shrub, or rock, to mar its beauty. It was almost perfectly round, and was walled in by the trunks of immense trees that stood in serried ranks upon its shores; while the dark mirror of waters was fringed all round with a hedge of living green, hung with gay festoons of flowers of ten thousand hues. Birds of every size, and note, and colour, were flitting about, and filling the woods with the sweetest minstrelsy; and wild geese, ducks, and stately swans, were lazily floating on the lake. While Walter and his companion stood still in silent admiration, they saw, far up the lake, a flock of white geese glide smoothly from the banks, in a direction towards them; and close behind them, and apparently drawn by them, was a tiny canoe, with

a girl dressed in white. At the distance at which they stood, the whole seemed like a fairy vision; the geese looked as small as sparrows, the boat appeared little larger than a shoe, while its occupant, with her broomstraw paddle, might have been taken for the Elfin tenant of some palace of shells beneath the waters. The two friends, doubting whether they saw Utopia, or a tiny spirit of the lake, taking an airing, scrambled towards the apparition as fast as they could.

In a short time they were opposite and in hailing distance; and then it was that they were able to distinguish the child of the desert, now, as it seemed to both, in her pure white dress and garlands of wild flowers, infinitely more beautiful than they had ever seen her before. She was startled a little when she first heard their shouts; but quickly recognising the voice of Walter, and having her geese under excellent control, she neared the shore, and greeted with a smile that shone through their hearts, her old acquaintances. Indeed, the unexpected meeting lit up her countenance with an indescribable glow of pleasure; and as she sailed slowly along, near the shore, she and Walter talked over the past and present with a feeling which neither had ever experienced before. Almost before he knew it, Walter had stumbled on her mother's cabin; but Utopia, quickly leaping ashore, took him by the hand, saying, "Welcome, Walter, to the dove-cote —and you, too, Mr. Coon; I welcome you both to our cottage in the woods."

"God Almighty bless you, my beautiful angel!" said old Zip, seizing her proffered left hand with both of his, and covering it with kisses; "I could die ten thousand deaths for you! aye, and wade through all the swamps in this accursed Carolina into the bargain!"

Walter was not long now in ascertaining from Mrs. Ricketts that she was then living with her second husband; but as the mysterious death of old Ricketts had not yet been explained, and she was still supposed to be in some way connected with it, he did not make known his knowledge of his relationship to her. Nor did he tell her of the death of Wild Bill, knowing that it would be a cruel blow to her; and

WALTER TUCKER ATTACKED BY THE PIRATES.

knowing, too, that she might not, perhaps, in years find it out. He had not been long seated, when Utopia brought out her scrap-book; and Walter saw that she was still improving in her art, and had continued down to the present time the history of their acquaintance. "Our adventure to-day will be capital," she said; "and then, Mr. Coon, in his great bell-crowned hat, and all covered over with mud, will look so funny!"

"You may draw me as you will, my blessed little angel, draw me as you will, I'll be delighted to be in your company in any fix."

Thus they spent the day in gathering wild flowers, and taking views of the lake; Mrs. Ricketts in the meantime anxiously looking for the return of her husband from his hunting excursion.

Walter, Utopia, and the Virginian wandered some distance from the dove-cote, when suddenly two pistols were fired at the same instant, one ball whizzing through the whiskers of Zip, and the other deeply grazing the left shoulder of Walter. The next instant two men sprang like tigers from the bushes; but the one who assaulted Walter fell the next moment with a knife through his heart. To withdraw his weapon and give his foe another deadly stab was the work of a few seconds only; and then turning to his friend, who was closely grappled with his antagonist, he endeavoured to assist him. The Virginian, though a brave and a powerful man, had found his match; he was engaged in a contest for life with one not so tall, but stouter even than himself, his immense black whiskers and his bushy head, giving him, to Walter, more the appearance of a wild bison than that of a man. Over bushes and briars they rolled, crackling the brushwood, tearing down even small trees and plashing in the water; whirling so suddenly, and moving with such quick and rapid motions, that the young man could not strike or shoot, for fear of hitting his friend. Up, however, he rushed, dagger in hand, and as he did so, the hairy enemy seized him with his left hand, slamming him violently against Coon; and then by an immense exertion of strength, lifted both in his arms and endeavoured to fling them into the pond. Zip went in, but

Walter caught upon a tree and seriously injured his arm; and as the submerged Coon arose his enemy rushed at him with a pistol in each hand. In an instant the Virginian's head would have been riddled; but before his ferocious-looking foe could cock his pistols his own breast was pierced by a ball from Walter. He staggered sullenly towards a tree; and as he fell against it, Coon with a club dashed out his brains. The survivors now proceeded to examine the dead; and in the first they were surprised to find a well-dressed and genteel-looking stranger. It was impossible to bring him to; he was already cold, though his countenance still wore the smooth placid look of life. Of the other also, they knew nothing, and were very curiously examining him, when Utopia, who had fled screaming to the house, now returned with her mother and her mother's husband, Ike Harvey. This latter immediately recognised the unknown monster; and it was with a thrill of horror they heard that they had been grappling in mortal combat with Dick Cruder, a notorious pirate, and the terror of the coast. Having stripped them of their papers and their valuables, they flung their bodies into the lake; and as they did so, old Coon remarked, "Be thankful, there are two villains less! Strange," continued he, turning to Walter, "this Utopia makes a heaven wherever she goes; and yet the devils will follow her!"

From letters found on Cruder, and which were ascertained to be those of Rowton, though not signed, it appeared that the pirate had been the participator of all his secrets, his most trusted agent in all his plans of iniquity. It appeared, too, that he was determined to play Bladen false; that he had himself fixed his desire on Utopia, and had resolved that both she and Alice Bladen should in time make part of his harem. Through him Cruder had assisted, for what reason Ike and Wild Bill knew not, in the escape of Mrs. Ricketts; he had, in fact, insinuated himself into Ike's confidence, and now he had come to murder him and his wife and assist in carrying off Utopia.

From these letters of Rowton Walter also learned important particulars in regard to the movements of the royalists; and

as he was too badly injured to travel immediately, he despatched Coon in haste to the Whigs on the Cape Fear. The old fiddler was exceedingly averse to such an undertaking, after his experience of the swamps of Carolina; but visions of glory floated before his imagination, beckoning him onward, and so, after many instructions and a very affectionate embrace of Utopia, he took his leave.

As he was impatient by nature, and anxious in the circumstances of the times to be acting his part in the great drama going on, it may be supposed that Walter Tucker bore his confinement in the midst of the Great Dismal Swamp with but little serenity of temper. Indeed, everything considered, it would almost have been a miracle had he been satisfied with his position; and yet never did a man bear confinement or the painful cause of it with more equanimity than was manifested by Walter Tucker while lying disabled at the dove-cote on Lake Drummond. Though unable to ramble far through the woods, he was not too feeble to accompany Utopia in excursions on the lake; and it was during these that he often had occasion to admire the inexpressible sweetness and gentleness of her nature, the purity of her heart and the intelligence of her mind. Her heart threw its golden sunlight over all the objects of the material and moral world; and every beautiful sight and sound of nature touched in her breast a chord responsive.

Did she love? She loved the harmony, that to her mind, pervaded all created things; and the living embodiment of that harmony, the glory of the universe, was in her eyes the companion with whom she now wandered about the shores of Lake Drummond. Love was a part of her being; she was a worshipper of that ideal beauty which, in the poet's imagination, clothes all the objects of the earth, dwells in all hearts and breathes its spell in the changing seasons, the sun and moon and stars, the winds and waves the flowers of spring and the fading leaves of autumn. To make a barbarous pun, she was a Utopian, and kindred in soul with the Utopians who had lived before her; the fair universe with its spangled firmament seemed to her to be made for the abode of immortals.

To eat, to drink, and sleep and die, seemed not to her the chief business, the destiny of her race. She fancied that it was born for higher and nobler purposes. Her longings were eternal, for her passions were the passions of an eternal mind; and the food of that mind, its highest and its only happiness, was love, that love, boundless and immortal, which can spring only from an immortal source. In all her intercourse with Walter there was a total forgetfulness of self, and a devotion to him that showed, or would have shown to an impartial observer, that she was not by nature made to be alone; and even he, self-abasing as he was, and little as he thought of love in connexion with Utopia, began at last to wonder at her conduct. She lived, not in her self, but in him; and this was so natural to her, and so completely and for so long a time affected all her actions, that she absolutely became necessary to him. He did not reason on the matter, or think much about it—Utopia had become his other self, and he could not be a moment without her.

The parting time came at last; and when it did come she had a thousand things to say to him that she had forgotten before. They talked over and over again every little incident connected with their intercourse; and then, with a hope of meeting soon, they parted. There was no silly weeping and sobbing on the part of Utopia; there were no idle speeches about remembering each other, about sentiment, affection, and such like. There was a promise on his part to return soon; on hers an undoubting faith in all he said, a wish expressed that he might safely return, and a simple "good-bye," which fell from her lips like the parting benediction of an angel.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

HISTORICAL.—AN UNPUBLISHED LEAF OF HISTORY.

EASTERN Carolina was in a state of intense excitement and alarm. Each of the antagonist parties had now thrown off all disguise; and the Demon of War stood, with torch in hand, ready to light the country in a blaze of ruin. The intrigues of Governor Martin, with numberless additions, were beginning to be brought to light; and those who knew most of these intrigues believed that they had succeeded in surrounding the infant cause of liberty with a force that could not be resisted. Communication between different parts of the State was slow and difficult; and thus the patriots of different sections were left to rely on themselves, without the co-operation of their friends, and acting without reference to any general and concerted plan of resistance. On the other hand the plans of the royalists were wide in their scope, and had been well matured; and they hoped, by a combined attack, by one grand swoop to crush rebellion in the Carolinas and Georgia. Depôts of British arms had been formed in Florida; and thence to the Virginia line the country was settled by tribes of Indians, all in the pay of the British Government, and ready to clutch the tomahawk and scalping knife at a moment's warning. Great fears were apprehended of negro insurrections, especially after the discovery of the plot of which mention has been made; some of the State forces had been marched towards Norfolk to head Lord Dunmore, who was making a demonstration on the north-east frontier; and

the Scotch about Cross-Creek were arming for the combat. These people, who lived in the southern portion of the State, were a brave and warlike race, from the Highlands of Scotland; and among them were chiefs and clans with whose renown in arms Scottish story and Scottish song have made the world familiar. They were the fierce men of Culloden; and among them were the McDonalds, the McLeods, and the Campbells. General Donald McDonald was their leader; and unfurling the royal standard, the shrill sound of the pibroch echoed among the pines, and quickly drew together an eager and martial host. These, it was expected, would march upon Wilmington, while Sir Henry Clinton was hourly expected to make his appearance in the Cape Fear; and thus the patriots of that section, the most obnoxious to the British, had reason to regard themselves as in a perilous strait. The devoted band was, apparently, surrounded by a mighty cordon of enemies; they were cut off from their neighbours in other provinces, and beyond the reach of aid from their friends in Carolina. With an unfaltering resolution, however, they faced the danger before them; and taxing their energies to their utmost power, they sternly prepared for a desperate conflict. Matrons and maidens, and children of tender years, caught the enthusiasm of the times; and the letters written in those times, and private memoirs, as well as tradition, tell of deeds of heroism, and of hardships and privations voluntarily endured by the females, that endear the region of the Old Cape Fear to every gallant heart. While every family was thus "setting its house in order," and preparing to fight as the Spanish Christians fought against the Moors, the first Continental regiment raised in the State, and under the command of the brave and skilful Colonel Moore, was marched to the west of the Cape Fear, to watch the movements of the Scots. It was not the policy of McDonald to encounter a fire in that region, desiring first to strike a blow at Wilmington, and open a communication with the British; and so he eluded a meeting with Colonel Moore, and stealthily advanced towards the intended theatre of his first operations.

Col. Alexander Lillington, at the head of a regiment of militia, raised about Wilmington, hastily proposed to march towards McDonald; and while he was getting ready for the field, he received important intelligence. The messenger was no less a personage than Lieutenant Coon; a gentleman who grew ten years younger the instant that he heard Lillington give order for immediate preparation for the field. The Virginian's heart throbbed still more proudly when he found himself in a homely uniform with a few strips of tinsel on it; and as he drew the great cleaver by his side, he mentally resolved to baptize it in the first engagement, in the blood of at least twenty Englishmen, for the honour of old Virginny and of James' river.

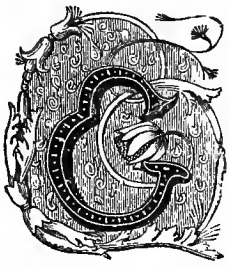
Military ardour is contagious; and thus even the philosophic heart of old Dan Tucker was fired with the spirit of the times. He had carried the faded victim of Rowton to New Berne, and there, while she enjoyed a lucid interval, he had her deposition taken, intending, if she should die, to ask to use it in his defence. She, poor girl, for awhile improved under his attentions and those of their kind host, Mons. Dufrong; but while her mind seemed to recover from its fitful delirium her spirits drooped, and her health decayed. She became sad, taciturn, and fond of solitude: and one night disappeared, and was seen no more in New Berne. Old Dan, having this care off his mind, resolved to become a hero; and so he at once bestirred himself to raise a company. Col. Richard Caswell, who commanded the men of New Berne, promised to receive the old fiddler and his men as volunteers; and Dan, taking it on himself to commission his own lieutenants, conferred the first honour on his friend and admirer, Mons. Dufrong. The Carolina Inn was forthwith converted into a recruiting rendezvous; and the "groceries" of the proprietor, as well as the fiddle of Dan, were freely used to attract the adventurous. The old philosopher of Roanoke wore his starched dignity with an ill grace; but his first lieutenant would, in that capacity, have done honour to any service. War is the Frenchman's pastime; he takes to it naturally; and thus Mons. Dufrong was now in his proper

element. He was all enthusiasm; he could neither stand, nor walk; and his senior, Dan, was fifty times a day made painfully aware of his junior's skill in cutting, pushing, and thrusting. Captain Tucker had desired his second in command to initiate him into some of the mysteries of the sword exercise; and after this, at the oddest times, day and night, he was constantly thrown into a fever of agitation by the everlasting *prenez garde*, and the glitter of the Frenchman's sword pointed at his throat. In time he learned how to cut down, without hurting himself, an unresisting foe; but the ranks of his company remained sadly thin. After a long effort, himself, his first and second lieutenants, and a fifer boy, constituted his whole command; and to add to his mortification, he heard that Caswell, in consequence of important information, had suddenly taken up his line of march towards Wilmington. The cause of this movement was not generally known, though it was expected a battle would be fought; and to miss that battle would have broken old Tucker's heart and have caused the Frenchman to commit instant suicide.

They determined, therefore, to follow; and preparing themselves for a long campaign they took the field. Small as was his command, Captain Tucker, as far as he knew them, observed all the rules of war: though he allowed himself the license of a fiddle, which was strapped on his back, and whose voice was every night heard in camp. This forlorn hope followed in the wake of Colonel Caswell; but so rapid were that officer's movements, that Dan's usual luck attended him. He was often nearly in sight of the flying regiment; but each morning as he would pass its still burning camp fires, a sad voice would whisper in his ear, "You're always too late, Mr. Tucker." But this voice did not chill his courage nor restrain his ardour; and with cheerful energy he, like many a greater soldier, still pushed on his arduous march, even though the efforts of each day were crowned at night with the melancholy words, "too late."

CHAPTER XXXIX.

BATTLE OF MOORE 'S CREEK.—RETRIBUTION.—DEATH OF ROWTON.—A GLIMPSE OF HUMAN LIFE.



ENERAL McDonald, with an array of four thousand gallant Scots, was marching towards Wilmington, having crossed the Cape Fear, and eluded the vigilance of Moore, when he heard of an obstruction in his path. On the farther side of a creek called Moore's Creek there lay encamped, as his scouts told him, a handful of militia under Colonel Lillington; and the general, after a short council, resolved to surprise and cut to peices the daring patriots. He learned that Lillington had with him only five hundred men, but that Colonel Caswell was rapidly marching towards him with about five hundred more; and to prevent this junction, and to destroy the two regiments in detail, was the object of the Scotchman. He therefore marched suddenly and expeditiously towards Lillington, who came near being taken by surprise. His camp he had before fortified; and now the planks were taken from the bridge over the creek, the sleepers greased and fortified by a *tête-de-pont;* and then going familiarly among his men, the Colonel prepared them for a bloody and desperate struggle. "Victory or death," was to be the motto; and on the iron heart of every soldier in the patriot camp was it engraven. Coolly and sternly they awaited the onset; while in the Scottish army not a soul doubted the result, unless it was the general himself, who who so ill that McLeod, the second in command, had to take his place. At break of day the Scotch, in beautiful array,

with shouts and martial clangour, were seen marching along the creek; but there was not a word nor a whisper heard among the men of Lillington. Suddenly a broad sheet of flame burst along the ranks of these, and the head of the Scottish column staggered backwards as many a gallant soldier fell from its ranks. Again they were rallied by McLeod, who, waving his sword over his head, actually crossed the bridge; but another and more deadly fire swept off the entire head of the column, McLeod himself falling mortally wounded. In this second and destructive volley, the men of Caswell* joined; and as Campbell, the third in command among the Scots, formed their ranks, a third discharge killed him with nearly one-fourth of his remaining men. Lillington now gave the word to charge; the planks were instantly thrown down, and the clash of swords and bayonets indicated the last deadly struggle. Everywhere the Scotch were beaten; but there was among them one whose gallant bearing attracted the attention of friend and foe.

Cool, stern, and wary, he still refused to surrender, and with a few devoted followers hewed his way from point to point in the patriot ranks; and after all hope of victory had fled, and he was alone without a follower, he still opened a path before him, his sword dripping with blood and his uniform cut to pieces. As he was thus slowly making his way towards a body of still resolute Scots, he was suddenly confronted by a young officer, who hailed him.

"Who among these patriot dogs knows my name," said Chester Rowton, throwing back the clotted hair from his face.

"I, the avenger of innocence," cried Walter Tucker; "and I thank God for this hour, which I have so longed prayed for!"

"I will end your troubles, vain boy," replied Rowton, as

* There are different opinions in regard to the honour of the achievement at Moore's Creek; some giving it to Caswell, some to Lillington, and others to both. The Carolinians generally give it to Lillington. This officer, by the rules of the service, was entitled to the command; and it is even said by some authorities that Caswell arrived after the battle was nearly over. The current of authorities, however, represent him as having co-operated with his brother hero, Alexander Lillington.

he took his guard and coolly parried the strokes which Walter furiously showered upon him. "*You* the avenger of innocence!" cried he with a scornful laugh, as he shivered Walter's sword: "*You* the avenger of innocence! I 'll send you to the other world before me," and his brandished sword glittered near the head of his defenceless antagonist.

But here a third actor intervened.

"*I*'m the avenger," cried he, with wild and terrible energy, and as he spoke, plunged a dagger to the Englishman's heart; "I 'm the avenger," he continued, leaping into the air and brandishing his dagger. "Ha, ha! the day of retribution has come at last! Vengeance is sweet, sweet, oh how sweet!" and he again plunged the dagger to the heart of his dying victim.

"He 's dead," said the youth, as the pallor of the last foe overspread the countenance of the Englishman: "he 's dead! and he 's forgiven. Chester, Chester, my dear lord, take me with you!" and falling on his neck, the maniac youth and his victim expired together. Such was the end of Chester Rowton and of Polly Dawson, the beautiful, and until she saw him, the happy belle of Utopia.

The struggle was over, and the whole Scotch army was killed or taken captive. Among the former were Mc Leod and Campbell, the second and third in command; and among the latter General McDonald.

This was one of the most decisive and important victories achieved during the revolution; for with this ended the royal sway in North Carolina. The armament in the Cape Fear, with Sir Henry Clinton and Lord Cornwallis, soon left without doing any damage; the Scotch settlements were broken up, the negroes kept in subjection, and the Indians beaten and overawed. The tories were everywhere intimidated, and the whigs made confident; the governor was driven off in disgrace, and North Carolina was, from this day, a free and independent state. Such were the effects of the battle of Moore's Creek, fought by eleven or twelve hundred militia, in 1776, against four thousand Highland Scotchmen; and yet who out of North Carolina has heard of Moore's Creek, or of its heroes, Lillington and Caswell?

The brave, and great, and good, are born everywhere; in some places they neglect them, in others they crucify and stone them, and in others heap rubbish on their heads and suffer them to starve. In some very few places these evidences of man's immortality are humanely treated by the natures they ennoble. Some may object to these reflections in such a place; but who can recount the deeds of men, their eternal fights and feuds, without feeling disposed to moralize on the melancholy tale of blood and crime?

On the night after the engagement at Moore's Creek, Walter Tucker was introduced to Colonel Lillington by Richard Caswell.

"To this young man I am greatly indebted," said Caswell; "and, indeed, the whole country owes him a debt. From him I got the information which caused my rapid movements in this direction; and I have been surprised at his military tact and skill."

"I am happy to make your acquaintance," answered Lillington, speaking to Walter; "I have heard of you before; your visit to Rock Castle was, perhaps, one of the causes of my being here to-night. By the way, have you not a relation in the camp, a noted fiddler?"

"I have a father who plays on the violin," said Walter, colouring; "but surely he cannot be here."

"There is one here of the name of Tucker—my attention was called to him by a singular incident. I observed him coming up with some three or four followers, just at the termination of the engagement; and so eager did they seem that one of them, a furious little Frenchman, flung the scabbard of his sword away, as he ran over the bridge crying, "Begar, ve vil be in at de suppaire!"

"This must be the old gentleman of New Berne who requested permission to join my regiment with a company, and whom I left diligently recruiting. They called him Old Dan—and I heard that he was a famous fiddler."

"That is my father," said Walter; "I must endeavour to find him."

"With your permission we will walk with you," spoke

Lillington, "for I would be delighted to form the old gentleman's acquaintance."

"Certainly," answered Walter, though his heart misgave him that he would be covered with shame by the old plebeian's manners.

They had not walked far before a merry group about a blazing log fire attracted their attention; and as they neared it they could plainly distinguish the sound of violins mingled with the shouts and laughter of the soldiers. The officers came up unperceived; and, as they did so, Walter's heart sank within him as he beheld his father bare-headed, on a camp stool, gazing upwards at the stars, his head squeezed down into his shoulders, and whirling himself round in his seat, while his bow moved as if it went by steam. Not far from him was old Coon, mounted astride of one of the logs on the fire, his hat pulled over his eyes, and his head flung forward, while he swayed himself to and fro, droning in tune with his violin, and occasionally uttering a wild yell, as if pierced with ecstasy by the sounds which he was evoking.

The two friends, it seems, had met for the first time in many weeks; and from a dispute about the relative merits of Caswell and Lillington, had fallen into a more pleasant rivalry, and were now making a display of their musical skill, each playing a different tune, while Mons. Dufrong was endeavouring to dance to both. The crowd, hugely delighted, were divided in opinion; and with "Old Virginny, Never Tire!" "Go it, Old Too Late!" and such like sentences, cheered on their respective friends. Walter Tucker, mortified beyond expression, instantly formed his determination; he bade Alice Bladen and aristocratic society a mental farewell for ever, and resolved, with Utopia, to bury himself from the world. Having thus determined to cast away his pride, and forego his cherished aspirations, he felt as if a burden had been taken off him; though he could not refrain from an expression of regret at his father's unusual and unseemly conduct.

"Tut, man, if I was a fiddler, I'd be playing myself," said

Lillington; "and won't we caper wildly when we get to Wilmington!"

"My father seems strangely affected," continued Walter; "he is not such a man as you would take him for, from this display."

"No doubt of it, no doubt of it," replied Caswell; "any one would be justified in playing the child on this occasion."

At this moment the officers were recognised; and Dan, certainly influenced by a spirit stronger than that of mere enthusiasm, rushed to embrace his commander, when he discovered Walter. For a few minutes his manner changed as he greeted his son, tenderly, but not rudely or boisterously; and then saying, "Never mind, Walter, never mind, boy, I shall not disgrace you," he gave himself up to the most extravagant demonstrations of joy.

The young man, although remarkable for filial piety, could not but wish his father in New Berne, or on his Island of Roanoke; but as for Dan, to use his own emphatic language, he did'nt "care a green persimmon for anybody or anything." Old Zip kept along with him in this race of folly; and Mons. Dufrong, out of friendship for his former guests, was particularly drunk all the time, and would have required at least half-a-dozen of interpreters to make himself understood. The senior Tucker looked on the war as now at an end; the ken of the philosophic islander extended far into the future, and the vision of a pure democracy was already floating before his intoxicated fancy. In a day or two, however, he and his friends, Coon and the Frenchman, left the camp; and although Walter had now abandoned all hopes of aristocratic promotion, he could not but feel relieved by the absence of his plebeian relations.

CHAPTER XL.

WALTER JOURNEYS TO WILMINGTON, AND REAPS GOLDEN OPINIONS BY THE WAY —SECOND AND LAST MEETING OF WALTER AND FRANK HOOPER.— TIME'S REVELATIONS.

SOME weeks after the battle of Moore's Creek, Walter Tucker, led by an irresistible feeling, found himself on the road to Wilmington. He had heard much of the hospitality of the citizens of that town and the surrounding country; of the beauty and grace of the women, and the gallantry and generosity of the men. Indeed it was pictured to him as a sort of paradise, so extravagant were the praises of those who had been there; and he had a desire to test the truth of this description. Colonel Lillington and many others had given him cordial invitations to come to their houses and make them his home; and above all, he had a passionate desire to see once more his young friend Hooper. He was aware that reports of his father's conduct would precede him; and he knew that these reports would be exaggerated, while his own air of gentle breeding would but make him a mark for the shafts of envy and malice. He expected to be talked about and stared at as a curiosity, but he determined to pocket his pride for awhile, knowing that his fate was fixed and that his season of mortification would be brief. He had become one of the most polished, and certainly the handsomest man in the country; but fashionable life was now nothing to him, for the vain hopes of his youth had given place to more manly desires and more stern resolves.

Everywhere on the road his manners and appearance

attracted attention and won respect, while he, attributing to the people what perhaps was in a measure due to his dress and bearing, began really to love the Cape Fear country. He thought he saw in the looks of every one something to admire; and when he arrived in Wilmington he was fully persuaded that there was no place like it in the world. He had, for his companion, Griffith John McRee,* a gallant and accomplished officer and hearty patriot; and to this very intelligent young man he related his adventure with Hooper, and spoke of his desire to see him. In fact, he formed an attachment for McRee; and in the society of that genial gentleman, the frostwork about his heart was melted away, and he began to feel himself a man. From his friend he received a letter of introduction to Mr. Harnett, who lived just beyond the limits of the town, at his seat called Hilton; and Walter, sending out the letter of McRee, enclosed in it one for Hooper, desiring to know when and where he could see him. His young friend despatched an immediate answer, informing him that Mr. Harnett was not at home, but that he, Frank Hooper, would next day look for his quondam fellow traveller.

The student had wound himself about the tenderest chords of Walter's nature; and when he started to see him, it was with the feelings of one approaching the only object on earth dear to his heart.

When, therefore, he met his adopted little brother, the fountains of his breast overflowed at his eyes, and seizing the youth in his arms, he embraced him fervently, and even kissed him. The student wept too, and trembled like an aspen, and when Walter released him and stood gazing affectionately at him, he hung his head, while his tears still continued to flow. He seemed now less froward and pert than formerly

* Griffith John McRee, was a distinguished patriot and brave officer of the Revolution. His son, the late Major McRee, of the United States Army, was a hero of the last war, and one of the most brilliant officers the country has produced. His modesty was equal to his worth, and though offered the post, he firmly refused to be placed at the head of the engineer department, as this promotion would have been at the expense of his seniors in rank.

his manner being mild, subdued and tender; but he was dressed exactly as he was when Walter first beheld him, and, as it seemed, in the very same clothes, although they seemed not the least soiled by use. They had much to tell each other—especially had Frank Hooper a great deal to say, for he had not often written. He informed Walter of the fate of the Lady Susannah and of Dr. Ribs—that the former had gone to Charlestown, and having there been discovered to be an arrant impostor, was exposed and disgraced.* Her admirer, the Doctor, had found means to escape and join her there—had shared her infamy, and been treated by the boys of Charleston to a coat of tar and feathers, and had had the honour of a ride on a rail over the city. She herself had intrigued for Rowton, having become desperately enamoured of him: and he, it was thought, would have married her, in the belief that she was the sister of the Queen. But she was exposed before her plans had ripened, and forced to marry her suitor De Riboso, the ceremony having been

* "In the course of the winter, a female adventurer passed through the province, and attracted great notice. She had assumed the name of Lady Susannah Carolina Matilda, sister of the Queen of Great Britain, and had travelled through the province of Virginia, from one gentleman's house to another, under these pretensions. She made astonishing impressions in many places, affecting the manners of royalty so inimitably, that many had the honour of kissing her hand. To some she promised governments, to others regiments, or promotions of different kinds in the Treasury, Army, and Navy; in short she acted her part so adroitly, as to levy heavy contributions on some persons of the highest rank. She received the marked attention of Governor Martin and his lady whilst in New Berne, and proceeded thence to Wilmington, where she was also received with great marks of distinction. At last, after remaining some days in Charleston, she was detected and apprehended. Her real name was Sarah Wilson; having been taken into the service of one of the maids of honour to the Queen, she found access to one of the royal apartments, and breaking open a cabinet, rifled it of many valuable jewels, for which she was apprehended, tried, and condemned to die; but through the interposition of her mistress, her sentence was softened to that of transportation. She had accordingly been landed, in the preceding fall, in Maryland, where she was purchased by a Mr. W. Duval, of Bush Creek, Frederick County. After a short residence there, she effected her escape into Virginia, and when at a prudent distance assumed the name and character of the Queen's sister, having brought with her from England clothes that served to favor the deception, and a part of the jewels, together with her majesty's picture, which had proved so fatal to her."—*Martin's Hist. N. C. vol.* ii, pp. 292, 293.

performed while he was wearing his suit of tar and feathers. This was a bitter dose to the fair figurante, for she was really sprightly, intelligent, and beautiful; but the boys were inexorable; and in fact she made a light escape, considering her many daring crimes and follies. And thus she and the beau of Utopia were married; and in a cart, to the music of the Rogue's March, and of a great variety of pans and kettles, were marched out of town and started on a bridal tour.

"And by the way," continued Frank, "I lately saw Alice Bladen, and she spoke of you."

"Of me?" said Walter, reddening; "I suppose she made herself merry at the expense of her rustic lover."

"Indeed, she did not," replied Frank; "she spoke of you in the kindest manner, and would like to see you. She has heard often of you, and always something good and honourable; and I believe she thinks a great deal of you. She is not far from here, aud if you say so, you and I will call on her to-morrow."

"To-morrow I shall be engaged," said Walter; "I am then to be introduced to the Republican Club of Cape Fear. My friend Major McRee has already made application for me, and so indeed has Colonel Lillington; and to-morrow I am to be initiated and made one of the Cape Fear brotherhood."

"It is a great honour," answered Frank, "and I congratulate you on it. It is composed of the best men in all the country; and your initiation will at once introduce you into the society and affections of our people."

"I care little for these things now," said Walter; "Frank, I have changed my whole plan of life. I have given over all my youthful aspirations. I have now higher and greater aims. I am lowly born and lowly connected—"

"Nonsense!" cried Frank; "you have already taken your stand. You know you told me you intended to do like the hero in the play at New Berne—to perform three great achievements, and then—"

"Yes, but play heroes are but poor models," interrupted

Walter. "It is folly to try to do in real life as they do in plays; adventures are made on purpose for them, while no such opportunities for distinction are offered to us."

"Yes, but you have done three, yes, four great things," replied Frank: "You put yourself to a great deal of trouble to befriend a lost and orphan boy, and to do so had to neglect an opportunity of taking revenge on an enemy; you saved the life of Utopia, and you have been of great service to the country. Besides this, Alice Bladen often speaks of the service you did her on the beach; and I 'm sure she will no longer laugh at the name of Tucker."

"She shall not have a chance in my presence," said Walter, proudly; "Frank, you must not talk to me of that haughty woman; my resolution is fixed, and it will be best to carry it out. I will marry Utopia."

"What! your cousin?" cried Frank, in surprise; "I know she is worthy of you—she 's an angel," continued he, with a tremulous voice.

"Perhaps *you* love her," said Walter, smiling; "if so, you shall have my claims if she will love you, and I 'll go back to Roanoke Island."

"Perhaps—you might break my heart by marrying her," replied Frank, much confused; "and if—if Alice really loves you, could you not forgive her?"

"She does not love me," said Walter; "she may pretend so, but she 'll only love my fame, when I become famous."

"She will, she does love *you*," cried Frank; "you, Walter Tucker, and she has loved you from the beginning. I *know* it—that is, I 've seen it in a thousand ways, and if you will go with me, your own eyes shall tell you so. Mercy! who are all these coming up the avenue?"

"Do not be alarmed," said Walter, seizing the student as he was about to run; "see, there are several of my acquaintances among them. But what has brought such a crowd? and see, what a strange figure hobbles in their midst!

Notwithstanding the assurances of Walter, Frank Hooper still trembled violently as Cornelius Harnett, followed by a number of gentlemen, led into his house the apparition

alluded to. It was a gaunt figure, stooped with age, its limbs clad in ragged garments, formed of patches of paper, a close-fitting mask giving it the appearance of having a head perfectly bald; while a solitary lock of long white hair fell from the forehead, and mingled with the snowy beard that streamed over its breast. It was painted all over with emblems of decay; the wrecks of ships, falling houses, broken columns, bleaching bones and grinning skeletons. In its right-hand it held a staff, and in the left the hand of a girl closely veiled, shrouded in white, with a wreath of evergreens and amaranth upon her head; and having taken its stand in the middle of the room, with Col. Lillington and Major McRee on opposite sides, it spoke as follows:

"I am Time, listen to my story: You have all heard how that the first white Colony settled in North Carolina was planted on that green gem of Albemarle Sound, Roanoke Island. It was sent out by Sir Walter Raleigh, the pride and glory of England, and it was brought by his relation, Sir Richard Grenville. You have also heard that that white colony vanished as the snows vanish from the vallies in spring; and when the English came back again there was not a soul found to tell the story of their friends. But I saw what had happened—I knew it all, and now I will reveal it. All perished but one, and that one was a natural son of Sir Walter Raleigh, and a brave and sprightly lad. Manteo, the great chief of the Roanokes, took a liking to him—he gave him his daughter, and the lad afterwards became a chief. His father-in-law, for his goodness and greatness, was called by the English Lord of Roanoke, and this title descended to the son of Raleigh and to his descendants. One of the last of these, a poor man, but a proud and worthy one, one Walter Roanoke, a man nearly white, one day sent for his neighbour. 'I am dying,' said Roanoke,—'I will soon join my wife in heaven. This child is the only pledge of our love—to him I can leave nothing but my name. But a proud name ill becomes an unworthy man; therefore, let the boy not assume my name until he is worthy of it." And so died the descendant of Manteo; and his friend and rival

once, took his son, adopted him, and raised him to man's estate. He has proved himself worthy of his name—there he stands, WALTER ROANOKE, the descendant of Sir Walter Raleigh, and of Manteo, the Lord of Roanoke! Be still, and hear me out—I am Time—Time unveils all secrets, and behold what I shall now do. Frank Hooper," continued he, seizing the cap from the head of the student, "Frank Hooper, these curls are Alice Bladen's!"

The abashed lady, with loosened hair falling over her face and shoulders, stood trembling and blushing in the hand of Time, as he proceeded:

"*You* may be called Time's fairest daughter; but you have a sister who is not the daughter of Time—a meek-eyed maiden of whom poets have dreamed and philosophers written—behold Utopia!" As he spoke he unveiled his companion, and the room was lighted by the radiant face of the nameless child of the Desert.

"And this," said Major McRee, taking hold of the palsied figure of Time—"this ladies, and gentlemen, is our distinguished friend, the famous Daniel Tucker, from the sound of whose violin this vision of love and purity is born."

Let the curtain drop upon the tableau.

CHAPTER XLI.

THE TEMPTER AND THE TEMPTED PART COMPANY.—OTHER CHARACTERS RETIRE FROM THE SCENE.—WHERE IS UTOPIA?

UTOPIA filled Wilmington with amazement. She met all as if she had known them all her life, and all met her as if she were the guest of all mankind. The children followed her, and cried when she left them—the old stopped to hold her by the hand, and give her their blessing, while they gazed in her meek hazel eyes, that blessed them in return—and the young of both sexes called her sister, and spoke kindly and gently to her.

In her scrap-book was imaged forth the adventures of her life—and the last picture in it was the face of Walter.

She, and her mother, and Ike Harvey, had been brought to Wilmington by old Tucker, Coon, and Mons. Dufrong; and the citizens of that place bought and fitted up for her a beautiful cottage, below the town, and near the Cape Fear River. Here her mother was to spend the evening of her days in comfort—and hither on a pleasant summer afternoon she was brought by Alice Bladen, Walter Tucker, and a host of ladies and gentlemen of the town and country.

The young people were in a gay humour, and amused themselves in various ways; some in gathering flowers, some in fishing, and others in lounging and gossiping in the shade.

Alice and Utopia were alone in the cottage of the latter, each looking more beautiful than ever, and each dressed in simple habits of spotless white.

"I have a secret te tell you," said the former, "though no doubt you have heard of it before now. Our wedding is to take place next Wednesday——"

"Whose wedding?" asked Utopia, gazing seriously in the eyes of Alice.

"Why mine, child—mine and Walter's—had 'nt you heard of it?"

"Do you mean Walter Tucker?" inquired Utopia.

"Walter Tucker that was," said Alice, laughing.

"We have agreed to have it next Wednesday, and I am now making preparations. The party will be a small one; but you will be there, and I wish you, my dear, sweet friend, to act as my first bride's-maid. Will that dress suit you? indeed, you look beautiful in it—but, perhaps, we had better get a new one for the occasion. Let me see now, a satin one with—do you hear me, child?"

"What did you say about Walter?" asked Utopia, abstractedly.

"Oh, dear," exclaimed Alice, "must I tell it all over again. Come, lay down your scrap-book, and listen to me."

As Alice spoke, Utopia came to her, felt her hands and

arms, kissed her, and handing her the scrap-book, told her to give it to Walter.

She then passed out of the door; and Alice, rather surprised at her manner, but thinking she would soon return, sat waiting in silence for an explanation. At last she became vexed at Utopia's delay, and went out to look for her; she inquired for her eagerly of those in the woods, and finally became uneasy. Her fears were contagious; a number of persons started off in search of the girl, but she was not to be found.

Her friends were forced to the conclusion, that she was lost or drowned; and while they were consulting in anxious groups, they were startled by a wild cry in the woods. It came from Robert Bladen, who was one of the party, though now a complete wreck; and as the company turned towards him, they were horrified at his appearance. Wild with delirium, he came brandishing a bloody dagger in his reeking hand; and throwing up his arms, cried as he ran, "See there! see, there she is! Oh, for mercy's sake, hide her face!"

"Where is she, where is Utopia?" asked Walter Roanoke, seizing the maniac youth; "madman, what have you done?"

"I could not bear her sight," replied Bladen; "her face was every day looking in my soul, and I could not shut it out. I could not bear to hear her voice. I could not bear to see her smile——"

"Where is she?" again asked Walter, sternly.

"I found her under an old oak," answered Bladen—"She was kneeling and looking up to heaven—she smiled on me as I took hold of her."

"But where is she? what did you do to her?" asked the crowd.

"I tried to kill her," cried the madman—"I tried to hide her—but when I looked up, she was in heaven gazing at me. Look there!" he continued, in a wild frenzy, pointing upwards—"There she is! there, there, still smiling at me! Oh for God's sake, hide her face!" So saying, he tore himself loose from Walter, and ran to a cliff on the river, and again pointing up, and shouting "There! there she is!" he uttered a fearful scream, plunged into the water, and was drowned.

As for Utopia, she was seen no more on earth.

The loss of his niece was a blow from which the fiddler of Roanoke Island never recovered. Jealous as he was of his honour, he insisted on having his trial for the murder of old Ricketts at New Berne; and there he and Mrs. Ricketts, or rather Mrs. Harvey, brother and sister, were formally tried and triumphantly acquitted. Then the old man could amuse himself awhile, in locating his sister near his own home, and in reforming Ike Harvey from his vagabond propensities, and in assisting his adopted son, Walter Roanoke, in the construction of a handsome summer residence on the island. Here Walter, universally esteemed, and his no less popular and happy wife, were wont to spend much of their time; and at their house, old Dan and his friend Coon would sometimes awaken the "memory of the days of other years," in strains never to be forgotten by those who heard them. Still the old man was no longer what he had been; life had lost its savour, and he fled, accompanied by his faithful friend Coon, to the excitements of the camp, to escape from the recollections of the past. Throughout the whole war of the revolution he served, not continuously, but at different times; and it is no exaggeration to say, that his violin and that of Coon did the State some service. When the war was over, Dan pined gradually away, fading even like the notes of his own violin, till at last, in the arms of Coon, and surrounded by Walter, his wife and their little ones, he quietly gave up his troubled spirit. By the remains of the Old Fort, in the deep woods, he was buried; and there, suspended from a tree over his head, and protected from the weather, was hung the violin that had been his companion and faithful friend through life. It was said, that in the stillness of a summer's night, an unseen hand would touch the strings of that violin, and then strains that seemed to be wafted from a spirit-land, would breathe their spell over the enchanted island, discoursing a sad sweet requiem to the soul of the departed fiddler. Such was the universal belief through the country; but perhaps it may be accounted for by the fact that old Zip would often steal to the grave of his friend, and there spend

the live-long night in playing melancholy airs. For years after this, he was still known in the country, for he travelled about from place to place: but at last he also passed away, and now he and his lamented friend live only in the traditions of the common people, and in those immortal airs to which they bequeathed their names.

Like a sweet tune, a fragile flower, a transient halo, a beam of heavenly light at the dusky hour of eve, Utopia passed away, leaving no trace or memorial behind her. The world saw her and felt her presence for a moment; and then she was gone, and the memory of her was like a pleasant dream in the sinless days of youth. She had been, and she had shone in the hearts of her contemporaries; and yet when she was gone she seemed not to have been as a reality, and the recollection of her was like those strange recollections of worlds, and things, and people, that we have never seen, which sometimes flit across the mind.

The author, who had himself once regarded the beautiful places of this world as shrines of immortals—who had been, in other words, a day-dreamer—was deeply interested in what he heard of the traditions concerning the nameless child of the Desert, and he followed her footsteps from the wild sands of the beach to New Berne; from New Berne to the fairy Lake Drummond, and from thence to the Old Cape Fear, rich in legendary lore.

On a pleasant afternoon, the author and a friend took a stroll along the bank of this noble river; and we had not gone far before we came to a wilderness of vines, brushwood, and reeds, all growing "in a wild state of nature." These, as far as we could see, skirted a small grove of live oaks; and with the branches of these oaks, they formed an enclosure or palisade, which we found some difficulty in entering. The moment we did enter, however, a strange sensation, a feeling of indescribable awe, of sadness and veneration, crept upon me; I found myself in one of those spots which nature herself seems to have consecrated for her most holy rites. There was not a shrub, nor a blade of grass within that sacred temple; there the garish beams of the sun never pe-

netrate, but even at noon-day a deep and solemn twilight reigns. The oaks, whose multitudinous branches formed a thick canopy above us, looked as if they had witnessed the flight of centuries; and from their limbs and trunks there streamed hoary and luxuriant flakes of moss, sweeping almost to the ground, and looking like elfin locks whitened by the frosts of a thousand years.

Within this Druid temple there are old brick vaults, without a name, and without a date; and here, nature herself seems to have formed a cemetery for her favorite child —here, beneath one of these vaults, and close by the banks of the old Cape Fear, are supposed to repose the ashes of Utopia. The scene and the recollections which it awakened threw me into a meditative mood—and seating myself on one of the vaults, and looking out on the broad but lonely expanse of waters before me, I remained listening to the subdued murmur of the distant ocean, not knowing that the Doctor had left me. Thus I remained conjuring up a thousand fancies—aye, and remembering a thousand hopes of youth that had faded. "Where, where," I thought, "is Utopia? Where is that pleasant land, and those good people of which I dreamed so much before I was wise? Is life but a vapour that exhaleth for a moment and perisheth for ever? And are all the hopes of life, and all its pleasures and pursuits but 'vanity and vexation of spirit?' Is Utopia to be found only in the grave? *Vanitas Vanitatum*, 'vanity of vanities, all is vanity, saith the preacher.' There is no hope here—and hereafter——;" as I thus reflected, the shades of evening were insensibly gathering round me, and far, far in the hazy horizon of the east, an exceedingly small star twinkled tenderly in the blue expanse "There was the smile of Utopia;"—a something whispered to me—"Beyond the shores of time—beyond the ocean of space—away, away in those bright worlds beyond, you will find Utopia."

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