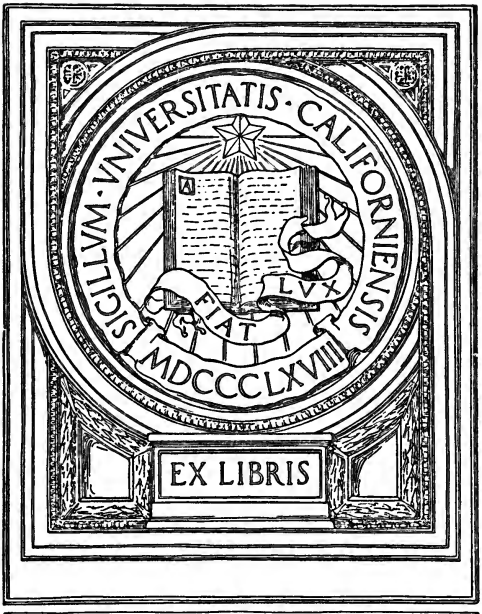

THE KENTUCKIAN.

VOL. II.

THE

KENTUCKIAN

IN

NEW-YORK.

OR, THE

ADVENTURES OF THREE SOUTHERNS.

BY A VIRGINIAN.

"Perhaps it may turn out a sang,
Perhaps turn out a sermon."—*Burns.*

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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THE

KENTUCKIAN IN NEW-YORK.

CHAPTER I.

Beverley Randolph to Victor Chevillere.

"High Hills of the Santee, South Carolina, 18—

"Dear Friend,

"You will be surprised to learn that this letter is written in bed, on a large old portfolio of yours, while I am propped up with chairs and pillows behind; all during the doctor's absence, and against the urgent entreaties of the whole house.

"I have been ill, Chevillere, exceedingly ill. You, no doubt, recollect the threats I made to charge my system with miasma, and thereby take on the fever-and-ague, by way of making myself interesting. I had little thought then of the reality, or how soon that reality would come.

"It has come; and, I hope, has gone; but not

the fever-and-ague. I had an ague, it is true, and fever after it; but the latter, I believe, kept up a more continued fire upon my system than intermittents ever do. Strange too, that when this attack came upon me without my bidding, I never once thought of my former interesting schemes; nor (as it seems to me now) did I think much of *any thing*, except the taste of the medicines.

"I can recollect when I thought it must be a strange and dismal experience—that of the sick chamber. It is no such thing. I have vague and ill-defined recollections of hot days and restless nights, perhaps; but all the other experience seems like a long dreamy period of existence.

"Nature seems to provide us against the misery of conscious suffering, by turning our ideas upon trifles and childish vexations. A man who is ill with a malignant fever, is an object of dread and commiseration to his acquaintance, who exclaim, 'How horrible! how dreadful a thing it is!'. And this with regard to his physical sufferings, and in anticipation of immediate dissolution of soul and body. We attempt to picture to ourselves what his thoughts must be.

"What is the invalid himself doing all this while? He is begging for cold water; quarrelling with the taste of villanous drugs, and abusing his nurse, if the fever has just then remitted a little. And as for his thoughts—he has none beyond these things; his mind is a blank; the past and the future are obliterated.

"The rational creature is lost in the predominating exigencies of the animal; the mind seems to lose the power of combining any but the simple sensations.

"I have not reflected much upon the causes of these things, because my own mind has but too lately recovered from that very state. I merely give the facts of my own experience, because I know you are fond of gathering up these little unnoticed things, and arranging them with your other natural curiosities.

"But I have not told you half yet; my mind was in a worse state even than that just described; it was entirely in eclipse. Of that I know nothing except what Virginia has told me.

"You see, I do not call her Bell any more, nor do I mean to do so; the reason, perhaps, I may be able to tell you before they take the paper away from me.

"The name Bell, short and alone, somehow suited her character, as I then understood it, as well as my feelings towards her. She seemed to me a lively, intelligent little romp, and I loved her as such. I did not then think myself capable of feeling any stronger attachment for any other character of beauty, or for any deeper or more profound characteristics of the female heart. Indeed, I doubt whether I knew of, or believed in, the existence of any better foundation for an attachment.

"Poor, fickle-hearted man! I have changed

already. Be not alarmed, Chevillere; I have not gone out of the family; I have only changed from Bell to Virginia.

"Now can you solve this truly profound enigma? No. Then I must unravel the mystery for you.

"First then, I have not spoken to her once of love, unless it was during the two days that I was deranged; and to tell you the truth, I have some shrewd suspicion that I did broach the subject then; nay more, that I did much better for myself than if I had been sane in mind. This is a left-handed compliment to myself, but I cannot help it, as I cannot challenge myself. Something that I did or said, during those two days, has certainly revolutionized her whole conduct towards me, and every one else in my presence. She has changed towards me, and hence my change towards her. I thought her the most charming girl in existence before; now I have different feelings. Charming she certainly is, but charming is too cold a term—too much the word of a stranger, to express my feelings any longer. They are more respectful now—but more of this at another time.

"Old Tombo has been my constant attendant, because I preferred him, it seems, to any of the house servants. He has been devoted to me. I suppose he little thought that I once had a design to drown him.

"When I returned to sane views of things, the doctor had gone. I awoke out of a profound sleep, and found myself lying on my back, with my

face towards the ceiling. In a short time my recollection was perfect of every thing which happened previous to the two days. I lay in that state collecting my thoughts a few moments, and then slowly and silently turned my head towards the centre of the room. Virginia sat there reading intently. She was paler and thinner than usual, and her countenance so complete a mirror of her thoughts, that I imagined I could almost read there what she read in the book. I had never seen the same look before, and was struck with it. I at first thought it nothing more than the result of my wayward fancies coming over me again, for I knew that something had been wrong with me. I closed my eyes to recover myself, in order to try again; still her countenance was sad, absorbed, and deeply thoughtful. I never saw a more wonderful change; there was not an expression of the thoughtless school-girl there.

"It was the woman I saw, in *propria persona;* not that she has numbered more than eighteen years, and that is a long age of feeling; but that she appeared now so calm, dignified, and sensible; her beautiful upper lip convulsively tremulous with deep sympathetic feelings. It was this chord which first caused my own nervous vibrations. The nether lip, the eye, and even the cheeks are obedient in some measure to the will, in expressing either pathetic or ludicrous ideas. But show me a tragedian who can convulse the upper lip in those little (almost) nameless vibrations, which come

from, and go straight to, the heart,—and I will show you a consummate master of his art.

"You see I go upon the ground that he can first operate upon his own feelings sufficiently to touch this delicate chord, for I hold that it is obedient to no other monitor.

"Is this observation the result of a diseased mind? Look at those who have had that organ paralyzed; let them weep; and I think you will see a *horrid* confirmation of my opinions. Or on the other hand, deeply touch the feelings of a sensitive child or woman, and note the result; I will abide by your judgment.

"I saw that her feelings were not only deeply affected by what she read, but all her sensibilities were attuned to a state of thrilling vibration for which I had never given her credit.

"It was my ignorance of this, no doubt, which caused her playful and artificial manner towards me, or in other words, she had not until lately (if now) a very exalted idea of my penetration. Consequently she could not have formed a high opinion of my understanding, for penetration is but the eye of the soul. No one can go beyond his own profundity, in penetrating the obscure origin of looks, feelings, and passions in another; and we can generally go, I think, about to our own depth.

"Our opinion of another depends much upon his opinion of us. This has generally been ascribed to selfishness in the human heart, and an inordinate

avidity for flattery; but it has likewise a deeper foundation.

"Fools, no doubt, may admire each other for the pleasure and satisfaction which the thing affords; but wise men have other interchanges besides the feelings and passions. First there is the *magnetic* influence (I have no other name for it), which will open a secret intercourse and understanding between two persons, in a room where scores of duller mortals may be standing by, none the wiser. It is not purely *magnetic*, because a word or a hint will sometimes open the door before the secret influence.

"I have been hitherto a most unfortunate fellow in this respect, for I never could get a great man to receive the magnetic stream from me. You see the devil is not entirely cast out.

"But seriously, let the change in Virginia be owing to what it may, the fact was incontrovertible.

"There she sat, as completely metamorphosed as the shoemaker's wife in the play. There was nothing to intercept my view except the mosquito nets which here surround all your beds, instead of the curtains which are used in the middle and, I suppose, in the northern states.

"A full quarter of an hour elapsed while the foregoing ideas passed through my mind, before the death-like silence of the sick-chamber was disturbed by a single sound louder than an occasional sigh from the beautiful girl. But a quarter of an

hour, short as it was, sufficed to induct me into more of the mysterious and subdued operations of the female heart and mind, than many months' previous experience while my blood was warm, my pulsations impetuous, and my actions produced by direct impulses of the moment.

"You, Chevillere, have preceded me in these observations. You seemed from the first to have been endowed with an intuitive perception of these things. At least, you manifested a secret and undefined dread of prematurely encountering such little magazines of combustible feeling.

"But now, it seems, you are about to explode in a genuine Guy Faux affair, after being frightened at a pop-gun. This is always the way with you silent abstracted gentlemen; you avoid the little school romances which beset your companions from the year 14, until you get the credit of being very unsusceptible young men, and are set down by the little gay creatures as incipient bachelors.

"But a day of retribution comes at last. The experience which others have been drawing in through that long, long age of minority, is in your case concentrated into a single year, month, or week.

"But how prosing sickness has made me. While you are asking for bread, I am giving you a stone.

"'Miss Virginia,' said I, softly (it used to be Miss Bell); she dropped the book and sprung to her feet like one who had been electrified.

"'Do you feel better, Mr. Randolph?' she asked,

at the same time gently tapping the floor with the handle of a riding switch, kept there for that purpose.

"'I do feel better, my dear young lady,' said I, stretching out my hand.

"My own voice frightened me; it came as if from the bottom of a sepulchre. My bony hand slipped from under the bedclothes like a smuggled piece of anatomy; she placed her warm throbbing little hand in mine; it felt as if it had a heart within its soft and pure outlines; I denied myself the reviving pleasure, and withdrew my hand, as a deformed man would withdraw the defective member.

"At this moment your mother entered on tiptoe, and seeing Virginia standing by the bedside with the netting in her hand, she approached and laid her hand upon my forehead.

"'Dear Mr. Randolph,' said she, 'do you feel better?' in her peculiarly mild and benignant tones, and feeling my pulse like a novice. 'O, I know you are better; the doctor thought your sleep would restore you. Thank God! you know not what we have suffered, both on your account and our own; but I am afraid we have made you talk too much. Compose yourself, my dear sir, and I will watch by your bedside.'

"Now, Chevillere, I admire, and honour, and love your mother almost as much as I did my own; but I love her neice's company better. The idea instantly occurred to me that Virginia would come

back again if I fell into a slumber; so I pretended to enjoy a very comfortable nap. As I expected, your mother withdrew on tiptoe, and Virginia returned to her post.

"I saw that she had been weeping. She still held the same book in her hand, but I was too vain to attribute the tears to the influence of its contents. I lay and enjoyed one of the most delightful periods I recollect ever to have spent. My system was cool and comfortable; not a particle of disease was left. My eyes were just closed enough to catch a shadowy outline of her figure and profile through the eyelids. I was determined not again to disturb my own comfortable reveries, and had just fixed myself with a good deal of complacency to enjoy the delicious present, when, behold! I fell asleep in earnest.

"Did you ever fall asleep just as you had sat down to a magnificent dinner, with fine wine and fine company, and slept till the dinner was eat up and the company gone? That was precisely my case. I awoke and found I had fallen asleep under the most atrocious circumstances, perhaps, that ever a man snored in,—not excepting deacons, elders, town clerks, and cooks on a summer Sunday. The delicious meal which I had laid out for my eyes was gone, and old Tombo sat there in her place. When I awoke, I turned my head slowly towards the spot, as I had done before, and slowly raised the lids in a lazy, luxurious, and valetudinarian style, until they beheld—the devil! I

thought, indeed, it was he at first; so ugly did old Tombo look from very contrast.

"'Tombo!' said I, 'how came you here?'

"'Up the stars, masta.'

"I smiled, for the first time, I suppose, in many days; for Tombo seemed to be tickled at the sight of my teeth.

"'Tombo,' said I, 'sit near, and tell me all the things I have been saying within the last two days, especially those things I said when your young mistress was in the room.'

"'I can't, sir, axing your pardon.'

"'Why not, Tombo?'

"''Cause why, Miss Bell been tell me no, and I tink I find it bery hard to say him ober again.'

"'O, never mind what Miss Bell told you; she only told you so on my account; come, tell it out. I will explain to your young mistress that I ordered you to tell me; if you can't repeat the words, let me know what it was about, for the most part.'

"'O! I can tell what it was about, for it was all the same ting, and that was Miss Bell heself; and fine talk I calls it too; I told 'em in the kitchen that you been no more crazy than the doctor heself.'

"'What did I say about Miss Bell, Tombo?'

"'O, Lord, sir, I can't speak him, but he make her cry for true, some time; and misses cry too, and I can't say but I swallo'd bery hard myself; more, maybe, from what the doctor says than what you said.'

"I told him to hand me a looking-glass. I had been picking the skin off my finger bones, and holding them up occasionally to look at them, until I began to feel some curiosity to see my phiz!

"And a precious piece of anatomy I saw; head shaved close, and a sheepskin plaster over it, like a bald crown; face as sharp as a handsaw, and features, good imitation of the teeth thereof; ears sticking out in bold relief like two handles to a tub; lips covered with fever scales; neck long and stringy; eyes drawn in like a turtle's head; nose sticking out by itself like the cutwater of a ship, and skin like a tanned sheepskin. An interesting plight for a hero of a love affair! I had not finished admiring myself when Virginia again entered on tiptoe, expecting, no doubt, to find me still asleep. She started back in astonishment, when she saw Tombo holding the glass before my face. I motioned to him to take it away, and begged Virginia not to rap on the floor, which I saw she was about to do, as I did not wish to disturb your mother. I declared myself much better, and begged her to be seated a few moments. She did so.

"'Have I said any thing during the two last days which would have been improper if it had been said in my sane moments?'

"'Nothing, sir, but—'

"'But what?'

"'You said many things of which you seldom thought when you were well.'

"'Indeed! what were they?'

"'It would be useless, sir, to rehearse them, and might injure you to hear them.'

"'Not at all; on the contrary, the restlessness of anxiety will injure me if I do not hear them, especially those things in which your own name was mentioned.'

"'I cannot repeat them, sir; I have no doubt my aunt will, if the doctor approves of it.'

"'Tell me, then, do you think a maniac displays any thing of the operations of his mind in his sounder moments?'

"'To tell you candidly, then, I think he does.'

"'Will you tell me why you think so?'

"'Because most of a maniac's discourses are retrospective; detached and disjointed, it is true, but still momentarily calling upon that stock of ideas which has been treasured up in by-gone days; but, sir, I think this a very improper subject for you to converse upon at present.'

"'Not at all; I feel as strong in lungs and intellect as I ever did in my life.'

"Your mother came in just at this moment, and sent Virginia down to receive some visiters, male and female, from the refugees' sandhill village.

"I feel now what it is to be stretched out here, not able to wink an eye at a rival; but I shall recruit apace, at least as long as they stay. They have been trying to get the paper from me this half hour, but I will not give it up yet; I tell them that it soothes and calms me like an opiate.

"Since I wrote the above, the doctor has called.

He is a better specimen of the cloth than I expected to find here—gentlemanly, sensible, and discreet. I asked him, when there was no one present but Tombo, what I had said about Virginia in my two days of mental eclipse? He answered, that I was a very impassioned lover for a philosopher, and laughed heartily.

"I suspect that he suspects me of not being too sound in my most rational moments. What, in the name of the seven wonders, does he mean by philosopher? But I will be at the bottom of all these things, before I get on my legs again. In the mean time, the change in Virginia occupies our attention.

"I begin to doubt very seriously whether she is such a real, natural, and unsophisticated character as I first described her to you in my letter of that period.

"At a certain age, far within twenty, girls of a good deal of ingenuity may make almost any character seem natural to them, especially if they have vivacity to support it. Nay, they may stamp that character upon themselves for life, if it is much admired. They do not at that age study *themselves;* they do not know that the character which they have assumed is an artificial one; but of course there is just enough of nature, and artlessness, and unaffectedness, to make it captivating to our sex.

"It depends entirely upon their adventures in the world, just at this time of setting out, what turn

this girlish vivacity will take. An early disappointment will temper their sprightliness into a very discreet carriage, and sometimes make them sad and melancholy all their days.

"In these times of convenient matches, the whole world is full of this sadness and melancholy; not affected melancholy, but real and true sorrowing after the gay and brilliant dreams of their youth; a yearning for the scenes and associates of their childhood.

"Happy that man and that woman who have wedded in young life, upon the impulses of the heart, and have moulded each other's characters into genuine connubial congeniality. I have frequently seen old couples who had been united in early life, and had lived so long together that they actually resembled each other in feature, face, and expression.

"Your cousin's mind is much more like yours than I had at first supposed. She endeavours to penetrate into the results of experience without its pains and penalties. Oh! how much you both have the advantage of me there. I plunge headlong into every thing, and then I can study very ingeniously how to get out. I really believe that I improve by experience; but no other schooling can make me wise.

"But you and Virginia seem to make it your study to suck honey from the flowers strewed in your path, without touching the thorns; 'tis a heaven-born gift, therefore cherish it. I, on the

contrary, plunge up to the neck in thorns after a single flower, and then pay some one to help me out, with the very thing for which I jumped in. What does experience avail a man, when the occasion for using the knowledge he gains by it, vanishes with it. It is an experience which comes too late.

"It is very common to suppose, indeed to say, that these prudent and discreet characters are dull and prosing. There can be no more pernicious mistake, nor one more calculated to lead would-be geniuses into follies and erratic vices. Thus copying the errors of some fatal genius they find themselves in the midst of follies and crimes, without the excuse of genius, or the genius to get out of them.

"The finest combination of talents in the world, is that which can lead a man to fold his arms and stand as a spectator upon the actions of others, drinking in that wisdom of experience through his eyes and ears, which another must have lashed into his back. Scott and Napoleon are two fine examples of this genius preceding experience, and Byron of the opposite.

"It is doubtful in my mind whether Byron might not have been a very different character if his 'Hours of Idleness' had been suffered to die a natural death, and had he never been lashed into the production of 'English Bards and Scotch Reviewers.' This result would have been still more probable, had he married the lady of his youthful love. This

opinion of the noble poet you may take as the product of a mind diseased, if you like. The truth is, there are so many conversations, lives, memoirs, &c. of Byron, from Leigh Hunt up to Moore, that we on this side of the Atlantic have not the materials, in an authentic form, wherewith to make up our opinions.

"And now that the time and paper allowed me are drawing to an end, permit me to allude to a subject upon which we exchanged letters before setting out.

"I promised to give you my poor views of the gradual change of opinion, of population, and of circumstances, and of the future prospects of Virginia.

"The truth is, I have found things here which interested me so deeply that I of course thought they would interest you too; but when my health is restored, and present objects lose their novelty a little, you shall be welcome to any observations which I have made with regard to my native state; always giving the first place, however, to whatever concerns her little namesake.

"Tell Lamar that I consider much of our correspondence, on both sides, as joint stock.

"Believe me to be your much chastened and sobered chum.

"B. RANDOLPH."

CHAPTER II.

V. Chevillere to B. Randolph.

"New-York, 18—.

"Dear Chum,

"I did not write to you the next morning, as I promised, for many reasons, which may appear in the sequel. Bad news always comes soon enough.

"This city now presents a most singular spectacle. The throng, and hurry, and I may say the pleasure of business, have changed into the throng, and hurry, and misery of fear. Carts that formerly bore merchandise through the streets, are now carrying beds, chairs, and tables of flying families to their country-seats. The bodies of carriages are dismounted, and the running gears are covered with platforms, on which are placed the whole culinary apparatus. Stages and steamboats are crowded with all colours, sexes, and conditions. The mason has forsaken his half-built house, and the joiner has left his timber in the street. The glittering bow-windows of the bazars in Broadway are many of them darkened with their night and Sunday barricades. The theatres and places of amusement are closed, when the season had just commenced. The entries to the

hotels look like the empty aisles of churches on week days, and the streets look dismal, gloomy, and silent.

"The only business which thrives is that of the apothecaries and coffin-makers. From these facts you have already gathered that the pestilence of the East is really and truly here.

"Early on the morning of the day appointed for our jaunt to the Falls of the Passaic, Lamar and myself arose from our beds with all the ardour of expectation, and the high impulses and impetuous spirits of our best youthful and college days. Before we had completed our toilet, my impatience led me to the high four-story front window of our apartment, which overlooks the eastern part of the city, in the direction of Long Island and the Sound, to see if a fickle climate promised to be propitious to our undertaking.

"All nature seemed to smile upon our intended expedition; the eastern turrets of the city, and the bright curtains of misty drapery which fantastically arose and hovered over Hurlgate, were brilliantly tinged with the crimson rays of a summer morning's sun; although the arbitrary divisions of the year remind us that we are considerably beyond the period of that happy season in a northern climate.

"We were scarcely sooner in readiness than the cabriolet, horses, and servants intended for the occasion. As we slowly walked the horses to the rendezvous where we had agreed to take an early

breakfast, fearing, perhaps, that we might disturb the little nestlers in their slumbers, we observed for the first time the various operations of morning in a large city.

"Preparations were making at every door to supply those incessant wants of natural or artificial life, which, in so large a city, employ so many hewers of wood and drawers of water. Here was the dingy charcoal-vender, with his dull monotonous song, which almost makes one imagine that he is still slumbering through the disturbed hours of the morning. Here was a large cask of spring-water, sold by the gallon, and looking cool and invigorating, especially to those countless crowds of youth and men who enjoy the night with the murderous pleasures of wine, only to long for ice and soda-water in the morning. Here was the sooty patent-sweeper, with our southern corn-songs converted into the monotonous twang of business. The various rival dairymen with their milk carts standing along the curbstones, their drivers yelling like western Indians to the tardy housemaids, as they slowly rubbed their eyes, adjusted their aprons, and sleepily handed out their pitchers at random.

"As we rode along the street, maids were to be seen sweeping the pavement, clerks taking down the barricadoes of the night, and journeymen hurrying to their employers. Gentlemen and ladies, singly and in pairs, men-servants and maid-servants, boys and girls, both coloured and white,

those of low as well as of high degree, were pouring down those streets leading to the markets, which you know, perhaps, are here situated in various parts of the city.

"At length we arrived before the door of the house which contained the magnetic points by which so many of our movements are directed. We dismounted, while Cato held the horses in his most pompous style, seeming to have a shrewd suspicion that his best behaviour at this house would not be entirely unacceptable to us. When we rang at the bell, no one hastily answered our summons as on the former occasion, and our hearts began to misgive us a little. We were surprised that the green lattice-door, which opened externally, was now gone, and its place supplied by a very inhospitable cold-looking one of more solid construction. We rang again, and after waiting some time, heard some one fumbling at the door inside, in a very different fashion from the sudden overdone politeness of proud servants; one bolt began to withdraw after another, until at length the door opened. Who stood there, do you suppose? not the gay and lively Isabel Hazlehurst,—nor her mother,—nor the footman who usually did the office,—but an old lady housekeeper in spectacles, as deaf as a door-post, who invariably answered to what she thought ought to have been the question. We, of course, were not aware of this at first, and were therefore not a little surprised,

after Lamar had expended some very useless courtesy upon her, to hear,—

"'And what's your will, gentlemen?'

"Lamar screamed the object of our visit loud enough in her ear to have awakened the whole family, had they been still asleep.

"'O ay! O ay!' said she, 'you are the gallants, you say, and you want the bit letter,' and away she waddled, leaving us not much less impatient than our horses, which were pawing the pavement at a furious rate.

"Presently she returned, and delivered to Lamar a note directed to me; it was from young Hazlehurst, apologizing in the name of the family and the ladies for our disappointment, and pleading as the cause the ravages of the pestilence and the dread of the family; concluding by stating, that they had all gone up the Hudson to the country-seat of Mr. Brumley (Miss St. Clair's step-father), and would return together as soon as the Board of Health pronounced it safe to do so; when they would be happy to see us again, and to compensate for our present disappointment by making the promised jaunt.

"Lamar sprang upon his horse and galloped away down the street, the fire flying from under his feet as if some imp of darkness was at his heels. I saw no more of him that morning, but fortunately met Arthur soon after breakfast. He seemed astonished that we had not fled also, and still more so when I communicated my desire to

see something of this disease, and especially in those haunts where the wretched paupers were congregated.

"Our first visit was to that celebrated place the *Five Points*, called so from there being five corner houses on the spot, one of them triangular, of course; the others being formed by two streets intersecting each other at right angles. One of these in one direction divides into two streets, running one on each side of the triangular house.

"As we approached the spot, the loaded atmosphere from the filthy streets began to salute our olfactories, and various evidences were presented to our eyes of the loathsome and disgusting dissipation which was still kept up, in spite of the terrors of the grim monster. The corporation wagons or hearses were to be seen standing along the streets, with the end gate down, into which two men were stacking the white pine coffins as high as the lid would admit, and often bringing two and three of these from one house. I will confess to you that this struck me with horror at first,—not fear, but horror,—and I must remark to you an observation of mine connected with it; you know I am fond of treasuring up *these*, great or small.

"When a person first enters these dismal regions during the prevalence of an epidemic, he is ten times more struck by the appearance of these crowded coffins, than he is at the sight of a whole hospital of patients with the epidemic. In the first house we entered, were three persons lying ill of

the disease in one room; all of them of the very lowest class of drunken debauchees. I can scarcely give you an idea of the wretched condition of these tatterdemalions, by any thing which you have seen in the South. They are far more filthy, degraded, and wretched than any slave I have ever beheld, under the most cruel and tyrannical master. If such is their condition in ordinary times, what must it be now? they are in the lowest depths of human degradation and misery.

"Two of the three were females,—mother and daughter; the latter looked as if she was thirty-five years of age, though she told me she was only twenty. She was thought to be convalescent, and I can truly say that out of the hundreds whom I have seen, she was the only one of her class who exhibited any thing like remorse of conscience for her past life. One would be apt to suppose that there would be weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth,—but there is no such thing; they die like dogs, amid the ribald jests, vulgar wit, and Billingsgate slang of their quondam associates. Self-preservation seems to have ceased to be a law of nature here, and death has become familiar to the eyes of these wretches, as carnage does to the soldier. I asked the daughter if she and her mother had ever been in better circumstances. She said they had, far better; that they had once been comfortable and happy, but that her wretched mother had deserted her father's house while he was gone to sea, which had driven him to dis-

sipation, ruin, and the state-prison, and them to their present condition; there was no kind of feeling exhibited by the mother, either in regard to the past or the future; the sufferings of the present moment occupied her, both soul and body, and this is the case with ninety-nine in the hundred of all those whom I have seen sick and dying; they forcibly remind me of a flock of sheep swept off suddenly by some rapid distemper. I never could realize the idea of the state of feeling in Paris during the bloody days of the reign of terror until now; I can readily conceive how indifferent men may become to death, by being stupified with its hourly exhibition.

"There are some heart-rending scenes here,—such as parents just landed from Europe, who die and leave little children wandering about the streets, without any one to know or care for them. Dead bodies lying in the houses by twos and threes and sixes; no one caring or knowing of them, until the corporation officials come round, and then they are dragged out into the middle of the floor and thrown into pine coffins, clothes and all—unknown oftentimes, even by name.

"From whence did these people come? Most of them from happy homes, and tender and affectionate friends in the country. Attracted here, perhaps, by gay scenes, and brilliant delusions, and intoxicating delights, which greet the young and thoughtless upon a first entrance into a city life. Misfortune or misadventure, perhaps, first throws

them from the current of business into the current of amusements—this again carries them down to dissipation—perhaps to crime. And finally, death meets them in these awful sinks of perdition. Urgent, indeed, should be the calls of business or ambition which lead a youth of any tolerable prospects in the country, to fly to the greater theatre of a populous city.

"With such as these last mentioned, I observed one remarkable fact during the prevalence of the epidemic. Until a fatal disease seizes them, they live from year to year, month to month, and day to day, under some strange hallucination; expecting some miraculous change of fortune, or a turn of luck, as they call it. But when finally the grim monster seizes them, their consternation and confusion are equal to their previous delusions. For the first time in years, perhaps, they see themselves in their true outlines. The shock is frightful to look upon; the criminal brought to the scaffold does not appear more wretched and overwhelmed.

"I have seen one of these precocious sots first really and thoroughly convinced of the extent of his degradation upon his death-bed.

"Yours truly,

"V. CHEVILLERE."

CHAPTER III.

VICTOR CHEVILLERE TO B. RANDOLPH.

"New-York, 18—.

"DEAR FRIEND,

"ONCE more I breathe freely; the pestilence has almost left us, and the citizens are returning. Joy has taken the place of fear and trembling. The hum of business and the crash of wheels are heard, and I have opened my portfolio once more, to lay before you in a more concocted form those things which have crowded upon me since I last wrote; which I believe was some two or three weeks ago.

"I have again seen her, Randolph; have ridden with her fifteen miles—have talked with her; and by all that is lovely, have laughed with her. Think of that, my dear fellow! Yet I am as profoundly ignorant as to the cause of the blight which has fallen upon her spirits, as I was when I first mentioned the topic.

"How shall I tell you of those things which have occurred in the last forty-eight hours? And where shall I begin?

"When other people began again to crowd this little island, Lamar and I began our promenades

in Broadway; and I will not conceal from you that sundry glances were cast to the condition and appearance of certain window-shutters and doors. At length, and on a sudden, they began to assume an indescribable appearance, as if some treasures were enclosed within, which had not been stored there of late. We saw no signal ribands through the shutters, nor any intelligible announcement. Our knowledge was derived from the external appearance of the house alone. We approached the house—rang the bell, and speedily the hospitable-looking door was thrown wide open by the footman, in as polite and welcoming an attitude as if his young master and myself were never to become rivals.

"Did you ever sit half an hour, examining the cornice around the ceiling of a fashionable saloon, or the texture of a Turkey carpet, or the veins of an Italian marble slab? adjusting yourself twenty different times and ways for the reception? conning over your first speech—first short, then longer, and at length, formal and spiteful. That was not our case, for I had not fixed my mouth, even for a speech, before the gay Isabel bounced into the room, as full of hilarity as Lamar or Arthur could have desired—but alone.

"'I am truly sorry,' said she, 'that we disappointed you—but indeed, indeed, it was not my fault. Brother brought such terrible accounts of the epidemic, that mother would not hear of our remaining two whole days longer, and Mr. Brumley

would still have gone, had we declined, and that you know, Mr. Chevillere, would have been quite the same to you as if we had all gone. You shall have your revenge; we are all here again; and will go to-morrow to the falls, if you are still in the humour. Frances is out this morning, but I will promise in her name.'

"We did not detain the gay girl any longer with our morning visit than was barely sufficient to arrange the same plans which we had adopted before. I brought away with me abundant materials for reflection during the intervening hours. Of one thing I had now satisfied myself; namely, that young Hazlehurst and Mr. Brumley had conspired to defeat our previously arranged jaunt. Perhaps conspired is too harsh a word; but, certain it is, that they had needlessly frightened the ladies from going to a place where they would have been as free from infection as amid the shades of Oakland itself. Perhaps you may see the matter through a less jaundiced medium. Be that as it may, I determined to move onward in the career which I had laid out for myself, either with or without their aid.

"Accordingly, on the next morning, we were again blessed with a propitious day, and having risen early, and forewarned Cato of our intentions (which is always sufficient, you know) our equipage was ready, and we were soon at the door.

"Isabel and the other equestrian young ladies made their appearance at the window by the time

we had dismounted, arrayed in long riding skirts, and plumed hats. Not so, however, the lady in black, who leaned against the recess of the farthest window, gazing out upon the passing scenes, as a melancholy damsel will sometimes gaze upon a long continued storm of rain. She wore no long skirt nor plumed hat, but appeared in her usual travelling garb. As we dismounted I saw a momentary suffusion of the neck and face, but in an instant it was gone, and she stood, sad, serene, and beautiful as ever.

"After a hasty breakfast I led the way, conducting Miss St. Clair. As I was about to enter the carriage myself, Isabel sent a servant to smuggle something under the seat of our cabriolet, in the shape of a long box. I readily assisted in the scheme, for I doubted not that it contained cold meats, wine, and crackers,—I was wrong; it contained something of far more importance to our pleasure, but of that you shall hear in due time. We were soon across the ferry and pursuing the road to Aquackenack and Patterson. A gayer party you perhaps never saw; if I except a certain lady, and even she did not affectedly frown upon the gayety of others. On the contrary, it seemed to raise her spirits in her own peculiar way.

"Lamar and Arthur seemed to have left their formality behind them, although the former escorted Isabel. Of course I can only speak of what took place between others of the party in general terms.

Of my own proceedings I suppose so little will not satisfy you.

"Now was the interview granted me which I had so earnestly desired; that is, it was practically granted to me under another name; but will you believe it, Randolph? I was confused, although the case had been merely adjourned. The truth is, I very foolishly attempted at first to support a general conversation, when my mind was entirely engrossed with a more interesting subject. At length my confusion and absence became so apparent through my blundering answers, that she actually laughed outright. By old Noll's nose! I was glad to see it, for it enabled me to say,—'You see, Miss St. Clair, how impossible it is for me to converse upon one subject, while my thoughts are running upon another which has been too long deferred already. Do not consider me abrupt or impertinent if I now beg leave to renew it?'

"'It would be affectation in me to pretend that I too was not anxious to set your mind at rest upon that subject.'

"Randolph, this took my breath completely away from me; it was so firm, sudden, and unexpected. I thought of the words again and again—'set my mind at rest.' There was but one way to interpret it; viz. that she was about to give me the same kind of rest which the dead enjoy. However, '*onward*' was my motto of the day previous, and I continued; 'I hope you speak of *rest*, in the happy sense of the term?'

"'Indeed, sir, I cannot tell how you may interpret it, but my meaning is, that no possible good can grow out of the continuation of the subject alluded to.'

"'And is Miss St. Clair so resolved to reject my suit, even before I have fully pleaded my case?'

"'Indeed, indeed, sir, you must greatly mistake my meaning. I did not understand that you had laid a suit before me; but—'

"'Permit me to interrupt you before you go any further. I do now, madam, offer myself—'

"'Stop! sir, stop! Let me interrupt you in turn. You are about to do you know not what. Suffer me to go on in the course which I had first intended; and that is to say, that you do me far more honour than I deserve, or even expected *again*, from any one, for whom I should entertain so much esteem as I do for Mr. Chevillere. But, sir, it is impossible that I can ever encourage the addresses of any gentleman. It is painful, sir, on my own account, as well as your own and your mother's, for me to say so; but fate has shut the door against me, in that respect, long ago.'

"'Then it is not on my own personal account that you thus peremptorily reject my suit.'

"'Indeed, sir, it is not.'

"'Then I breathe again! Now, Miss St. Clair, listen to me with patience but a few moments. It seems, from what I can understand of your rejection of me, that it is from some imaginary cause resting on your own inability, instead of my un-

worthiness, which is acknowledged. Now, I am not vain, if I know myself; and I would not boast of what I could dare, or do, in such a case; but there is no impropriety, I hope, in saying that it will require the most extraordinary array of untoward circumstances, to make me believe that the fates have fixed the decision so irrevocably as you seem now to think.'

"'But, sir, will you not take my own decision, without entering into the why and the wherefore?'

"'Indeed, madam, I cannot. Forgive my boldness and presumption; but I have never before been a suitor before woman's shrine. I had lived through twenty-three years before I saw you, unscathed. Think, then, whether I am likely to give up a pursuit at the very threshold, in which my whole soul, my present happiness, and my mother's happiness if you will, my future plans, and my very existence are concerned.'

"'Your mother's happiness! Certainly, sir, your mother does not encourage your present course, knowing what she does?'

"'She has never had the opportunity. But you add new vigour to my determination: you say, if I understand you, that my mother is partly acquainted with the circumstances which have conspired to produce your determination.'

"'I do not know that I said exactly so; nor did I intend to say so. It is nevertheless true.'

"'Then am I doubly armed against your resolves. Trust me, dear lady—no trivial circum-

stance shall unite my opinion with yours on this subject. Perhaps it is a vow?'

"'It is not.'

"'What then can it be; is it impertinent in me to ask?'

"'It is not, sir. But it is painful to me—painful in the recollections which it revives—and painful because I must seem strange and unreasonable in denying you a present relation of them.'

"'And do you—will you deny me that relation?'

"'Indeed, indeed, sir, I must for the present.'

"'At some future day, not very far distant, will you indulge me?—'

"'It is hard, sir, very hard to promise; yet to avoid it—'

"'Thank you, thank you, dear lady.' I would have seized her hand, and smothered her little palpitating fingers with kisses, if the company had not escorted us so confoundedly close; but I continued—'Perhaps Miss St. Clair will pardon a still further impertinence—is it too much to ask, if none of these things had ever happened, whether my suit would then have been rejected?'

"'I cannot now answer that question.'

"'Fix, then, the period of my probation; name the happy day when you will give me this promised history.'

"'Oh, sir, it will be any thing but a happy day for me, and I am very sure it will be little more so for you. Why then persist in a course which must result in unhappiness to all parties? Trust

me, there is no affectation in the case, when I say that we can *never, never*, sir, be more to each other than simple friends. As such I am proud and grateful to consider both you and your honoured mother.'

"'You but add firmness to my resolves, when you allude to the friendship of my mother. Say, then, dear lady, would to-morrow be too early a day?'

"'To-morrow! Since you are resolved upon it, I will relate to you the history of my life. Nothing less, it seems, will serve; but I must be at home; the very sight of dear and cherished objects around that place would comfort and reassure me, if my own dear mother was not there also. But to-morrow would not suffice, sir, even if I had the opportunity required, in the house of a friend. This history I have never *fully* disclosed to any person living; I related some passages of my sad story to your mother, not because she thought it necessary, but because I thought it so; when I saw her disposed to lavish upon me so much of her cherished love and sympathy.'

"'I know well,' replied I, 'what persons attract her regard; she has an astonishing sagacity in selecting the gold from the dross on such occasions.'

"It is useless for me to dwell upon every word, Randolph. Suffice it to say, she consented that I should visit her after her return to the quiet shades of Oakland, upon the banks of the Hudson.

"It was truly gratifying to hear almost all the ladies exclaim, when we reached the hill-side which overlooks Patterson,—'Why, Frances, how the ride has improved you!' In truth, her mind had been harassed with the idea of the interview which I had been seeking; but now she was relieved for the present, and the effect was magical.

"An autumn sun shone out in all the splendour of our most brilliant days of that more genial climate in which you now sojourn. The trees were a bronzed green, and the lingering flowers of the season still greeted our delighted senses, as we strolled among the hills of that romantic region. How could she but inhale a portion of the surrounding happiness? Her companions were gay and lively, even to the romping mood; our anticipations were bright, our pulsations impetuous; weather propitious, scene brilliant, and journey prosperous. In this condition of the party we arrived at the rude enclosure on the top of the hill overlooking the town of Patterson, on the side next the falls. We soon entered an extensive and rugged area, interspersed here and there with rude arbours and booths, covered with green boughs of the forest, and lined with seats, as if refreshments were occasionally served out here to parties, from a little shop of some kind, which stands near the entrance to the area. We could now distinctly hear the roar of the cataract, and see the river to the left of us as we proceeded onwards, but were surprised that we nowhere saw the falls.

"Following a beaten path over rugged beds of projecting rocks in the direction of the sound, we came to a narrow, covered bridge, thrown across a dark and deep ravine, after ascending to the middle of which we stood in front of the Passaic Falls. The river before mentioned, about a stone's throw from the bridge, came tumbling down a precipice in great magnificence, sending up splendid wreaths and festoons of vapour, through which the rays of the sun exhibited the colours of the rainbow in surpassing beauty. The river, after being dashed down this precipice some eighty or a hundred feet, into the abyss below, among the remnants of a former convulsion of nature, is, by the concussion, beaten into waves of white foam, and then gently glides down the widening ravine, till it suddenly changes its course around the base of a cliff in the direction of the town, and expands again into its accustomed width, stillness, and beauty.

"Each of our party, as is universally the case, was impressed with the scene before us according to his or her *individuality*. A consummate master of all the workings of the human heart might have found ample materials for study on the present occasion, and though not one of those, I must still give you the observations of a novice.

"Those who were fanciful and light of heart, poured forth quotations from favourite poets. Those with the organ of veneration more fully developed, stood with hands clasped, eyes upturned, attitudes startled, as if their souls shrank

from this too open and majestic display of the power of the great mysterious mover of floods and torrents. While the simple of heart and weak of understanding exclaimed, 'O! dear, how wonderful!' 'Only see! I declare it is beautiful! is it not?' appealing to some one, perhaps, whose spirit, with the mist of the cataract, was soaring into the summitless regions of the heavens.

"But there was one, Randolph, who stood in the solitude of the spirit, though in a crowd; there was little outward exhibition of emotion to a less curious observer than myself. The pupil of the eye was distended to its utmost limits; her features had assumed a chiselled distinctness, her lips were compressed together, and her whole countenance was in the highest degree abstracted and contemplative. Many questions were addressed to her, but she heeded them not; nor did a sound issue from her lips louder than an occasional full inspiration, as her beautiful bust heaved with the internal and deep-seated emotions of the spirit.

"That is a profound abstraction which can entirely withdraw us for a time from any communion with external objects of sense. We see the misty clouds as they heave each other from the gulf beneath. We hear the thunders of the cataract, it is true, but we hear on such occasions for the soul alone, our social and conventional feelings are lost and swallowed up in the profounder emotions of adoration. We hold a more direct communion with the great and mysterious spirit of the deep;

the eye becomes dim and watery with the eager stretching of our glances into an awful futurity. Not that we always direct our vision towards what is farthest and least obstructed, for we often glance upon the scene before us, looking, as it were, through the tumbling torrent into a great abyss below, as if we could see there the great master of the scene. The soul does not scorn its prison-house, because we learn to love even its weakness too well; but it attempts too often to soar into those regions which, to human organizations, are fearful, dark, and shadowy.

"It is delightful to contemplate the reflection of these scenes upon one of those imaginative beings who can people the floods and torrents with the darker creatures of their own imagination. Such a one will walk abroad into the groves and forests, at the hour of midnight, or stand upon the deck as a vessel rolls through the black chasms of the sea, in the darker hours of early morning; or stand upon an eminence while the blackness of the storm rages around, and the lightning quivers above, in its gleaming gambols, and will people these regions with misty forms and unearthly spirits, until earth and all its lesser tempests, and man with all his little cares, are forgotten. Are these wanderings of the spirit a foretaste of what we shall be hereafter? Will it be permitted to our disenthralled spirits, as the stoics fondly hoped, to ride upon the wings of these storms and tempests, revisit the scenes of our earthly struggles, and see others as we

have been, vainly attempting to hold converse with us? If it is delightful to contemplate the reflection of these things upon a kindred spirit of the sterner sex—how much more so to see these images cast upon the pale transparent countenance of a youthful female? Could you disturb the beatified trembler, as the sportsman brings down the graceful little flutterer from his sunny regions? No, Randolph, you could not; you would have done as I did; you would have stood guardian over the fairy while she communed with the spirits of the mist.

"There is something worth observing too in the manner in which we come suddenly down from this mysterious abstraction. We gaze on, entirely unconscious of the time, and of the weakness of our physical organs, until mere exhaustion compels us to identify ourselves once more, and then arouse from the trance like one waking from a deep sleep; we look around on worldly objects first in a sort of lofty contempt, and then perhaps despise our own littleness of spirit.

"It was not so however with the fair dreamer before me; when her eyes became so weak that she could no longer distend the pupil, she first looked around until she caught my steady gaze and blushed; and then covering her face with her hands, she withdrew to a secluded crag. But there was yet another character left for me to study, after she deserted—no less a personage than lofty old Cato. He stood upon one of the

rugged cliffs, whence he could see the whole cataract, with his arms folded upon his breast, and his brows drawn down over his dark, stern countenance, until you could almost have imagined him the gloomy spirit of the scene himself. I know that he has a soul of his own, and of rare excellence too, but it is not metaphysical in its construction. He looked as a sturdy old warrior of the ruder ages may be supposed to have looked on such a scene. But I fear I tire you with these descriptions, on which you know that I love to dwell. I will therefore pass on to one of the rude arbours before mentioned, where all the company were seated around a board spread with napkins, upon which a cold collation formed a very inviting spectacle. When we had all done ample justice to this good cheer, and washed it down with a delicious cup of light French wine, our party became truly sociable. Indulgence in the creature comforts is a wonderful leveller of distinctions and formalities. We were now in the most delightful state of romposity. Lamar was quite in the third heavens, and, I doubt not, forgot entirely that such a man as Arthur lived; much less did he remember that he was eying him all the while. Young Hazlehurst and old Mr. Brumley walked apart and conversed confidentially. Something is hatching between the two; but my motto is 'onward;' I am one of those who do not believe in the influence of fathers on such occasions. I have no doubt that there is a natural desire existing in these two fami-

lies to unite them; perhaps an understanding between those who have no primary right in the business; but of this more hereafter.

"Old Cato now entered by the orders of Isabel, I suppose, with the smuggled long box which I mentioned to you before. A green baize cloth being removed from around it, I saw at once that it was a flageolet case. Receiving the box from his hand, I took out the instrument, and eyed every lady on the rocks and seats around, to find to whom it belonged. The ownership lay between Isabel and Miss St. Clair; for the former smiled and the latter blushed. On my presentation of it, Miss St. Clair took it very reluctantly, and complained loudly of Isabel's fraud; she took the instrument, however, without affectation. Before commencing, she gave us to understand that we were not to expect fashionable music; and then, Randolph, she commenced one of the wildest and most delightful Scotch airs I ever heard. There was something novel in this. I had never before heard the flageolet except in dull, mechanical songs of the fashionable school, and scarcely knew that any life and feeling could be infused into its tones. Imagine us seated on the rocks around this picturesque and romantic spot, listening to music as wild as the scene itself, from the hand of an enthusiast.

"'Now, ladies and gentlemen,' said Isabel, 'I wish to put to the test one of Frances's theories with regard to the effects of music.' She contends that every air conveys specific impressions to the

mind and feelings of the different hearers, varied somewhat, indeed, by the character of the individual.'

"'Indeed, Isabel, this is very unfair,' said the frowning performer; 'you first stealthily introduce my instrument, and then bring some of our thoughtless discussions to the test by means of my own performances, which, you must recollect, I never pretended would have much effect.'

"All insisted upon the trial; and each prepared to give way to the natural feelings excited by the music, as little interrupted by others as possible.

"The air was one of the same Scotch effusions, peculiarly touching in its effects, and most appropriate to the scene. When it ceased, Isabel required each one to write with a pencil the impression made. She found much difficulty in getting some of her female coadjutors to comply. The fact is, that many persons are so unaccustomed to imbodying out their feelings on any given occasion, that they find it no easy matter. All made the attempt, however, after being assured that no names would be required to the papers; and as these were all of the same size and cast into a hat, the writer alone could know each as it was read. Lamar collected the ballots, and then seated himself to read them. I must try to recollect a few for the amusement of your convalescence.

"First ballot. 'This air excites in my mind visions of wild glens and brooks.'

"Second ballot. 'Highland scenery, with kilts and tartans.'

"Third ballot. 'Mountain passes, and wild herds of forest animals.'

"Fourth ballot. 'Associations connected with the surrounding scene.'

"Fifth ballot. 'Romantic adventures, of which the fair musician is the heroine.'

"Although there was undeniable frivolity in this, yet the gravest of us was surprised to see the identical vein which ran through the thoughts of all. The experiment was repeated once and again, and always with like success, when the music was Scotch, Tyrolese, or German, and entirely unknown; the latter we found essential to an identical effect in all: for if any one had before heard the air, it invariably called up associations of the time and place and persons connected with its first performance.

"Almost a unanimous vote declared victory in favour of the performer; her more gay and dashing friend admitting herself vanquished with becoming grace.

"During our ride to the city, the transition from the foregoing subject to national music was natural and easy, and as my companion's ideas were somewhat new to me, I must endeavour to recollect a little of our conversation.

"'I am truly rejoiced,' said I, 'that you are not an admirer, nor a performer of fashionable music.'

"'It is not the result of principle with me, but

the dictates of what I always thought my own peculiar taste.'

"'Both my taste and judgment are in perfect unison with yours, and I must acknowledge myself indebted to you for some new ideas on the subject. I have always been a reviler of what I considered an affectation of fondness for Italian and French music. But is it not strange that we have had no American composer of any celebrity, nor any national music?'

"'It is owing, I believe,' said she, 'to the very cause we have been speaking of. Italian music is only suited to those double-refined and palled tastes, which have passed through ages of effeminate luxury to complete them. Affectation and fashion have engrafted this style of music into our systems of education, without once inquiring whether it is suited to the taste and genius of the people, and the features of the country. What is the result? It is, that we have no composers, no enthusiasts, and no native performers,—except such as are mechanical and artificial.'

"'You think, then, that the features of a country have some connexion with a national taste for music.'

"'I do; and that if our natural and unsophisticated tastes were consulted, we should have music in keeping with our wild and majestic scenery. In proof that this is true, and not founded entirely on my own taste, look at the music of Switzerland, Scotland, and Germany, in comparison with the

Italian and French. Each of these nations has music suited to the traits of the country and the corresponding genius of the people. We should have such here, if those who have by nature a taste and genius for the art were not uniformly disgusted at the very threshold, by a style with which they have no sympathy. Others, with less genius and no taste, escape this disgust, and are pushed forward, and called great performers, when in fact nothing but their very deficiency in natural qualifications enables them to succeed at all.'

"'It is perhaps our refinement, instead of our rudeness, which prevents the development of these capabilities.'

"'True; but the word refinement must, I think, be qualified. Our refinement in the art is of foreign growth, and is pretty much the same kind of culture which a *gourmand* gives to his appetite. He refines upon refinement, in one dish after another, until he no longer possesses any relish for those articles of food which nature has evidently provided for us. So in Italian music; its votaries have become more exquisite, until it has lost the power to charm the natural ear.'

"'On your hypothesis, Miss St. Clair, it would be much the same thing to feed a lion upon *blanc mange*, as to offer this double refined music to an American ear which had not been tampered with.'

"'Exactly so, sir! Though his majesty of the forest is rather too rough a trope for our countrymen.'

"'I stand corrected, madam.'

"Randolph, there is something charming in the enthusiasm of woman; far more so than in that of our sex! With the latter is too often mingled the inspiration of wine, the rant of passion, or the artificial and selfish exaltation of ambition, vanity, and conceit of genius. Female enthusiasm is pure, touching, and sincere; divested of self, generous and benevolent to others. Besides, it seems so natural to the sex to be raised 'above the stir and smoke of this dim spot which men call earth,' that they appear to soar in their proper element. Their enthusiasm is carried out even into their every-day concerns too; they are enthusiastic in their taste, in their friendships, in their hatreds, in their religion, and in their love. Ah! Randolph, there is the key-stone to the arch. Nature has endowed them with these generous and high-toned feelings, from the wisest and most benevolent designs towards man; upon this natural peculiarity of the other sex rests more of man's happiness than we generally suppose. The old look back to its early influence with a sad but pleasing excitement, such as we feel in pleasant dreams. The present generation act, and fret, and fight, and trade, and grow rich, all for its genial blessing; while the young live in the constant hopes of its early fruition. 'Woman loves but once and loves for ever,' is the language of one of the most touching and pathetic songs in our language. Most men deny the truth of this text, because they are interested in doing so;

thinking generally, that if this is true, their wives are false, because they were not the first choice, nor could they have been in the nature of things.

"All women are not false to their husbands, who cherish these dear and flowery dreams of early youth, in some remote and secret corner of the heart. So far from it, that I doubt not many of them have a more fond and enduring attachment to their lords from throwing habitually the colours of these early tints over their more mature engagements. These romances season all the after life, and invest us, as we glide down the vale, with a richer mantle than that of prophecy.

"All men and women have these little secrets locked up within their own hearts, as dear and nourished treasures which grow richer as they grow older, and are really inestimable when the time comes in which the pleasures of the present consist in a retrospect of the past.

"Yours truly,

"V. CHEVILLERE."

CHAPTER IV.

V. Chevillere to B. Randolph.

"New-York, 18—.

"Dear Friend,

"Hitherto we have been gliding down the smooth current of college life with a full breeze of youthful hopes and pleasures; we seem to have skimmed over the sunny surface of things, entirely unconscious of the waters beneath. But now we are embarked upon the life of passion. No longer have we the regulated pulsations, the quiet slumbers, the delightful reveries, the monotonous routine, and the cool and invigorating shades of college groves. We now begin to know man in his developments—we saw him before, but we knew him not. It is not given to us to stand aloof and view all this war of the contending elements of man's composition, without partaking in the adversities of the storm. And now that we are fairly embarked, and have occasionally, as is the case with me now, time to look within and around, to see how we are prepared for the voyage, what a confounding sight presents itself?

"Let us see of what our stores consist! We

have reason, it is true, but so feeble and doubtful in its results, that we seem still to be placed like our primitive parents, with the tree of life before us—the devil leading us one way, down-hill, and reason the other way, upward. Even when we have that rare combination of all the faculties of the mind which constitutes true greatness, are we any better off? and especially when we have brilliant developments of peculiar faculties called genius, are we any better prepared for the trials and troubles of this world? How are we in the dark, even when possessed of some or all of these excellences? Conscience may be imperfectly tutored, reason misled, or genius itself be confounded with the ravings of the maniac, or so doubtful in its pilotage as to be worse than common sense or even instinct itself. I can recollect when you and I turned up our indignant noses, when clergymen and moralists descanted upon the trite subject of the depravity of the human heart; we had not then embarked upon this ocean which constitutes human life. We now see differently; at least *I* do. There is now no bottom to this profound. We can already see into the mystery of the murderer's feelings; we can trace the gradual steps, at first, and then the leap, as these wretches are both led and driven to perdition. But above all, can we now see those fierce contests of human life which are brewed from the passions; reason being deluded, and genius run wild; where one being deceives another, and yet more deceives

himself; where one being wrongs another, and yet most of all wrongs himself; while multitudes are engaged in fierce struggles, they know not why. They are driven by impulses, and surrounded by circumstances, over which they imagine they have all, yet have in reality little, control. These do not plunge down to murder, but they are engaged in a constant warfare, in which the same passions are developed with which the murderer sets out; they wrestle upon the brink of the precipice, and are preserved from the fall by two things—selfishness and fear.

"These two passions hold the world in its constant equipoise. The fear of which I speak is not the mere dread of the executioner; there is a darker apprehension lurking in every human heart. He who is possessed of it fears, he knows not what, nor how long he has felt it, nor how much power it can exercise over him. Indeed he has never analyzed its properties; for this very power of analyzing his *weakness* is often the *strength* of the outlaw, the murderer, and the assassin.

"This fear is early developed, and seems at its very first exhibition to give us some clew to its future mysterious influence over us. One urchin will be frightened at stories of ghosts and graveyards; another at haunted mansions; a third at warning dreams; while another, and this is by far the most common case, at all undefined darkness.

"This fear is matured according to the peculiarity of the individual, and the circumstances in

which he is placed; but wo be to that man, who, with an imperfectly matured understanding, learns how to rid himself of this fear, and thus cuts himself loose from the safe anchorage which nature has given him, without acquiring the substitute of a corresponding pilotage of intelligence and principle. A spark of genius, ill-directed, may make a murderer; as a spark of genius, well-directed, may make a saint.

"But there are some fearful exceptions to this general lot of humanity; some spirits which are so dark themselves, at their very entrance upon the scene, that no darkness terrifies them. The obscurity of real things to their gloomy minds laughs to scorn the shadowy creatures of our superstitious imaginations. These are the characters which overleap all the usual stepping-stones of mortality in their career, either upwards or downwards, as destiny and circumstances may develop them, and as nature may have qualified them with collateral powers and feelings.

"The other great passion of supreme selfishness forms one of the most curious subjects of mental study. Bear with me a while, and I will tell you what frightful adventure has given rise to this train of reflections.

"Selfishness is the master-key to unlock every heart; it is the great passion upon which all others have their foundation. It will be found variously disguised and modified, and sometimes scarcely to be recognised; and what is strangest of all is, that

ninety-nine hundredths of the subjects of it are entirely unconscious of its secret operations. But look (where it is not so evident at first sight) at the most disinterested acts of the self-deceived, —of the poet, the scholar, the genius, the philosopher, the philanthropist. Is it not the mainspring of all?* Look around you at your fellow-probationers, and see how many of the purest deeds of apparent piety, and benevolence, and charity, may be traced through its deep disguise to this source. If you have doubts remaining, as to this great ruling motive of mankind, look within, and there you will find it, Randolph. I do not hesitate to tell even you this much, because those who have this main motive adorned with most virtues can see it most clearly within themselves. There is no man so free from selfishness in his own opinion, as he who is ruled by no other motive or principle. The very power of self-examination seems to be entirely swallowed up by this mother of passions. Such persons see themselves through a medium so tinctured with self, that self always looks pure and disinterested. The highwayman only robs the rich to feed the poor, according to his philosophy; the murderer only rids the world of a monster and a tyrant in the most disinterested and generous manner imaginable; the thief only takes that to

* The author thinks, with a late writer in the North American, that the attacks of this college philosophy, like the measles, come but once, seldom last long, are easily cured, and rarely fatal.

which all men were born with equal claims; the politician and the demagogue live for the benefit and advancement of others' interests alone; while the trading community are nothing more than agents, to gather from the four quarters of the globe necessaries and luxuries, to supply the wants, real and imaginary, of their fellow-men, scarcely ministering to their own cravings of nature.

"Oh! how generous and benevolent is man to his fellow-man! How little does self appear in all the bustle and turmoil of this busy city; that is, if you only look at the surface of their acts, and listen to the language of the actors.

"But I do not complain of these things; they are best as they are. I state them as facts, which are not always clearly seen in the dear intimacies of college life. I would not destroy the selfishness of man if I could, any more than I would destroy the main-spring of a watch, which I highly prized; upon it are founded the courage, the industry, the enterprise, the knowledge, and the prudence of our species; and out of these grow our governments and our laws.

"I cannot disguise from you, Randolph, that the natural tendency to gloom and despondency which you have so often observed, grows upon me much of late; but attend to what I am about to relate, and you may account, perhaps, for that, as well as the previous train of ideas in this epistle.

"On the evening of the day after our visit to

the falls, the same company, with many additions, had assembled at the house of Mr. ——, father to one of the young ladies of our party. The stiffness and formality which generally prevail for the first hour on such occasions, were just beginning to give way to a better state of things. Lamar and Arthur were formidably arrayed against each other, on either side of Isabel, while Miss St. Clair and I were ensconced, as aforetime, in one of those little convenient recesses in which these fashionable houses abound. I had never seen her so cheerful, or known her to enter into conversation with more spirit and apparent enjoyment, than upon this occasion. She conversed with great animation and eagerness, which is evidently her natural manner, until she would catch my eyes unconsciously riveted upon her countenance; she would then cast down her own, with the most becoming modesty, while her usual sadness would again steal over her countenance, as if she had just recollected and identified herself and her treasured sadness. But I would again succeed in banishing the cloud by leading her to converse and become excited on some subject which deeply interested her, and again she would recollect herself. These repeated excitements eventually led her to look with more complacency upon the power of pleasing and of conversation which still remained to her, for it was evident to me, by the time the evening was half spent, that she could be said to have enjoyed the party.

"Every thing seemed thus to be going on smoothly, until we had all, as is frequently the case on such occasions, become for a time quite boisterous; here one little coterie laughed outright; there another had got into such a lively dispute, that the neighbours were compelled to pitch their voices to the same key in order to be heard at all; and so on round the saloons, until the din resembled a little bedlam; every person seemed to be enjoying himself more after our southern fashion than I have seen since I came hither; there was a reckless resignation to the enjoyment of the moment, which you do not often see in these large cities.

"All at once there was a dead pause. Every tongue was hushed, as if a funeral knell had been sounded from the richly wrought ceiling. You could almost have heard the ladies' hearts beating. My companion and I were deeply absorbed at the time in a conversation, which it is not necessary *now* to relate; but when silence thus suddenly took place, all were anxious to see the cause, all the necks in the room were elongated, and ours last but still among the rest. And there I beheld, Randolph, a sight which I shall vividly remember to the latest period of my existence, both on account of its character, and its effects upon one around whom are entwined the very fibres of my heart.

"In the centre of the room, there stood the emaciated figure of a man, wrapped in a long red dressing-gown,—his throat bound up with surgical dress-

ings,—his head shaved and dressed with a plaster, his gray hair hanging lank from its edges over his temples and shoulders,—his eyes sunk deep in their sockets, and glaring round the room,—his cheek-bones projecting,—his eyebrows gray and bushy,—his beard and mustachios unshorn,—his lips thin and retracted, showing a perfect set of large white teeth, in the most ghastly manner, like a recently-dissected skeleton,—his nose long, white, and thin, and collapsed like that of a corpse. Just above the dressings of his throat was the *pomum Adami*, working up and down among the long stringy tendons, like a tackle or pulley; while an unnatural fire shot from his eyes, and all his movements were quick, convulsive, and maniacal.

"As soon as my companion raised her head above the little crowd which obstructed her view, the eye of this figure darted upon her with vulture quickness and malignity, and stretching out his long bony hand, and pointing his shaking finger directly at her, 'There,' said he, 'is the murderess! Thought you I was dead? Dead men tell no secrets! but I have risen from the grave! Behold me! am I not a pretty corpse?' and then he burst out into one of those singularly frightful and wretched peals of laughter, which you may sometimes hear from the maniac's cell.

"Ere his speech was half-concluded, as I subsequently found, the lady had fallen lifeless at my feet. My attention was so irresistibly attracted by the strange visiter, that I was not aware of this

effect until a dozen at once sprang to her relief. By the time she was carried out of the saloon, the friends of the wretched man, or his attendants, had been able to trace him; and rushing in, forcibly dragged him off, and placed him in a carriage at the door. The room was now one scene of indescribable confusion: the predominant feeling was sympathy for the afflicted young lady. There was a great deal of low whispering, of which I was enabled to catch only detached sentences, such as, 'That is his father.'—'I thought he was dead.'—'It is shameful in his friends to suffer him to annoy her in this way, as if she had not suffered enough by them already.'

"I ventured not to ask what all this meant, Randolph; yet the most maddening curiosity seized me. I left the room without Lamar; indeed the whole party broke up in confusion, and I suppose our agreeable little society will now be dissolved; for I hear that the lady has already gone up the river to her own home.

"After I left them so abruptly, I wandered round this large city with as little purpose or motive as the maniac himself could have done. My brain seemed to be on fire, and every pulsation to be throbbing as if it would burst; huge drops of perspiration would start upon my forehead and upper lip, as I ran, rather than walked, from one street to another, Heaven only knows where; and I suppose I should have been wandering till this time, if a hackney-coachman had not happened to come

along, which I discerned by the number on his lanterns, and I immediately employed him to set me down at the City Hotel.

"When I arrived at our apartments, I found Lamar and Arthur talking over the circumstances as busily, and in as friendly a manner, as if they had never been jealous of each other. What provoked me, however, was, that the moment I entered the room they became mute as statues, and exchanged knowing glances, as if I had been an idiot, or could not see them. I hate this sort of commiseration: I suppose they saw it; for they left the room together. I walked the floor for half the night; tumbled and tossed in the bed for the remainder, and arose next morning little refreshed, and none the wiser to this moment, as to the meaning of this strange business.

"CHEVILLERE."

CHAPTER V.

B. Randolph to V. Chevillere.

"Belville, High Hills of the Santee, S. Carolina, 18—.

"When I last wrote to you, I had but just escaped from the jaws of the hideous monster, cooked up by a spell of fever, in order, as it turned out afterward, to be served up to the same monster in a more novel and savoury form; at least, that seems to have been the benevolent intention of his grim majesty towards your humble servant, if my good genius, or destiny, or a good servant, had not interposed in my behalf. With the exception of the time when I was ill, I have occupied a small building which stands about a hundred yards from the main edifice at Belville. It is known here as '*the library;*' and seems, from all I can learn, to have been your favourite retreat. There, you know, I found all the little snug luxuries of a southern bachelor, not excepting a supply of cigars for a twelvemonth's siege; all the foreign and domestic reviews and magazines, files of country and city papers, old and new novels, writing materials, half-finished drawings, music-books and musical instruments, all in the most delightful order in the midst of confusion.

"There I used regularly to retire after eleven P. M., to saw on the violin, snap some of the strings, throw it aside, take up the flute, dive into the midst of an overture—quiver, and quiver, and quiver at some tough passage, like a Frenchman talking English when he does not understand the language; bowing, scraping, shrugging, and making all the appropriate gestures, but coming no nearer the words he wishes to get out; so it was with me on your confounded twenty-one keyed flute; I bobbed my head, and turned up my eyes, stamped with my feet, and shook with my fingers, but it would not come out music. Away I tossed it, of course.

"Next came one of your half-finished sketches. I recognised it immediately as one of our old college-haunts, and took up the crayon to finish from memory what you had left undone; but I soon found that I put down mountains instead of molehills; so that a very few of my touches were required to obliterate the perspective, lights and shades, and every thing else save a little touch of darkness visible. Away it went after the flute and violin. Next came a cigar out of a drawer, and the last number of the Southern Review. '*These*, at least, I can play on,' said I to myself; 'these require none of the touches of artists or accomplished gentlemen; here I have all the pleasures of life, dressed to the taste of all comers—grilled, stewed, roasted, or fricasseed. Here is an epitome of the age of intellect and the march of mind; music ready played to your hand, perhaps, and if

not, the finest substitute in the world for it in the jerks and quivers of the writer, as he draws his bow-hand over the dots and demi-semi-quavers of some luckless wight of an author.'

"Such were my occupations in this *sanctum sanctorum* of yours, during most of the latter part of the evenings, and such was my employment on a certain night when, having retired from the parlour uncommonly well pleased with myself (merely, I believe, because I was pleased with Virginia's treatment of me), and having gone through this routine, and read myself into drowsiness, I undressed and went to bed, and (as has been the case ever since I recovered my legs) was no sooner down than I was fast asleep; not so fast, however, but that I dreamed horrible things. No marvel that I should; for in the midst of one of these peregrinations, I was suddenly awakened by a cold, damp, clammy hand, fastened so tight upon my throat that I was almost strangled at the first grasp. I had scarcely become conscious of my position, before I heard a heavy blow, as from a billet of wood, upon some one's head. Instantly the grasp was loosened from my throat, and I heard a heavy fall upon the floor. I sprang up in the bed, and screamed to my defender, whoever he might be, to get a light. He ran out to obey my orders, but was scarcely over the threshold of the lower door before the man on the floor sprang up, leaped out of the window about twenty feet, I suppose, and was shrouded in impenetrable darkness. His

movements were so sudden that his escape took me completely by surprise.

"But I was still more surprised when, as I stood by the open window drawing on my clothes, I saw the whole lawn suddenly illuminated as if a magnificent meteor had darted across the horizon. The light increased and continued, however, and I soon heard my protector raise the alarming cry of *fire!*—wood crackling, and dozens of voices joining in chorus. The smoke began by this time to make its way into the room where I stood, from the library below. I rushed to the staircase, but found there was no egress except through the same opening which my strange assailant had sought. Something between a jump and a fall brought me to the ground, when I discovered that the whole of one side of the library was in flames. It was useless to throw on water by the single bucket-full, and seeing the lower door free, and one side of the room and all the books and papers on that side safe as yet, I rushed in and ordered those of the negroes to follow me who had collected around, and were gaping in stupid wonder at the scene.

"We were enabled to save many bundles of papers and most of the valuable books, before the flames encroached so much on our side as to compel us to seek the door. This they were a long time in reaching, because the incendiary had placed the fire among the papers under the staircase in the little closet, for the purpose, I suppose, of cutting off my retreat. By this time, your mother and

cousin had hastily dressed and were no unfeeling spectators of the latter part of our labours. It did not strike them with so much dread and horror as it would have done, because they were ignorant, as yet, how it originated, and I determined to let them remain so until morning, lest it should alarm them so much as to prevent their further repose. In the mean time I determined to see every precautionary measure taken to guard the main building from a like calamity. Accordingly, after I had persuaded the ladies to retire, I summoned Tombo and my brave defender (who proved to be the young fellow whose cause I had advocated against the driver), to a council of war in the parlour.

"I had every confidence in my coadjutors; I therefore arranged that Tombo should stand and walk sentinel round the house for two hours, that Philip should then take his turn of two hours more, and at the end of that time, they were to awaken me. I arranged it thus because I thought it likely that if any attempt should be made on the mansion, it would be just before daylight, when I should be on guard myself. I supposed a renewal of the attempt more likely, because I thought that I discovered in some of the crowd assembed at the fire a disposition to stand aloof and secretly rejoice, and from what I have since learned, there were two complete parties on the occasion. It seems that this driver (like all drivers, I suppose) was in the habit of showing partiality in his administrations of summary justice. This had naturally

made him a strong man with his own peculiar favourites.

"The day after the disturbance at the driver's house, spoken of in a former letter, when all things had assumed their wonted quiet, the driver made his appearance. According to promise, I summoned the white overseer before your mother, and requested an examination into the conduct of the driver, in cruelly and unjustly whipping Philip. It was readily granted, and both your mother and the overseer requested me to accompany the latter to see the matter impartially settled. I did so, and the investigation resulted in the deposition of the driver from his high authority, and a repayment on his own back of part of the stripes which he had so unmercifully inflicted upon Philip. These were almost forgotten until the night before the last, when the fire and my attempted strangulation were discovered, and the latter was so fortunately thwarted by the shrewdness and vigilance of Philip.

"It seems he had noticed the ex-driver prowling about the library in the early part of the evening, and had determined, in consequence of so unusual a circumstance, to keep an eye to his motions. This he did effectually, so far as my personal safety was concerned; but the scoundrel had thrown the fire into the closet, between the time of his own entrance and Philip's following him; which he was afraid to do too quickly, lest he might discover him before he had ascertained his designs on the library

and its inmate. No farther attempt was made upon the house during the night, nor did his ex-drivership make, then or since, his appearance.

"Next morning I cautiously made known all these facts to your mother. She was much more agitated than during the attack upon the said driver; but she soon rallied her accustomed energies, and laid down the course to be pursued with a promptness and decision which were really admirable in one so gently tutored in her younger days. She determined that the culprit should be sold as soon as he could be caught, together with any others who could be detected as having aided, abetted, or approved of his designs. This punishment of selling seemed to me mild for one so guilty; but when your mother explained to me her views, I was satisfied that it was the best disposition of the case, for all parties, which could possibly be made.

"'You see, Mr. Randolph,' said she, 'that this ignorant creature was elevated by the overseer to an authority which tended to excite rather than subdue his bad passions, and one which I doubt whether any ignorant negro can exercise without injury to himself and his fellows. It clothes the slave with the authority and some of the privileges of the master; two conditions which are entirely incompatible with each other. If, then, he has been criminal, when it was difficult, indeed almost impossible for him to be otherwise, it becomes us to protect ourselves, it is true, but to be as lenient as

this duty to ourselves will admit. I am determined, henceforward, to have no more black drivers on the plantation.'

"It seems, too, that this selling is a terrible punishment to negroes who have been accustomed to the mild and indulgent treatment which yours enjoy. But now that all this burning, and attempted murder, and consequent discipline, and the excitement of the moment are over, and we have time for cool reflection, what ideas naturally present themselves? A gloomy foreboding for the future!

"You know that I have not, when in health, habitually looked at the dark side of things; but I must confess to you that the recent circumstances have conjured up exceedingly unpleasant anticipations. What can we do to prevent the realization of these apprehensions? We cannot set slaves free among us. Such a course would dissolve the social compact. It would set at defiance all laws for the protection of life, liberty, and property, either among them or the whites. It would present the strange anomaly of a majority under the control of the minority, and a majority possessing personal without political freedom; which state of things could not last, because anarchy and confusion would usurp the place of law and government. To emancipate them where they are, would be, then, to surrender life, liberty, and property,—and for what? to render justice to these poor creatures? Would it be rendering justice to them or ourselves?

Would it be any reparation of an hereditary wrong, to plunge the subjects of that wrong, with ourselves, into irretrievable ruin, to attain nominal justice? Who is it that expects this of us? Certainly not the intelligent part of the community among whom you sojourn at present! Who are they, then, who demand it? A set of enthusiasts. Send some of them here to preach their own doctrines among the negroes, and, my word for it, they will set a ball in motion which they cannot stop again! They would be overwhelmed in a storm of their own creating. It is cowardly in the extreme for them to stand at a *safe distance*, throwing lighted matches into our magazines. If they wish to fight freedom's battles, let them repair to the scene of the conflict, and expend some of their surplus chivalry at the post of danger. They would need no worse enemies than the blacks themselves. They would soon see a tyranny ten times worse than the slavery of the South, in the lawless outrages and uncontrollable fury of the savage mob.

"But let us turn from this disagreeable subject to my own more immediate concerns. My rival, the Charleston refugee, has actually, and in form, become a suitor to Virginia; and she is now engaged in playing off on him something of the same caprice which she formerly exercised upon me. When I say that he has become a suitor in form, I mean that he has requested your mother's leave to address her; she replied, 'that she intended

henceforward to refer such applications to Virginia herself; that she had full confidence in her judgment and discretion.' Virginia intends to reject him upon the first opportunity. My vanity says so; and then—and then—I intend to give her a chance to add another to her list of killed and wounded. You see the devil has not been cast out of me so completely as I thought; he was only subdued a little.

"I shall not leave this place, whether rejected or not, until I see all things tranquillized at the quarter, so you may rest at ease on that score. Write freely, fully, and often; I feel quite interested in your demure lady of the black mantle; you ought to have me there, to unravel the mystery; I have been panting all along for some such opportunity.

"Virginia's respectful treatment of me continues. I am observing her closely; the result of which, perhaps, with some other results, I may give you in my next. She is a beautiful subject of study, either for the artist or the moralist, but for the latter more especially, being just at that interesting age when the female mind begins to mature in the south; she is just arriving at some results, and preparing to work her previous observations into connected links. God send she may not come to some conclusions very unfavourable to your humble servant,

"B. RANDOLPH.'

CHAPTER VI.

V. Chevillere to B. Randolph.

"New-York, 18—.

"Dear Friend,

"She is gone, Randolph! and without my seeing her, or receiving an explanation from any source whatever. I did not expect one from them at this time, but there are others of my acquaintances who have no excuse whatever for the manner in which they treat me. The moment I approach any of them where she is the subject of discourse, the conversation is hushed, as if they were talking of an idiot who suddenly makes his appearance. I will not bear it, by heavens! I will be off without so much as giving Lamar notice, and seek an explanation where I have now a right to seek it, namely, at Oakland. My brain is on fire. My passion, if it can be dignified with no higher name, becomes the more maddening with every new obstacle that is thrown in its way. But my object in taking up the pen was not to dwell upon the unutterable things which I have suffered in the last few days, but to relate to you another unfortunate

turn, which things relating to our northern expedition have taken.

"Lamar and Arthur have become bitter enemies, and Arthur has actually challenged Lamar to meet him in deadly combat the day after to-morrow. What is to be done? My own head is confused, my heart sad, and my anticipations gloomy. I have reasoned and raged with both, and have left them much more disposed to fight with me than to adjust their own quarrel. This enmity had its ostensible origin, like most others of its kind, in a mere trifle. Lamar and Arthur met at the Hazlehurst's, when the former began to entertain the fair Isabel with some of the oddities of Damon, repeating his speeches and imitating his gestures. Arthur construed this into an intentional affront, purposely introduced in his presence for effect, and immediately left the room. Lamar had not long returned to the hotel before Arthur entered in a towering passion, and demanded to know what he meant by exhibiting his damned Kentuckian, just at that time and place, and in his presence, and by heavens, glancing at me all the while, said he. You know how this was likely to end. Lamar is not the man to be either softened or bullied into measures by such a speech. Coolly talking through his teeth, in his peculiarly provoking style, he told Arthur that all dicussion was at an end, and that he was willing and ready to hear any communication from him with which he might choose to honour him. To make the matter more difficult to adjust, young

Hazlehurst became the bearer of a challenge from Arthur, which Lamar referred to me of course. I say it made the matter worse, because, in the first place, he is the brother of the lady, and in the second, he and I are open and undisguised rivals, so that we might get up a double affair with very little trouble; but against this, I took especial care to guard at the onset.

"I waited upon Arthur in person, contrary to all rules in such cases; he insisted upon sending for Hazlehurst. I locked the door and put the key in my pocket, and then undertook to argue the case with him; I represented to him that we were three strangers here, almost in a foreign country, and that it would have no good appearance to slay one of the three for a trifle. He was silent. I begged him to relate all the circumstances; he referred me to Hazlehurst, so that I was compelled to turn my attention next to Lamar. I found him in his room, writing. He laid down his pen, and looked up in a very unpromising manner; he was as perverse and coolly obstinate as his antagonist, and wound up the discussion by handing me the key to his pistol case, and requesting me to look to their condition.

"Now you have a glance at the whole business. What could I do but arrange weapons, distance, place, et cetera, with Hazlehurst? And thus the matter rests until day after to-morrow; when I will make one more effort to reconcile these maddened young men and old school fellows.

"Now for my own affairs again. You no doubt recollect, Randolph, those days of incipient bachelorism, as you and Lamar considered them, when I was living secluded from female society; I was not then an unobservant spectator, as you supposed; I studied the female character much and deeply; it is true, that I had given myself up to a future life of single blessedness; not from selfishness, or suspicion, or parsimony, or fear, but from a supposed knowledge of my own individuality, I never expected to find a lady endowed with all the rich and varied characteristics which my imagination had taught me to look for, at the same time that she should possess youth, beauty, and accomplishments. I thought such a one as I might worship, could only be formed by the two (almost) impossibilities of youth and experience.

"Such a one I have found, Randolph; one whose whole life in detail could furnish me with subjects for pleasing study and admiration; one whose interest would never flag; whose mind is constantly increasing in its rich and simple stores; whose deep knowledge of the world has neither tinctured her with incurable melancholy, cynicism, nor pride; who is as simple and unaffected as a child of nature, whose beauty is of such vision-like influence, that you breathe in an exhilarating atmosphere as long as you are within its spell. Her presence illumines a room, not for me only—every one smiles when she smiles, and listens when she speaks. She carries with her an indescribable

charm; the young and the old alike seek her society. To the old and the sanctimonious she is agreeable without the affectation of piety or prudery; to the young she is charming without wit, gayety, or vanity. It is not sympathy alone, for we can deeply sympathize with those that suffer, without receiving as much as we give, and without in any measure enjoying their society.

"There are a few of these rare and gifted individuals scattered over the world, like brilliant stars in a dark night; but they are often overclouded with storms and vicissitudes. I do not assert that these are actually necessary to their full development; but certain I am that they are a constant attendant upon their sometimes brilliant career. The captivating charm in these persons is not eccentricity, either real or affected; nor in displays of learning or superior wisdom; nor in wit and novelty; nor in beauty and genius. It seems to me to consist in bland, ingenuous benevolence, intuitive perception of propriety, and the engaging sadness of deep and painful experience, untinctured with the evils which a knowledge of human depravity too often engenders. I know that every ardent lover imagines his mistress to be just such a character; but before I would class them as such, the impression must be universal; there must be no room for argument; these good qualities must charm all hearts into acquiescence—not reason them into conviction, or dazzle them into the acknowledgment by brilliant sallies of genius. Such

a gentle and admirable being, I say, I had found: nay, more, I had worshipped, in the permitted human worship of the heart. But now, Randolph, I am neither contented nor happy. I have a longing and eager desire to hear what this experience has been that has developed those very qualities which I most admire. It would be strange and anomalous, would it not, if I were to quarrel with the means by which this great good, in my eyes, has been brought about? But so it is; we often are willing to pluck the delicious fruit, and quarrel with the thorns upon which it grew. This is quite natural. All men love to pluck the roses without the thorns; to gather up the good things of this life without the accompanying and antithetical evils in which they are uniformly found imbedded. The soul of man seems to have been constructed for another sphere of existence. It seems to scorn the schooling of contrasts by which all things are effected here; and not to desire the knowledge of good and evil in the only way in which nature has made that knowledge admissible. We would reap the knowledge, it is true; but we would reject the pains and experience of which it is born.

"I am just now in that predicament. I desire to possess a peerless and princely jewel; yet I dread to dive down into those regions in which only it is to be found; but I have embarked upon the current, and I must now sink or swim.

"But apart from personal considerations, is it man's singular destiny, that all sensations should

be born of contrasts? That all pleasures should be born of pains, and that our ideas should be but the combined representatives of these? It is a curious matter of study, to ascertain of how much pain our pleasures are composed, and how essential are the former to the very existence of the latter. These rich capacities produced by the various combinations of contrasts, are peculiar to the human animal, so far as I have observed; and may account in some measure for the fact, that man is capable of suffering more exquisite and a longer duration of pain, than any of his fellow animals. How much of this acute sensibility is owing to the combination of the soul with our organizations, is another curious subject of study, which I merely hint at for your especial benefit; investigate these subjects, Randoph, and enlighten the world upon them.

"You see I begin with love and murder and end with metaphysics, but you must not quarrel with the desultory manner in which I write, if you wish really to follow the current of our thoughts and feelings, for is it not a fact that men, at our age at least, think and act in this desultory train? Take one of your conversations with a friend, for instance, and think over the course which it pursued, and you will be surprised at the first glance to perceive how little connexion there is apparently between the subjects of it; yet if you have been the leader in that conversation, take a second view

and see the little secret vein or connexion in your own mind; you will find the most opposite subjects connected together, by a chain which you will seldom find on paper, either in fact or described. How many ludicrous ideas will sometimes force themselves upon us on the most solemn occasions! How natural it is to see an urchin labouring to suppress a laugh at a funeral or at church! And how often have you yourself been just ready to burst into merriment in the middle of the most pathetic scenes of tragic representation, not owing to the defects of the actor, but to that secret current of the thoughts over which one has no control. I recollect once going to hear a funeral sermon, deeply impressed with the solemnity of the occasion, and of course profoundly engaged in the subject of the eloquent speaker: but all at once, like a flash of electricity, the idea rushed through my mind, of Samson racing down three hundred foxes. I thought of the dead, and his virtues; of our loss, the sad occasion for which we had assembled; but all would not do; I could see Samson running after Reynard too distinctly; so that I was forced to feign sudden illness, and leave the church for fear of disgracing myself. Now there was no impious feeling in all this. I had never in my life thought of that subject before; I surmised some figurative meaning in the text, but the ludicrous was too palpable for me.

"These secret currents of the thoughts are in-

explicable, at least at our time of day; perhaps age and long drilling may put the other powers more completely under the command of the will; until then you must allow me to write as I think.

"Yours truly,

"V. CHEVILLERE."

CHAPTER VII.

B. Randolph to V. Chevillere.

"High Hills of the Santee, 18—.

"The change in Virginia's deportment has been to me a curious subject of study and reflection. I dare not say that it has been entirely disinterested study, but perhaps it was none the less close and minute on that account. We are apt to investigate those engines which operate upon ourselves very philosophically. But before I go any farther, permit me to correct an error into which I fear I have led you, because I had honestly fallen into it myself. I stated to you that my sickness had cast out devils for me, and that I was altogether a changed and reformed man. It is no such thing; I feel the devil of mischief and fun in me even now. It was nothing more than a natural depression of animal spirits, consequent upon the low state of my stomach and pulsations. The doctor was my priest on the occasion. He subdued the old Adam in me for a time, by the assistance of his lancet and the whole vegetable and mineral kingdom, worked up into shot and bullets vulgarly called pills, by the aid of which these same doctors, I believe, often do a deal of execution; at all

events this disciple fleeced me of a goodly quantity of the flesh upon my ribs; none of his shot happened to be mortal; but, nevertheless, I would advise you to keep out of the reach of their magazines. The muzzle of a pill-box is as terrible to me now, as the mysterious dark hole in the end of a forty-two-pounder; and a blister-plaster as awful as an army with banners. As for cupping-glasses and scarificators, they are neither more nor less than instruments of torture, borrowed from the Spanish inquisition. But above all, deliver me from the point of a seton-needle! Did you ever see a cruel boy string fish on a stick before they were dead? He runs the stick through the gills, tearing and torturing as it goes; so do these disciples of Esculapius; they seize a piece of your skin, no matter how scarce the article may be,—no matter if your lips do not cover your teeth, and the bones of your nose look white through the attenuated sheath! Away goes this surgical bayonet through a handful of it, armed with a piece of gum elastic, which is left sticking there, the sensation on the back of your neck being as if the ramrod of a small swivel had been shot through it; and there you must sit, or stand, or lie, with this huge thing all the while poking your head forward, as if you had a pillory on your back.

"Although there is not so great a change in me as I had supposed, the change in Virginia is none the less certain. She is as dignified towards me now as a princess; nevertheless there is a trem-

bling nervousness about it, which charms me indescribably. I know you will exclaim here, 'Vain fellow!' I am not vain; but as humble and fearful as a bride of two hours' standing. Half the time I am doubtful of the cause of this new reserve, and set it down as decidedly unfavourable to my views, until I detect a little thrill in her voice, or tremulousness in the fingers as they meet mine, or touch the piano; and even that I set down, sometimes, as nothing more than sympathy for my forlorn condition, especially if there is a mirror near, and I happen to get a peep of my shaved cranium and sharp visage. And then, again, I consider it nothing more than the natural reserve of the woman, as she throws off the playful air of the school-girl; and that too, perhaps, from having discovered, during my illness, that she could no longer, in justice to myself, treat me as a playmate. But all these doubts and difficulties will be solved in two hours. I have requested her to accompany me in a walk around the lawn and garden, and I intimated to her that I had something very particular to say. This was ill advised, I know, but the truth is, I was attempting at that very time to broach the subject, and, as with all other bashful boobies, my tongue clove to the roof of my mouth. I certainly have some fear of disturbing my pleasant dreams of the present reckoning; but I am committed now, and there is no retracting. I shall leave this letter open, that I may communicate to

you the result; no doubt you can anticipate now more truly what it will be than I can. Until this crisis in my affairs is over, farewell.

"B. RANDOLPH."

B. RANDOLPH TO V. CHEVILLERE.

(In continuation.)

"I have deferred the closing of this letter a day longer than I intended when I penned the above. The fact is, I was not so much in the humour for writing as I expected. I was compelled to order your horse and take my first ride, and you may be sure that I did not restrain his mettle. What would you argue from this? That I was successful? or defeated? I should suppose neither, from that circumstance alone, say you,—as you would be apt to ride down your impetuosity in either case.

"But the time at length arrived,—the long looked-for, hoped-for time! and lo! when it did come, I would have put it back again, if I could have done so with credit; but no, I must now go onward; so I plucked up my wavering courage, and prepared for a formal introduction. This, you know, is at all times, and under the most favourable circumstances, but an awkward business; but it is especially so if the lady possesses a keen sense of the ludicrous, has a lurking devil of ridicule in her

eye, and if the person about to address her has often felt the smart of her keen satire.

"In the present instance, there seemed a hundred little smothered devils of fun, and wrath, and frolic peeping from the corners of her eyes; not that her deportment was different from that placid serenity which has of late sat so modestly upon her brow; unless, indeed, it was that there might have been discovered greater efforts than usual to produce this result. We sauntered down the lawn, until we came to the clump of pride of India trees, amid which is situated a summer-house, covered with vines; you no doubt recollect the place; here we were seated.

"'Miss Virginia,' said I, in the formal style in which a lawyer says, 'may it please the court,'—'Miss Virginia, when I first set out from home upon a southern expedition at this strange season of the year, my only object was to see whether the original of that miniature, about which you have heard so much, was as lovely as it represented her. I expected to see a beautiful little girl of thirteen, and hoped at some future day to make her my wife; nay, if I must make a true confession, I hoped to make some impression on her youthful and gentle susceptibilities, before she could see any more attractive admirer, and then leave her to mature until my return. In all these expectations I have been disappointed, except with regard to the personal qualities, which I found of a much more dangerous character than I had cal-

culated upon; but Miss Virginia Chevillere is not one to whom I would address compliments upon her beauty, except in the regular course of my narrative. During the progress of these discoveries I was taken ill, and within the same time a great change has come over Miss Chevillere.'

"'A great change,' said she, suddenly turning full upon me, a deep blush suffusing her face; 'in what respect, sir?'

"'Does Miss Virginia ask that question seriously?'

"'Never was one more seriously propounded.'

"'The change has been from hilarity to calm placidity, as it regards externals.'

"'You astonish me!'

"'And *you* astonish *me*.'

"A laugh ensued, which afforded a favourable opportunity, and I continued:

"'After my recovery, I found that I had rivals; that it was more difficult than ever to tell upon what ground I stood;' she smiled, while I continued: 'I have now only to offer Miss Chevillere a skeleton of a hand,' holding out my anatomy, 'but it is an honest one, and is at her disposal, backed by as warm and ardent an attachment as ever a man was laughed and fretted into; will you accept it for better for worse?'

"She hung down her head a moment upon the ends of her fingers, seeming to struggle, I know not with what; then suddenly placing her hand in

mine, she said, 'I will be as candid and as honest as yourself,—you have left me no alternative.'

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"But I pass over those delightful passages, which no human eye shall ever fathom; they are my own treasures for future retrospection.

"Yet I may give you some hints of our subsequent conversation, towards the end of the time spent in the arbour.

"'But, Mr. Randolph, you acknowledge that you have entertained two distinct opinions since your arrival at Salem; suppose you should have a third, and a fourth?'

"'My changes of opinion,' said I, 'have in both instances taken their cue from your own changes in deportment; but to tell you the truth, I should be contented with either set of manners, or with either opinion of them.'

"'Pshaw!' she replied, 'you flatter; I thought we understood each other too plainly for you to offer such compliments.'

"'I would not offend you for the world, dearest Virginia, nor would I have you to believe that I pretend not to have studied the change. All that I meant to convey was, that I was pleased and delighted with Virginia Chevillere when I saw her the lively school-girl, but far more so when I saw her the reflecting and considerate young lady; and that I would have been quite contented with the

former if I had never known the latter; nay more, I will tell you the cause of the change!' Here she put her little hand over my mouth.

"'No, no, no!' said she, 'for fear you might tell the true one, and surely you shall never find out my secrets for the world, lest I become afraid of you!'

"'Well,' said I, 'I am satisfied with the result; you may keep your own secrets for the present, but remember a time is coming, and that soon, when there will be no secrets between us.'

"'Hah! are you there?' replied she; 'then I must see all those letters you have been writing to my cousin and his friend; indeed, now I think of it, I must see them before—'

"There she stopped, not knowing how to finish the sentence, and immediately started up and attempted to run towards the house; I caught her, and, with gentle violence, compelled her to resume her seat.

"'Before when?' said I.

"'Before the great day,' she answered, laughing.

"'What, the day of judgment?'

"'Yes, truly, the day of judgment.'

"'But tell me truly, Virginia, how very, very soon shall that happy day come?'

"'One year from next Christmas day.'

"'Phew!' whistled I, 'a year and a half! Come, say a week and a half.'

"'Why, sir, you have not asked my aunt's consent, nor my cousin's, nor my guardian's.'

"'Come, then,' said I, 'let us to the house; it shall soon be done.'

"When we were seated in your mother's private parlour, the old lady looked first at me, and then at Virginia. The latter sat with her cheeks flushed, biting the fingers of her gloves into bits, with side-long glances at me, and a malicious smile upon her face. I was meanwhile pulling all the fur off my hat with one hand, and drumming on the crown with the other. Virginia could bear this no longer, but, bursting into a sprightly laugh, flew out of the room.

"'Ah!' said your mother, 'I see it all; you need not pain yourself, Mr. Randolph, in breaking the subject. Believe me that a woman's vigilance does not often sleep in these matters.'

"'Ah then, dear madam, say that your judgment approves of your son's partiality in my favour.'

"'My *son's*! I thought it was my niece's.'

"'Indeed, madam, I mean both, if I dare say so.'

"'Mr. Randolph, you have my cheerful consent; trust me, I have not observed you carelessly, since your visit to us, to say nothing of the unbounded confidence which I place in Victor's judgment of his associates and school-fellows. To tell you the truth, he long ago revealed to me his ardent desire that you and Virginia should become acquainted, and his conviction that you were exactly suited to each other.'

"'Do then, dear madam, urge an early day for our nuptials; your niece's most extravagant notions of the length of human life render the request necessary.'

"'My dear sir!' she replied, 'you have not yet consulted your own relations and friends; even if you had, you would not be married to-night?'

"'Madam, I would, if I had my own way, especially as I have unfortunately no mother and father to consult.'

"'There will then be nothing to prevent your removing to South Carolina.'

"'You forget, madam, that we Virginians are the most bigoted people in the world about our own country.'

"'You would not separate my adopted daughter from her widowed mother?'

"'By no means—I would take the mother with the daughter.'

"'Have you a home already prepared?'

"'I have, madam, the home of my fathers.'

"'I fear it will be more difficult to remove you than I had supposed. Virginia and I have managed this business badly. We should have held you in suspense until you had renounced your country. But perhaps it is as well thus; forced renunciations are generally unhappy.'

"I need not repeat to you, dear Chevillere, every word that passed between us; suffice it, therefore, to inform you, that I am to tear myself away, in a few days, to the Old Dominion, to prepare for my

nuptials, which will occur immediately on my return; and this, whether you shall have repaired hither or not. Indeed, you need not be surprised to see Mr. and Mrs. Randolph in New-York before Christmas.

"Yours truly,

"B. RANDOLPH."

CHAPTER VIII.

V. CHEVILLERE TO B. RANDOLPH.

"New-York, 18—.

"DEAR FRIEND,

"I AM inexpressibly sad. Every thing goes wrong. The bright hopes and brilliant anticipations with which we came to this city have vanished! Yesterday morning at sunrise, Lamar and I were on the ground (in Jersey) before our antagonists were anywhere to be found. As had been agreed upon, I was to furnish the arms for the unnatural occasion. Lamar, though not in bravado, was desperately calm and savage; I could see from his hurried steps, compressed lips, and flashing eyes, that he was in no condition to do well even the wretched business for which we had come. I thought too, while his present humour lasted, that there was no possibility of succeeding in my deeply cherished hopes of a compromise. To hint directly at a reconciliation would have been to thwart it; I thought the only plan, therefore, would be to urge upon him coolness and deliberation for his own sake.

"'Lamar,' said I, 'do you think yourself in good

condition and feelings to act with entire self-possession?'

"'Never in better! My eye is clear, heart cheerful, and hand steady! I could knock a mosquito's eye out this morning, at twenty steps.'

"What a singular thing it is, Randolph, that the mind of a firm and courageous man, when about to engage in a personal affair of this kind, seems always to be narrowed down or concentrated to the direction of the lead in its passage from the pistol, and all his ideas seem to run upon straight lines, and steady aims, and that even under an aspect of levity!

"How is it, that one can throw aside all the momentous considerations which press upon a bystander? that the profoundest melancholy does not overwhelm him? Why not throw the thoughts one hour ahead and see himself—perhaps weltering in gore—eyes half closed—tongue thick and motionless—feet and hands cold—pulsations feeble, and altogether in a condition which would call forth our tenderest sympathies for a stranger found in this condition by the way side. Perhaps if the thoughts of combatants could be thus carried forward for an hour, their imaginations might show them their antagonists in this condition. No enmity could be so bitter, that they would not feel sympathy for one thus situated. And herein lies the strangeness and inconsistency of the duellist. An antagonist once wounded, and we are all sympathy for those very sufferings which we ourselves

have inflicted; none was extended while it would have availed any thing, but no sooner is it unavailable, than it is showered upon the dying adversary! What wretched mockery is this? To thrust one over a precipice only to pick him up and lament over him! To fire a house, and then seek to extinguish it with tears! To put out a man's eyes, and then ask him to *look* upon you with forgiveness! To shoot a neighbour through the heart, and then kneel and pray for his pardon before he dies!

"How much like the child with his toy is all this, when he, in the folly of the moment, destroys some invaluable relic, which millions could not restore. So it is with us 'children of a larger growth,' when we go out upon the field to sport with human life, as if it was a thing to be restored when once destroyed.

"The truth is this, and the position will be sustained by the facts which I am going to relate: no man who goes on such an errand, realizes in his own mind what it is he is about to do or to suffer. Let such a one vividly realize to his own mind his antagonist, stretched out on a litter, just ready to be borne from the field, a ball having passed across the bridge of the nose and knocked out both eyes, and horribly deformed his face, without producing death! Would he not call upon the rocks and mountains to crush him for a monster, before he would touch a hair-trigger? But I am, as is usual

with letter writers and reviewers, giving you the reflections before the facts.

"We soon discovered the other party approaching the spot. When they were within about fifty yards of us they halted and held a council, as we did likewise, to arrange all the awful particulars. I could see their earnest gestures, as they stood, partly hid by the bushes, dripping with morning dew. The time having nearly arrived, one of their number separated from the rest and approached us.

"This movement roused me from a very disagreeable revery, into which I had thoughtlessly or thoughtfully glided, while Lamar stood talking to the surgeon and Damon (who, by-the-by, has just returned from Albany). I suppose that the cause of my so far forgetting myself as to indulge in this habitual mood, was the latter personage calling my mind vividly to the consequences of our present undertaking, by some of his plain, downright mode of speaking to the surgeon. However, I immediately recollected my individual responsibility, and hastened to meet the plenipotentiary of the other party, who, I found, was young Hazlehurst. He looked pale and haggard, as if he had been endeavouring to keep away the intruding imps of the night by the more genial spirits of the bottle; he was any thing but calm, though he assumed to be so.

"The idea of a compromise still forced itself

upon me; I therefore urged it upon him by all the considerations in my power. I told him that I had often observed the skill of both; that they were both 'dead shots,' and undoubtedly what the world is wont to call men of courage. Making but little impression, I determined to assail him upon a more tender point, namely, the delicate subject of his sister's concern in this matter. I begged him to recollect that it would give her an unenviable notoriety, if one of these young men should be killed. I seemed here to touch his home feelings, if not his judgment and his principles, and he returned to advocate a reconciliation, while I pursued the same course with Lamar.

"It was all to no purpose; for when we met again upon middle ground, it appeared that each of the principals had singularly enough construed our overtures into a demand of apology from the opposite party. Each now urged that the time had arrived. The ground had already been measured off (twenty paces). Our next business was to cast lots for choice of position and 'the word.' Hazlehurst won the privilege, if it could be so called, of giving the word 'fire,' and the choice of position fell to me.

"As seconds, we proceeded to load the pistols; not, however, before I had spent my logic in vain upon the parties. The task being finished, they took their positions, appearing calm and composed to the hasty eye, although a fierce commotion of subdued elements was going on within. They

looked, however, as report generally says, 'calm and steady.'

"Hazlehurst took his position, and all things being in readiness, his hoarse and evidently excited voice began in slow, measured, and distinct articulation, 'Ready! aim! fire! One! two! three!'

"Both pistols were discharged almost at the same instant, and for a moment I could not see through the smoke what injury had been done and received. In another moment Lamar and Arthur were visible, unhurt, and both singularly staring at Hazlehurst and me. For my life I could not, at first, see into this,—the first impression was that they had both been shot, and were still able to stand, yet unable to move. In this belief I hastened to Lamar, who said, as I came up,

"'And were they really and truly charged?'

"'Upon honour they were,' said I, 'and exactly in the same manner in which you and Arthur have been practising; for I showed Hazlehurst the charge when he took his away some days ago, and I saw him to-day, when we picked up the pistols indiscriminately, load his exactly as I had previously shown him.'

"'There must have been some magic in this business,' said Lamar; 'I never carried a steadier hand up and down a line in my life.'

"By this time each party had again withdrawn to themselves, when I asked Lamar my instruc-

tions, as I saw young Hazlehurst again coming to meet me, as might have been expected. 'Another fire, of course,' said Lamar. Hazlehurst's instructions were the same; accordingly, we again went through the same preliminaries, and something in addition,—for Lamar proposed, and Arthur agreed to it, through us, that they should both see the pistols loaded.

Accordingly we again collected, like a sociable little coterie, and proceeded to load. Just as I had done my part, Lamar found some fault with the manner in which I placed the percussion cap, and hastily seized the pistol, somewhat contrary to the usages in such cases; as no one objected, however, I surrendered it to him. In letting down the cock to a half-cock, it slipped through his fingers and exploded, bursting the barrel and wounding him dreadfully in the hand and the side of the head just above the right ear, by which he was prostrated in an instant, covered with blood and powder. We all thought him dead, as soon as we saw him fall. Arthur, in particular, knelt down beside him, and called upon him by all the endearing titles of old school-fellowship. The surgeon used such means as were at hand, and soon succeeded in restoring animation. As soon as he became sensible, Arthur took his hand and held it between his own during the whole time we were getting a rude litter ready to bear him to the carriage, and they were completely reconciled. We bore him to the carriage

and thence by slow marches to the ferry on the Hudson, from which place we safely removed him into the room in which I write.

"He seems now to be doing well; though his hand is dreadfully torn, and a deep and large scar will be left on the side of his head as long as he lives. We agreed, before we left the ground, to keep the whole business secret, except so much as related to the bursting of a pistol in Lamar's hand.

"Damon would have been quite amusing, as usual, if the occasion had not been unsuited to merriment; however, after Lamar was safely placed in bed, as Arthur insisted on staying with him, I agreed to accompany Damon to the theatre, as it was to be his last night in the city.

"Accordingly, after tea, he called for me, and we walked over to the old Park Theatre, taking box seats on this occasion. You must know, by-the-by, that I do not find the pit in these theatres the resort of the literati, and critics, and authors. This, I suppose, is owing somewhat to the character of our people, the nature of our institutions, and the low price of admittance.

"As we entered, the pit were calling loudly upon the orchestra for our national air, if it may be so called, of Hail Columbia. The band, most of whom were foreigners, were engaged upon some piece of music more to their own tastes, I suppose; for the yelling and stamping became excessive before they yielded to the voice of the mob, which they were at length compelled to do. It was a benefit night,

and the house was full; many persons standing up in the rear of the boxes. Damon and I were lucky enough to procure seats; which we had scarcely taken, when a little billet was dropped into my hat, which I held between my knees. I picked it up hastily, supposing it belonged to some gentleman behind me; but was astonished to see it directed to me. I tore it open, and read these words:—

"'You know now who the widow is. Beware of her, beware!'

"'(Signed) *Neither a Friend nor an Enemy.*'

"I had almost forgotten a similar communication received before. I looked round to see who could have dropped it there. Every countenance was gentlemanly and calm, forbidding at a glance all suspicion. I crushed it into my pocket, and endeavoured to forget it in seeing Damon so amusingly amused.

"After Hail Columbia had been played to their hearts' content, the mob became calm, and the curtain rose. The play, fortunately, was a home-production; and, as good luck would have it, a Kentuckian was the principal character.

"It was a prize-comedy, the hero of which, *Colonel Nimrod Wildfire*, of Kentucky, quite captivated Damon's heart. He entered into the spirit of the plot with great interest; and, as men unpractised in the ways of the refined world generally

do, he realized it so vividly as at times to forget that it was not a real scene. When the colonel was rounding off his periods in favour of old Kentuck, Damon would slap down his hand upon his knee and exclaim, 'Hurrah for old Kentuck!'

"'This,' said he to me, 'is worth a million of your Italian fiddle-faddles. There, at the opera, a man, if he should happen to go to sleep, would be sure to dream that he had fallen foul of a strange hen-roost, or was riding to the devil in a rail-road car of live-stock. But here, a man could a'most dream he was in old Kentuck, with his eyes open.'

"'Then you like your countryman the colonel?'

"'You may say that, neighbour; but between you and me and that pillar there, though he's a plagued clever fellow, yet' (lowering his voice to a whisper) 'he spins rather longer yarns than I'm a thinkin he does at home.'

"'The sin of a traveller,' said I.

"'Right again, neighbour; and I, for one, don't blame him for it. Double and twist me! if I don't feel *myself* very much moved, now and then, to spin a yarn or two about old Kentuck, when I see these eternal mountebank-dandies, knowing so little about sich a fine country, and sich whole-souled fellows.'

"'But, Damon,' said I, when the curtain fell upon the first act; 'I have always thought that your boasting-men never act?'

"'I don't understand you,' said he.

"'I mean that bullying, swaggering fellows never fight; or, in other words, 'barking dogs seldom bite.''

"'Oh, ho! I understand you now! you suppose because my countryman there on the stage spins a pretty good yarn, and tells a good story of himself, and what he can do, that he won't fight. But there, neighbour, I rather suppose that you might be mistaken a little; for it depends upon the company a man keeps what sort of yarns he spins. Now if the colonel there and I should happen to fall out about any trifle, he knowing that I was from old Kentuck and I knowing as much of him, why there would only be a word and a blow between us, all in good nature; but that Mrs. Trollope that he is feedin on soft corn don't know nothing; Kentuck 'l give her a lesson.'

"The first piece being concluded, the afterpiece now came on, 'Paul Pry.' Damon relapsed into a brown study for some minutes, until he caught a glimpse of Paul's peculiarities,—which were suddenly interrupted by his usual slap on the knee, like the fall of a sledge-hammer. 'That fellow,' exclaimed he, 'must be a real Yankee! yes, he's a Yankee, I see it! I see it! them's the sort o' chaps they have in Yankee town; no such chaps in old Kentuck, except among the old wives.'

"'How is that, Damon; I thought that every neighbourhood had a Paul Pry?'

"'That may be, hereabouts; but you see we

have a cure for such complaints as that chap seems to be troubled with.'

"'And what may that be, Damon?'

"'A knock down and drag out.'

"'That, to be sure, is a very summary remedy; but are you sure it would cure it?'

"'As sure as that I'm settin here; just let that chap or the likes of him travel into old Kentuck, and run his nose into other people's business after that fashion, and I'll agree to be hornswoggled if he don't be apt to *catch it* in his bread-basket. Jist suppose, now, that Mr. Pry was to git a sneezer between his two lookin eyes when he's runnin his nose about after that fashion! he wouldn't intrude again soon in the same premises. Paul wouldn't be apt to intrude at a regular hand-round in old Kentuck. But what makes you laugh?'

"'I was laughing at your new doctrine of social order.'

"'Lord, sir, I havn't told you half the good that comes of regulating the people by the five rules.'

"'Five rules! what are they?'

"'These marrowbones!' (holding up his clenched fist.)

"'Well, let's have it; what other good do they do, besides what you have already stated?'

"'They make people polite to one another, and keep them from calling names.'

"'Calling names!' said I.

"'Yes, calling names; no longer than to-day, I

was coming down this very street the theatre stands on, at a place they call 'the square,' and I heard two fellers talking as if their dander was up a little; so I walked up and leaned against a lamp-post close by, to listen and see if any fun was going to come of it; presently one of 'em called the other a liar. Now, thinks I, we'll see some sport; so I rolled up my sleeves, and held my arms both stretched out to keep back the crowd. 'Don't press on 'em, gentlemen,' said I; 'fair play, fair play!' and what do you think it all came to?'

"'Nothing, I suppose.'

"'Right; instead of knocking the fellow on his sconce, he stood quietly with his hands in his pockets, and says, 'Oh hush! Do tell now!' I stared at them to see if they had tails and walked on all-fours, and the crowd stared at me like fools, as if there wasn't two fellers there to be stared at sure enough, without putting old Kentuck out of countenance.'

"'But you did not interfere any further?'

"'Only to ask the man who stood next to me if he had seen a man call another a liar before, without being knocked down. 'I never saw anybody knocked down in my life,' said he, 'except by the watchman.' 'I'm hornswoggled,' said I, 'If I an't glad I'm goin away to-morrow, for I should be spiled here in a short time;' and then they all set up a horselaugh at *me*, instead of laughing at the two cowards who stood by.'

"'Well,' continued I, 'are there any other advantages of the knocking-down system?'

"'O, yes,' said he, 'hundreds; it makes the blood circulate, like runnin in the mountains keeps up the blood of the bucks.'

"'But here,' said I, 'there is no necessity for such a stimulus; because the difficulties of getting meat and bread where there is such a crowd, are sufficient to make the blood circulate.'

"'Ah, that's true,' said Damon, rather sadly; 'it may suit some stomachs to live in this crowd; but curse me if it don't make my breath short jist to think of it; and that ain't the worst of it: I am told that there is as hard scufflin among the dead here for a little elbow-room, as among the living.'

"'Yes, you have been rightly informed. The living begin to *push the dead* out of their quiet resting-places; insomuch, that a man who died here forty years ago, and paid two hundred dollars for the ground to be buried in (if he is cognoscent of such things in another state), finds his bones scattered with those of the dogs and horses of his generation.'

"'Oh, I'm off,' said Damon, 'this would never do for me. I don't like to be crowded,—living or dead; Lord! when I get into one of our long open forest ranges again, I rather expect that I shall snort like a wild beast, when he first snuffs a stranger.'

"'You see no advantages, then,' said I, 'to

compensate for these various inconveniences of a crowded city?'

"'None; do *you?*'

"'Some; for instance, the society of a large city, and the amusements; as the theatre.'

"'The theatre!' exclaimed he, in surprise; 'would you put this clamjamfry against a deer drive, or a fox-chase, or a 'coon hunt? Why, I wish I may be perlequed through a saw-mill, if I would'nt rather go to a country-wedding, any day, than come to this place. Why, here it's all make-believe; it's all sham; but out in old Kentuck we *have* the *real* things which you *pretend* here; like we do scarecrows to a corn-field.'

"Much of this dialogue passed between the acts and scenes; though when Damon becomes interested, he pursues his discourse independently of performers and audience too. After the conclusion of the performance, I walked with him to his lodgings, and took leave of him with real regret; whether we shall ever meet with him again, Heaven only knows; I, for one, will be glad to see him at any time, and in any company; I have learned to estimate our rude western yeomanry more justly since I have become intimate with Damon; the acquaintance was doubtless commenced in the waywardness of our old college mischief, but it has ended in our all respecting Damon for his good qualities, and looking upon his foibles rather as sources of amusement than as unpardonable faults. There are, doubtless, as

many accomplished gentlemen in the state of Kentucky, as in any other in the Union, but it is equally certain that wilder regions of the state produce many such characters as our friend. I have seen many polished gentlemen of our sister state; and with the exception of those who come from the large towns of Lexington, Louisville, &c., there is about them a wild romantic turn, analogous to their native scenes, which renders them, in our older settlements, unique, but by no means disgusting or disagreeable. This tinge is particularly observable when contrasted with the blunted and worn-out societies of our large northern and eastern cities.

"Lamar we found doing extremely well as to his wounds, and sleeping soundly. If he continues thus, I shall soon put an end to this cruel suspense, which tears my tranquillity to pieces, and strikes at the root of every enjoyment;—you understand me.

"Present me most affectionately to my mother and cousin; I read your letters with great interest, I assure you; you cannot be too minute; all, all will be interesting to yours, most sincerely,

"V. CHEVILLERE."

CHAPTER IX.

Victor Chevillere to B. Randolph.

Oaklands, 18—.

"Dear Friend,

"I left Lamar in the city of New-York, under the hands of an experienced surgeon, doing well as to his bodily wounds, and on such a footing with his rival as becomes them both, as gentlemen and old acquaintances. As soon as I had obtained from the surgeon so much of the foregoing information as was professional, I took my passage on board one of the Albany steamboats. About eight o'clock of the same day, which at this season of the year is just after dark, the sky was clear, serene, and beautiful, save along the western horizon, where a long veil of purple drapery interposed between the land and the sky, as the sun sank to rest in quietness and beauty, while the moon and the stars at the opposite point of the compass were just beginning to shed their paler rays over the magnificent scenery of the Hudson. Our boat glided over the scarcely rippled surface of the noble river, until the little bell of the engineer, or of some one in command, was heard in the quiet scene, as a signal

for the engine to cease its ponderous movements, while the captain at the same moment was heard to cry out, 'Passenger for Oaklands.' A boat was speedily manned and lowered from the stern, containing the said passenger and a small travelling trunk. It was none other than your old chum and humble servant.

"In a very few moments I was left standing on the banks of the river, and the boat was speedily moving out of sight. I looked all around me, to see in what direction the lights from the mansion were visible, but all was darkness amid the trees in the direction of the land. The surface of the river was still, but no such serenity reigned within my own bosom. Not that I have no taste for tranquil scenes; it was just such a one as I love to dwell upon; but I was approaching a house, the owner of which was secretly hostile to the objects of my visit; all the rest of the family, save one, were strangers to me, and that one was last seen under circumstances of doubt and mystery, painful and impressive to the heart of one who has been always charged, and perhaps justly, with fastidiousness as to female purity and refinement.

"Leaving my small trunk hid in a boat-house which I found upon the banks of the river, I began leisurely to ascend a gravelled walk, which was skirted on each side by a row of huge forest trees, each of which, as its black outlines stood forward from the darker regions of others behind, looked like a gigantic bastion of the citadel at the head of

the lawn, to guard against such intruders as I began to fear I might be considered by some of the garrison. Although I had yet some eight or nine hundred yards to attain the level at the end of the lawn where the house stood, the dogs began to warn the inmates of my approach; and as I ascended a little mound, more steep in its ascent than the rest of the walk, the mansion presented itself, dimly seen by the doubtful rays of the rising moon. The size and structure of the edifice I could partly discern from the lights within, as well as from the gleam without. It seemed to be a two-story frame building, painted white, with the longest side facing the river, and a wing or smaller building at each end; in the centre of the main building was a portico, surrounded at the top by a heavy balustrade. The trees and shrubbery, as I approached, became thicker on each side of the avenue, opening into something like a half circle in front of the house with the convex towards me. Within this area there were also trees and shrubbery, but the former were smaller and of a different kind, and the latter more tastefully arranged than that interspersed between the trees along the avenue.

"I did not present myself immediately in this area to sound my bugle and summon the castle, but wound round one of the wings to reconnoitre the premises. I had a reason for this movement. As I stood among the trees on one side of the avenue, waiting till some one should chain up the dogs, a gentle sound at intervals vibrated through

the still air, in delightful unison with the scene, the occasion, and my own feelings. There was pathos in the touch of every string, as its tones died away amid the serenity of the night.

"I skirted round among the trees to the other side of the wing from which the sounds seemed to proceed. There was no light in the window, but I could see the gentle songstress as she sat in the casement, the features of her face being just enough discernible in the rich and silvery tints of the queen of night, as her horizontal beams fell amid the boughs of the trees, to give employment to the imagination. I could discern her loosened ringlets, as they fell over a polished forehead and temples, and occasionally caught the lustre of the eye, as she turned her face (under the full rays of the moon) towards the thick grove in which I stood. The song ended,—and by some strange operation of the mind, I began to think of a favourite air which I sometimes play, and which I had given her in score; the thought had scarcely passed through my mind, before she touched the identical melody in her peculiarly soft and 'moonlight' style. Was it not strange? Yet I do not see why we should so consider these things, occurring so often as they do. I call to mind my having once adverted suddenly in thought, and without any visible cause, to a friend whom I had not seen for years. But a few minutes afterward I met the identical person, and that too in a city five hundred miles from the spot where we had met before. Is there

some secret connexion or intercommunication of the mind which we know not of, except by its effects? Is the German theory a mere whim? But waving these inquiries, the fact that the same ideas were passing through my mind and that of this beautiful and melancholy being, produced novel and delightful emotions. There must have been congeniality of thought, if not of feeling. I could hear the servants scolding and beating the watchful guardians of the night, as they still, from time to time, growled forth their knowledge of my presence. I nevertheless maintained my position against one of the venerable oaks, until the air was ended; she touched the guitar no more that night, but leaning her head on her hand, she gazed on the captivating scene in what seemed profound sadness.

"'Now,' thought I, 'the plain flute in my pocket (which I always carry with me in my travelling expeditions) will be in place; and the rest of the family in the apartments fronting the river are not likely to hear my soft tones;' (and I made them more soft than usual,) as I attempted to imitate a distant, dying echo of the air she had just been playing.

"The effect was instantaneous; she started from her sad revery, with her head erect, in the most expressive attitude of listening. I ceased instantly when these effects were visible. She soon seemed to think it a delusion, and, holding her hand to her forehead for a few moments, resumed

her former position. I waited to assure myself that I had not aroused any other members of the family.

"After remaining in that position for a few moments, she began in a kind of thoughtful abstracted mood to sigh over the same air. When she had finished it, I again softly breathed the echo upon the instrument. For an instant only she started to her feet,—looked out of the window,—held her hand to her head again for some time, as if trying to ascertain whether she were dreaming or awake. I thought now that I had practised upon her feelings long enough; I therefore replaced the instrument, and walked round to the main entrance of the building, where I held the knocker some little time in my hand before I could summon resolution for the attack. My knock was soon followed by the sound of footsteps, and when a servant opened the door, I announced myself as Mr. Chevillere of South Carolina. He left me seated but a few moments, before he returned with Mr. Brumley. The latter was more polite and hospitable in his manner than I had expected, and invited me into the parlour, where his wife, the mother of Miss St. Clair, was sitting at her work-stand, in a very domestic, and, to me, pleasing fashion.

"She arose upon the introduction, and held out her hand in southern style, giving me altogether one of the most smiling and benignant welcomes I have received for some time. It immediately carried me back to relatives and the scenes of

home. In addition to this, it was inexpressibly soothing to me on another account! It said plainly that I had been well reported to her by some one, and that one, I was sure, was not her husband. A servant was despatched for Miss Frances; in the mean time, the good lady made me quite at home in a few moments; during which, as I have above intimated, I found her and her daughter were of one counsel. Such things are easily discovered without much of the world's tact.

"Mrs. Brumley, formerly Mrs. St. Clair, is about the middle height, and apparently about thirty-five years of age, though she may be much older. Her hair is light brown, and her eyes are like her daughter's, blue; she is really handsome in feature and expression; the latter especially charmed me. With women of her age, there is generally an expression of suppressed suffering,—partly subdued misanthropy,—disappointment,—bigotry or fanaticism. How seldom do we see cheerful matrons of the middle age? But Mrs. Brumley was not only cheerful,—she was simple, unaffected, intelligent, and benevolent.

"The younger lady entered. I could not exactly determine whether she was alarmed or embarrassed, but she was evidently labouring under some excitement. She was in more simple attire than I had seen her wear before. There was something of the home look both in her dress and manners which I had never observed, and which

was inexpressibly delightful to me. And the half-mourning dress sets off fair hair and a fair complexion to the best advantage. In addition to all these things, a young lady appears different *at home* and in the world. Upon her deportment in the latter respect it depends whether that difference redounds to her advantage. Has she been simple and unaffected in the world? home will make her simplicity more captivating. But if she has been abroad in a holyday suit of manners and deformed with affectation, as is too often the case with very youthful females, the change made by home will be painful to the beholder, because this holyday suit must be thrown aside. It will not pass current in that market. Even the servants would comment upon such an assumption, and the lady would be subjected to the mortification of being laughed at and criticised by her own attendants.

"No such change was visible here; Frances was evidently at home, in every sense of that delightful word. Permit me to make another observation here: the estimation in which one is held by the persons around them, especially the servants, is no bad criterion. When I see the servants of a family pay unasked homage, and that peculiar touching devotion which comes from the heart, my own follows spontaneously. I would not lack the love of my servants for any earthly consideration. I can truly say that I never did lack it; and, contemptible as it may appear to the proud and super-

cilious, it has afforded me many an hour of self-congratulation.

"These were the first things that I looked for, nor was I disappointed. Every heart seemed to dictate the actions and services rendered to Frances St. Clair. Mrs. Brumley, after ascertaining that I had already supped, found some business out of the room, whence her husband had been previously called by one of the servants. We were thus left alone within less than half an hour after I had entered the house. I arose and seated myself beside her, and presuming to take her hand, was going to introduce the subject of my visit, perhaps too suddenly, when she said, permitting me still to retain her hand, 'Ah! Mr. Chevillere, a mental illusion concerning yourself greatly alarmed me to-night. Is it not strange that a thought or occurrence will sometimes recall the image of a friend, but a few moments before that friend himself appears?'

"'I am too happy,' said I, 'to know that I sometimes dwell in your thoughts during absence, to ask the how or the wherefore; but I hope the illusion was not wholly unpleasant?'

"'Do you perform on the flute, Mr. Chevillere?'

"'Imperfectly.'

"'Do you play the little air which you gave me?'

"'As well as I play any thing.'

"'Then my illusion was still more strange than I before thought it. Ah! I see you smile! perhaps

you have been practising upon my superstition; but I thought of that. Ah! you smile again; so you *did* play that air under my window! Still there was something strange about it, for I had but a few moments before touched it on the guitar.'

"'Ah, dear lady, I was so happy as to hear it; and I am so unhappy as to rob you of that slender hold for your superstition also; but I will give you a better one: at the very moment you touched that air, I was leaning against one of those old oak-trees of the grove behind the house, and that identical piece of music floated as distinctly through my mind, as if it had been played in the air immediately over my head!'

"She was brilliantly beautiful for a moment, as a new train of thought suddenly illumined her eye. She then said, in an absent manner,—

"'It was strange!'

"'It was more than strange!' said I.

"'What, was it more than strange?' she eagerly demanded.

"'It was delightful to me.'

"Her head dropped, while she blushed at the idea of my reading her thoughts; 'I shall fear you in future!'

"'Not for the world, dear lady. Surely it is no cause of fear that delightful thoughts will sometimes be spontaneously felt between us; when I say delightful, I speak for myself alone; they may be very disagreeable to you. Of that I do not

pretend to speak at the present moment, further than to acknowledge that I draw the most happy presages from these simultaneous bursts of thought and feeling, which you must often have observed; nay, further, it is a kind of congeniality which I have thought until lately had no existence except in romances. Perhaps it is presuming too far to say so with regard to the impulses of the heart; but certainly you will admit the fact with regard to most subjects.'

"'I shall not express my opinion just now, because my mind and feelings have been too painfully engaged since I saw you, to lengthen the conversation in that direction which I see plainly you are disposed to give it.'

"'Ha!' said I, '*you* too sometimes read thoughts. But may I presume to ask what that painful employment has been?'

"'I have been committing to paper a brief and plain narration of those circumstances of my life which I promised to relate to you. I preferred this course, because my feelings have become so irritable of late on the subject, that I should merely tantalize you if I attempted to relate them. Besides, in a painful and full confession (which you will find much of this to be), it conduces to truth, and an unvarnished statement of facts, to record them in the closet. It then seems that if we set down aught in extenuation, we lie to the great Searcher of hearts himself.' She then presented to me a roll of manuscript.

"On taking it, I said, 'It shall be read and pondered upon under the same solemn scrutiny. My eyes shall not know rest until they have devoured the contents of these pages; but I know full well that my heart will rest as well thereafter as it can do, until it receives its final blessing or quietus in this life.'

"I did not need a second invitation to my quarters for the night; but requesting the servant to supply me with an additional candle, greedily devoured what you will find I have transcribed for you.

"V. CHEVILLERE."

CHAPTER X.

Narrative of Miss St. Clair.

My grandfather, Holcomb St. Clair, settled about the year 17—, where the town of H—— in this state now stands. He had two sons, Holcomb and Howard, the latter of whom was my father. At the time of this settlement they were mere children. Adjoining his lands lived a Mr. Moreton, whose family consisted of a son and two daughters. Little intercourse had taken place between the two families except among the children at school. When it was determined to lay off a town at the place before mentioned, it was found, upon the survey, that a corner of Moreton's land extended into the very centre of the contemplated town, and much farther, according to his claims, than my grandfather was willing to allow. A deadly animosity and consequent lawsuit arose, which my grandsire gained. In the mean time, the town was laid off and grew apace.

All the little intercourse between the families was now broken off, and the separation extended to the children at school, with the exception of my uncle Holcomb, a precocious boy, and Moreton's eldest daughter, who was then a beautiful little

girl. Thus were the two families situated at the beginning of the revolutionary war. My grandfather espoused the republican cause, and accepted a commission in the army: while his persevering enemy took the opposite side. Whether his enmity to my grandfather had any thing to do with his determination, I will not undertake to say. During the progress of the war, owing to some reports of my grandfather to the commander of the American army, Mr. Moreton and his family left the neighbourhood, and soon after sailed for England. Nothing more was heard of the Moretons till long after the recognition of American Independence by the mother country, when Moreton and his family returned to their former mansion. His daughters were now both nearly grown, and the eldest, a fair and accomplished young lady. My uncle, Holcomb St. Clair, who was much older than my father, and who had now almost arrived at man's estate, from all that I can learn, in nowise participated in the feelings of his father, at least towards one member of the Moreton family—I mean the eldest daughter. Indeed, tradition says that the young people found frequent opportunities of meeting, were devotedly attached to each other, and had resolved to be married when Holcomb became of age, in spite of all opposition.

At length, that time arrived. Young Holcomb was twenty-one. He sought his father and made known to him the state of his affections. In vain did he plead that their attachment was prior to the

family feud; the old gentleman was inexorable; he next boldly presented himself before the lady's father, and asked his consent, declaring that he would marry her without the permission of his own parents, provided Mr. Moreton yielded. He however was more resolved against the match than my grandfather, and forbade his daughter ever afterward to hold communication with Holcomb, by letter or otherwise. Nevertheless, the young lovers found frequent opportunities of meeting, at the house of a former domestic, who lived on the land of Mr. Moreton. At this place many interviews took place, and at length a runaway match was concluded upon.

Neither of the pair possessed a dollar, independent of their parents, and they doubtless would have been in the greatest distress if their designs had been accomplished: but these very oversights of the young people were deeply pondered upon by the nurse, at whose house they met, and who had a most parental regard for the young lady. Her mind was greatly moved by seeing, as she thought, a little farther ahead than the lovers. She accordingly sought an interview with my uncle, soon after his separation from his betrothed bride, and asked him plainly to unfold to her his prospects after marriage, and his future means of living.

As it may be readily supposed, his answers were not very satisfactory to the anxious nurse. On her way home, and while she was deeply musing upon the melancholy prospects which awaited the

young people, she accidentally encountered her patron, landlord, and former master, and out of pure devotion to the real interests of the young lady, as she supposed, divulged the whole plot. Mr. Moreton kept his secret for the time within his own breast, but at length the night arrived for the elopement. My uncle was at the appointed rendezvous with the horses, waiting as patiently as could be expected, until the time appointed for setting off had some time elapsed, when he began to grow uneasy at the non-appearance of his bride. Two hours had gone by, and yet no trembling damsel greeted his longing eyes. Midnight found him still waiting and chafing under the appointed oaks. At length, leaving his horses under the care of his trusty servant, he resolved to reconnoitre the premises of the hostile father.

Around the mansion of the Moretons the quietness of death reigned; not a living being was to be seen except the dogs, and the agricultural animals which were quietly grazing over the green in the still moonlight. At length he retired to his own quarters totally discomfited, and at a loss to account for the want of punctuality in the lady, when all things around her father's mansion seemed, to his observation, to have been so propitious to their designs.

The next day found him without his having closed his eyelids, and in no enviable state of mind. Again he made his observations, and yet the same quiet prevailed. Every thing seemed to be moving

on at the usual rate of country life and occupations. He was now completely at a loss to account for his disappointment in any other way than that which is usually the last for an ardent lover to adopt—namely, the inability of his mistress. And before he was willing to admit a possibility of this, he proceeded to the cottage of the nurse, calculating with great certainty to find some letter or message, giving some explanation of the mystery. But when he arrived at the cottage, the door and rude shutters were closed; a thing so uncommon, except on Sundays, that he was struck with dismay and undefined alarm. He knocked and stamped, but all in vain. The next day, and the next, his visits to the cottage were repeated with the same results; and he now became almost maddened by suspense and fear.

He watched Moreton's domestics, in hopes to bribe some of them to a disclosure of the proceedings within the mysterious house, as he now began to consider it, but no opportunity offered. At length the long wished-for Sabbath arrived. Knowing that both the Moreton family and the nurse were constant attendants at the village church, he repaired thither, with throbbing pulses and an aching heart, in hopes, at least, to catch some stolen and consolatory glance from his adored mistress; or, at least, to gain intelligence from the nurse, as to the cause of her unusual absence from her ancient and much loved home. The bell was now ringing, and the people of the village and the

country around were pouring in from all quarters; and with them, at length, came the carriage of the Moretons. His eyes were now riveted to the spot, in hopes to see his betrothed descend as usual. First came the old gentleman, then his proud lady, and lastly, the younger daughter: and then the steps were put up, and the carriage drove away.

These movements he had watched from his position in the church; and long did his eyes remain gazing upon the spot from which the carriage had driven, until they were rapidly turned to the seat in the gallery where the old nurse usually sat; there also he was doomed to disappointment—the seat was vacant.

Seizing his hat, he rushed out of the church, and over the stile like a maniac; leaving my grandfather and grandmother completely astounded at his rude behaviour. From the church he ran to the house of the Moretons, being at least a mile; and bursting into the first door he came to, demanded of the astounded domestic to see Miss Catharine instantly.

"Lord bless you, sir! Miss Catharine's halfway to England by this time!"

"To England!" cried my uncle, as he fell upon the floor in uncontrolled agony.

When he had recovered himself, and reflected for a moment, he composed his features, and enjoined upon the two domestics (enforcing his request in the usual way) not to mention his visit.

After ascertaining that Catharine was accom-

panied by her brother and the nurse, and that they had set off for the city of New-York on the very night intended for the elopement, he rapidly retraced his steps to the church, and arrived there in time to be seen quietly reposing under one of the trees surrounding it, both by his own and the Moreton family; leaving it to be supposed by them, that sudden indisposition was the cause of his abrupt exit. On the next morning, while his father's family were yet ignorant of most of the foregoing circumstances, he requested a private audience of my grandfather. The old gentleman was just about to take his usual ride round the farm on horseback, and requested Holcomb to order his horse and join him. At dinner, the old gentleman announced to the family that Holcomb would set out next morning for the city of New-York; whence, after certain necessary preparations, he would continue his journey through the middle and southern States. He seemed more than ordinarily pleased at his son's determination; thinking, no doubt, all the while, that it proceeded from a laudable desire to wean himself from his unfortunate attachment, and a judicious wish, at the same time, to see his countrymen and improve his mind.

Some weeks after my uncle's departure for the city, my grandfather accidentally heard that Holcomb had sailed for England immediately on his arrival at New-York. And this piece of bad news seemed but the commencement of an unparalleled series of disasters. Next came the news of the

lady's having preceded my uncle: then the more dreadful tidings of the loss of the vessel in which the latter had sailed, every individual on board having perished, except the captain and one or two seamen.

My grandfather was now almost heartbroken, and his greatest enemy little better; for it was soon ascertained that the blooming and beautiful Catharine was in a rapid decline. Then came the news of her death, and lastly her mortal remains, to be deposited in the village burying-ground. Thus, in the short space of one year, were these obstinate parents brought to lament, each for the loss of a favourite child.

But their individual and family griefs by no means softened their hearts towards each other. So far from it, each acted towards the other with renewed hostility, seeming as if he attributed the loss to his enemy.

These wounds were just beginning to be cicatrized by the lapse of some few years, when, on a beautiful Sunday morning, the Moreton family were astonished, on coming into the churchyard (which was also the burying-ground), to see a chaste and elegant monument erected over the grave of their lamented daughter, with this simple inscription:—

BENEATH THIS STONE IS THE GRAVE OF
CATHARINE MORETON.

Every person in the churchyard had very naturally supposed that it was erected by her parents. The latter, however, were dumb with astonishment. An inquiry was immediately set on foot to ascertain who had interfered (as the old Mr. Moreton complained) with his private grief; but no clew could be discovered to the mystery: and finally the subject died away, and was never afterward renewed, except when a stranger visited the village, and was desirous to see the curiosities of the place, among which the mysterious tomb was sure to be the first.

There was one small yet singular circumstance connected with this tomb. At the corner where the name of the maker is usually inscribed, there was an anchor very legibly cut into the marble, without the sculptor's name. In a few years the memory of my uncle Holcomb and his unfortunate love was swept into that eternal sleep of oblivion, which had before engulfed a million of heart-rending tales, and which stands ready to bury all the sufferings of their successors.

CHAPTER XI.

Some —— years after the circumstances related in the foregoing pages, when many of the persons to whom they were known had sunk to rest for ever,—when Mr. Moreton and my grandfather had both paid the last debt of nature, and taken final leave of their earthly animosities,—when my father had grown to man's estate, and been married some time,—when I was a little girl just beginning to run about my father's house,—there appeared one day at the village tavern a pedestrian traveller, who excited little more notice at the time than such travellers usually do. He attended worship on Sundays in the only church in the place, being the one so often before mentioned; with this solitary exception, he kept himself secluded, and seemed desirous to make no acquaintances. He traversed the hills and dales through the neighbourhood with the zeal of a geologist, and seemed altogether quite domesticated at the village inn. At length it was announced in the village newspaper that the estate of the Moretons was for sale; the younger Moreton announcing in the advertisement that he was desirous of emigrating to the west. The day of sale arrived, when, to the amazement of all, the pedestrian of

the inn became the purchaser. Few people believed him able to comply with the terms, until he actually paid the money.

The Moretons moved away to the far west, and nothing more was heard of them at that time. The mansion-house of the family, which had so long rivalled my grandfather's in their pride and their pretensions, was at length closed for ever, and its classic columns and architectural device were destined to sink into ruins, overrun by those vines and flowers which were once obedient to the training of many a fair hand. The farm was let out in small parcels to the poorest people in the neighbourhood, and, with exceptions to fixtures and improvements to the land, at a mere nominal rent. This strange and unaccountable being at length paid my father a visit. He was an old bachelor, apparently about fifty-five or sixty years of age; a full, round-chested man, with dark hazel eyes. He wore a black wig, though it was easy to be seen that his hair had originally been light brown. His complexion was between a bilious and a cadaverous hue, which, with his great corporeal bulk, gave him an appearance of unsound health. He was sad and even melancholy in his temperament; but abstemious in his habits, and as generous as a prince in his disposition. He was remarkably fond of children; at least he showed great fondness for me, and took great delight in directing my youthful lessons.

Thus were things moving on in the neighbour-

hood of the village of H——, when, on a stormy and terrible night, a messenger arrived with a summons to the dying bed of Mr. Thornton, as the "old bachelor" was called, and my father immediately obeyed the call. The next morning he returned unusually dejected, which was accounted for, in some measure, by informing my mother of the death of Mr. Thornton; but the sadness lasted much longer, and seemed to be much more profound in its nature than was called for by the death of a mere stranger. Our family attended the funeral, which, for a time, closed all further particulars relating to this narrative.

CHAPTER X.

Mr. Chevillere will perceive that I have merely sketched a long train of circumstances connected with our family history; but I hope I have said enough to enable him to understand what I have now to relate, more immediately concerning myself. He will, in due time, perceive that the circumstances already glanced at had a powerful and unfortunate influence upon my destiny.

With the exception of the death of my grandmother, nothing remarkable occurred between the time just spoken of and my thirteenth year. My childhood was happy and unclouded; and the attention bestowed upon my mental cultivation was such as might have been expected from devoted and intelligent parents towards an only child; and my improvement by their instructions was such as, at least, to satisfy their partial judgment.

Those happy days were destined too soon to end—too soon it was thought that I was old enough to improve under other and less kind and blinded instructers—too soon it was determined that I must leave the dear home of my youth, the society of my parents, and the scenes of my childish rambles. Oh! how little do we know the value of the wild, gay, irresponsible happiness of childhood, until

we look back upon it from after years. Already, young as I am, I have often to recur to memory's stores in order to seek consolation from the past for the unutterable sufferings of the present. It was determined that I must now be sent to a boarding-school in the city of New-York. This gave me much pleasure in prospect, so long as the day of separation from my parents was at a distance. The idea of a boarding-school in a large city is pleasing to a gay and thoughtless girl; and doubtless, under ordinary circumstances, it is the source of much innocent delight. It is in such places that we form the dear friendships which are to endure, at least in memory, for a life-time. If the persons of our friends pass away, they still remain with us in spirit; and the scenes and enjoyments of younger life will sometimes, upon the casual touching of a chord, rush back upon us with a melancholy which, though desirable, is overwhelming and even suffocating. The term seems to me peculiarly adapted to that singular oppression of the soul which only the female heart endures. But I was speaking of more pleasing anticipations: these were but too free and buoyant; and therein, perhaps, was laid the foundation of all my after sorrows. The day of my departure soon arrived, when all my pleasing anticipations were turned into weeping and sorrow. Something inexpressible seemed to burden my heart upon this first separation from my mother. Whether it is a usual thing with our sex on such occasions, or

whether it was a more especial presentiment of coming evil in my particular case, I do not know. Certain I am, that I had never experienced any thing like it before; and what seems peculiarly strange to me now is, that the undefined sufferings of that hour were very like those which oppressed me under the real misfortunes of which they could only have been the foregoing shadows. There was really an identity in the miserable feelings attendant upon the two occasions. This may appear like folly: but, certainly, every one who has suffered at all can recur to each link in the gloomy chain, as particularly as we can travel back over the identical feelings of by-gone enjoyments. These are not the associations of the moment only, but specific and peculiar sufferings related to the cause, and even existing when the mind is abstracted from all surrounding objects. And these same nightmare feelings will arise again and again over the heart, when we are least expecting them. Sometimes, in the gay and joyous hour, they have come over me like a horrible dream, in exactly the same gloomy hues and colours in which they first presented themselves.

I have dwelt upon this presentiment a moment, because it seems to me that there was something peculiar in its first appearance; as I was but a child of thirteen, and had never felt more mental suffering than a moment's childish vexation. These were entirely new feelings, totally unconnected with my past experience at that time: how far

they were connected with that which was to come, I leave others to judge for me.

At length I parted with all those most dear to me upon earth except my father, who accompanied me. And here I may remark, that however peculiar and poignant were my feelings of the parting hour, they were of short duration. One night's sleep, away from home, effected the cure; all was forgotten, and my gay anticipations returned. I began already to select play-fellows and intimates from the crowd with which my imagination peopled the boarding-school. My plans were all arranged, dresses bought, and books selected.

Having parted from my father, a new life opened upon me, entirely different from any thing I had before experienced. I was now placed with girls near my own age, in that little epitome of the female world called a select boarding-school. Here I found, for the first time, the pleasures of congenial intimacy with beings of my own age, and the pains of envy, jealousy, rivalry, and all the meaner passions.

The love of admiration is a singular passion in girls so young; I say singular, because it is a general, undefined, impracticable feeling, having no ultimate object; a strange, fluttering, wild emotion, which is seldom analyzed by those who are under its influence. Indeed I doubt whether it could exist in a person who had judgment enough to know exactly its origin, support, and end.

A boarding-school is a very hot-bed for this tu-

multuous feeling, as it exists primitively, and many of the seemingly whimsical actions and flighty speeches of very young girls, under such circumstances, may be traced to it as their source.

There is one radical error of all girls at that age, which, it seems to me, may be the nucleus of this feeling. It is the dread of being overlooked in the human crowd—a fear that our virtues, our beauties, our accomplishments, or our intelligence, may be slighted. We cannot easily discern that the very efforts which we make to distinguish ourselves from the common multitude, tend but the more forcibly to stamp us of the commonest material of the number, and that the method best calculated to elevate us above the mass, is to seek deeper retirement in that oblivion which we then most dread. This grand mistake, it seems to me, has its origin likewise in a preceding error, with regard to those qualities which the other sex most admire in us. How can a girl, without experience, ascertain, at the very threshold of life, that retiring modesty, that seemingly negative virtue, is the index by which all others are supposed to be foretold; how can she possess by intuition, that which is nothing less than the grand result of all female education, experience, and accomplishment? True, there is a native modesty in most young girls, whose infantile education has been parental; but this is more properly called bashfulness, and may be allied with many reprehensible qualities, and of itself requires discriminating cultivation. There

is a great difference between native bashfulness and that self-possessed modesty, which can never be attained but through the influence of good sense in the pupil, and discriminating judgment in the parent or teacher.

It must not be supposed for a moment, that the cultivated humility of which I speak, is the same which many intriguing mothers and chaperones inculcate upon their daughters and protegées. These cunning instructers only enforce the imitation; I am speaking of the genuine principle and feeling; and I dwell upon these things the more diffusely, because much of my after unhappiness was owing to a neglect of them, as I am sorry to add, they are too often overlooked in similar institutions. It may seem that I speak too openly of the failings of my sex, when I detail the progress of the desire for admiration, and take it for granted that it is a feeling common to all; but it must be recollected that I speak of the secret motives of action in females of my own age at that time, not of the disgusting exhibitions of the passions which are too often to be met with in forward and uncultivated young ladies. I speak of it when it is not directly perceptible to any but a discerning mind; when it displays itself not so much by direct and unwomanly advances, as by whimsical actions and foolish conversation. How often do we hear it said of girls, at about the age of fourteen, that they are "light-headed" and "flighty." This is nothing more than the secret working of the desire for ad-

miration, and the fear of not receiving it. This may seem a humiliating exposure of secret female motives, and so it would be, if I were speaking of those whose characters are formed; but it is not so. I refer to the feelings of myself and my associates at the most interesting period of female education; and I consider it by no means humiliating to my sex in general, to expose feelings, which in their rude and natural state, are disgusting to a refined mind, but which, judiciously cultivated and guided, give origin to most of the social happiness of our race.

It will be perceived that the school into which I was now introduced, like all others of its kind, was a nursery for the growth and nurture of many other things than those which were formally put forth to the world as the regular routine: these indeed form but a small part of boarding-school education. Young ladies are there, for the first time, thrown into a community of their own age, sex, feeling, and prospects; for the first time cut off from the restraints of affectionate parental authority, and subjected to that which is formal, indiscriminating, and too often, ludicrous. The consequence is, that there is soon established a little republic of feeling, which is ruled by a tacit under-authority among pupils themselves. These develop similar passions and feelings to those which we experience in the world; female ambition, rivalry, jealousy, hatred, revenge, and all the little wars and contests to which they give rise.

For the first year there were no occurrences of an unusual character besides these developments; at all events, none connected with those events which I have undertaken impartially to relate. Twice a year I was allowed to visit my father's house, and always with renewed delight; fierce as our little contests sometimes were at school, they were all forgotten when the parting hour came at the end of the session; plentiful showers of tears washed away every vestige of bitter feeling; and we returned, at the commencement of the next session, with open arms for every one, like dear friends who had long been parted; but soon again we were divided into our little factions, each one with her favourites.

CHAPTER XII.

When I was about fifteen years old, and had been at school nearly two years, I received permission from my father to attend a riding-school in the city, at which some of the more advanced girls had already been attending. Among these were most of my intimate associates, some of whom resided in the city, and of course did not sleep at the school. Of the latter number was my dear and valued friend, Isabel Hazlehurst. When we had been at riding-school some time, Isabel and I were pronounced sufficiently secure in our seats to ride out into the country. One Saturday afternoon, when I was spending the day with my friend, a riding-party was proposed and soon made up, consisting entirely of the girls of our school, and escorted by Isabel's brother and several other young gentlemen, most of whom had sisters of the party. When we had proceeded safely for several miles, and timidity and caution began to give way to our usual wild mirth, the horse on which Isabel rode became all at once very restless and unmanageable; this soon startled mine, which was the most restive and mettlesome of the whole. All my endeavours to quiet and pacify him were fruitless; the nearer Isabel or one of the gentlemen

endeavoured to approach, the worse he became, until he was at length fairly at the top of his speed. I scarcely recollect what happened afterward, until I found myself lying on the road-side, and all the party standing around, frightened almost out of their senses. When I became able to sit up and look more freely about me, I found a gentleman added to the party, and then began to have some confused recollection of a person galloping by my side. The truth of the matter was, that the gentleman mentioned was riding along the avenue, in a direction to meet us, when he discovered my horse to be beyond my control, and saw that the efforts of our escorts to overtake him only made him fly the faster. With admirable address and presence of mind, he wheeled his horse, and began to canter in the same direction with us until my horse came up with his, when he seized the bridle without suddenly checking him, and would have skilfully graduated his movements to our usual gait, had he not discovered me falling, when, seizing me and drawing me from the saddle, by means of a movement between a jump and a fall, we came to the ground together, without my receiving, however, the slightest injury, and with only a slight bruise on his part.

As soon as he saw that I had recovered my bewildered senses, he sprang upon his horse and was out of hearing in an instant, before any one had asked his name or address, or even thanked him for his interference; all were so much interested

to know whether I was seriously hurt, that no one thought of it until it was too late: I was much chagrined, but there was no remedy. A carriage was soon procured, and Isabel and I were safely conveyed to Mr. Hazlehurst's. This was the last of our equestrian expeditions beyond the limits of the riding-school grounds.

On the Monday following our excursion, as I was sitting intently engaged upon a piece of painting in a front apartment of the school, a fashionable vehicle drove up to the door. Most of the younger misses (as was usual) ran to the window to see whose friend or relation had arrived. Immediately was heard the exclamation, "Oh! what an elegant young gentleman! What a beautiful carriage!" I, too, ran to the window now, with the others who were crowding around; but the gentleman had descended, and was ringing at the door before I arrived. We were all soon seated and waiting with breathless expectation, fluttering hearts, and eyes cast towards the door, to see who would be called down into the parlour. One said, "'Tis my brother!" another, "'Tis my cousin!" At length the formal old house-servant opened the door, and exclaimed, in her usual drawl, "Miss St. Clair is wanted in the parlour." I went down with fear and trembling, which was little tranquillized when I pushed open the door and discovered the handsome horseman of our riding adventure, sitting in conversation with the schoolmistress, with great ease and familiarity, and apparently

answering inquiries about some person who was mutually known to them.

"My dear" (the mistress's usual salutation *before company*), "this is Mr. Sandford, a friend of your father's, whom he has directed me to introduce to you, in order that he may inform them at home of your health, and the progress of your studies." I made a desperate effort at conversation, in order to occupy the time until the mistress should be called out for a moment, lest he should suddenly introduce our surreptitious and disastrous ride before her; out it came, nevertheless, in spite of all my shallow cunning. "Certainly I cannot be mistaken in supposing Miss St. Clair to be the same lady whom I was so fortunate as to assist, the day before yesterday, in alighting from her horse?" I hung my head and blushed like a culprit, or looked guilty as I really felt; when the mistress, holding up her finger, exclaimed, "Ah! you naughty girls. I suspected something was in the wind, from so many of you going to Hazlehurst's together, contrary to the custom." But it is useless to dwell on this particular visit, and every word that passed at it, for it was succeeded by many others, until I became the envy of the whole school.

But how shall I describe Mr. Sandford to you, so that you will understand his difficult character thoroughly? As to his external appearance, there is no difficulty. He was a tall, fashionable, sandy haired gentleman, with a sanguine complexion, eyes between gray and blue, teeth perfect and

white; lips thin and compressed; rather large fox-coloured, fashionable whiskers, extending down under the chin; cheeks, lips, forehead, and ears were all of the same florid colour. In his address he showed evidently that he had seen much good company; his speech was rather slow, deliberate, and inclined to pomposity. He had been educated at one of the eastern colleges, and my father mentioned in his letter, that he had been always distinguished in his classes. His address to females was rather calculated to please a mixed collection of young girls, than a select company of educated ladies, his discourse consisting chiefly of badinage, and a kind of conversational satire upon every passing circumstance and object. Since I have reflected upon his character, I can account for many things, which at that time made only an evanescent impression. Though he was peculiarly gentle and persuasive in his manners, these qualities did not originate in the heart. He was courteous from selfish motives, rather than polite from benevolence; he suited himself to the cast of our girlish society; yet his courtesy would have been an insult to our understanding, if we had understood it at that time as I do now. To me he was peculiarly attentive and polite, in the usual acceptation of the words; yet I was neither entertained nor improved by his conversations. Not that I thought or felt his attentions disagreeable to me at that time; far from it; I considered myself under obligations to him, to a romantic extent, perhaps,

and the failure of our conversations I attributed rather to my own want of tact and information, more especially as he sometimes introduced subjects with which I was entirely unacquainted, and seemingly dropped them again, and resumed the common-place, in pity or charity to my youth or ignorance. Such was my interpretation at that time; it is very different now.

He was undoubtedly a man of good sense and education, and I was as certainly pleased and flattered by his attentions. He affected poetry,—and here again he threw me in the background, not because I had not really a soul capable of poetic feelings, but because his exhibitions were too classically refined for my obtuseness; I rather dreaded the stores of his head, than sympathized with the feelings which he affected. Now the truth is, he had not one particle of poetry in his composition. He no doubt thought otherwise, and his associates and preceptors may have thought so too. I did not discern this by intuition, but from a thorough study and experience of his character, under circumstances well calculated to develop the secret motives of the heart, which will soon appear.

He was full of anecdotes, which were lavishly told among, and much enjoyed and laughed at by, the girls; but there was a sneer upon his nose and upper lip, even when he joined in the laugh at his own stories, as if they were told for our amusement solely, and thrown humanely down to us

rather than contributed as his share of the mutual entertainment. He never listened to the conversation or anecdotes of others with the feelings of the heart attuned properly to the social pitch; he gave his attention as a kind of conventional and fashionable duty. In short, he had an utterly contemptuous opinion of the understanding of our sex, and one as much too exalted of his own. He had been cried up for a genius at school, because he was successful in getting "his lessons," until he believed it. The truth is, he had no genius, although he was not without good sense, as I have already said, when it could be brought to bear uninfluenced by his contempt for others, or admiration of himself. He was supremely selfish. He could not laugh, any more than he could listen, with the heart. His mirth was forced. Even when he laughed at his own stories, he would pull the lower part of his ear with each motion of the chest, or place a finger beside his nose, in such a way as seemed to me at that time droll and expressive, but which I now know proceeded from a contempt for the understanding of his hearers. I have learned to attach some importance to these things. For instance, since I have detected the heartlessness of one through these little tokens,—laughter among the rest,—I now habitually observe people when they give way to their feelings. If I see a man laughing now with the same spirit that he would join in a chorus, I cannot keep my eyes from him, so deeply has my experience in one case affected the

general current of my thoughts. But perhaps I anticipate, for it must be recollected that my impressions at the time I have been speaking of were very different from the results of my subsequent mature and painful reflections. Mr. Sandford appeared to me to be an elegant and accomplished young gentleman; and I was flattered by his attentions, because they seemed to be highly estimated by my thoughtless associates.

At length, after repeating his visits to the school as often as it was proper for my father's most intimate friends to do, he called for the last time to take leave of me, and be the bearer of my letters. These I gave him, with many verbal messages for my friends in the country, and then shook hands with him, and was about to run away. But he detained me a moment, as no one was present, and said that he hoped again to enjoy the pleasure of my society at H——, where my father then lived, as soon as the session should be ended. There was something sly and peculiar in his way of saying such things; something that seemed to imply that he knew more than I did, or had a secret worth knowing, of which I would like to be a partaker. However, we parted with a slight fluttering on my part, the result of novelty; for I can truly say, as far as first impressions were concerned, that I was as free from any thing like being in love with him at first sight as might be. I may have received pleasure from having a handsome, rich, and fashion-

able suitor; but I had no feelings personally favourable to Mr. Sandford.

After his departure, I was as calm and unmoved as if he had never made his appearance, except when the girls teased me about my handsome lover; and then the only effect was a little excitement, having more relation to them than to him. But I was surprised, not long afterward, to receive a most inquisitive letter from my mother, asking particularly what I thought of *my father's friend*, Mr. Sandford; and, not answering it as promptly as I ought to have done, I soon received another from my father, on the same subject. These surprised me very much; because I never imagined for a moment that they took any interest in our girlish notions of beaux; and as to any serious thought of marriage, it had never entered my head, except in the same manner in which we think of death. I thought of it only as a thing to happen, if at all, at some far, far distant day.

CHAPTER XIII.

When I returned home during the vacation, which succeeded the events just related, I found Mr. Sandford completely domesticated at my father's house; and what appeared still more strange to me, there appeared to be some subject of secret conference, but of primary and engrossing interest, between this comparative stranger and my father: whatever it might be, it was studiously concealed from the rest of the family.

This course was so different from my father's usually *confidential* and unrestrained intercourse with his own family, that it excited my surprise; but in no way shook my confidence in him or his new friend. My curiosity was excited to find out the subject of these long and secret conferences. It was not that restless, feverish, morbid curiosity with which our sex is so generally charged; but one partly founded upon selfish feelings, and partly proceeding from a laudable anxiety for the welfare of us all.

But to proceed with my story; I found Mr. Sandford, under my father's calm, penetrating eye, a gentleman more to my taste than I had before seen him. He had doffed much of the city gallant, that had been visible when I last saw him; yet was

still far from a plain, unaffected country gentleman; and he suffered no opportunity of displaying himself to escape. Yet he was not disgustingly ostentatious, for there was much good taste in every thing he did; his errors lay in the motives, and not in the manner of his actions. This combination of good sense, taste, and fine education, without principles, is perhaps one of the most dangerous assailants to female happiness which it has ever been my misfortune to contemplate. Almost every one of my sex would do as I did; look to the effects, not to the secret motives—to the actions, not the principles—and to the accomplishments, rather than the morals of a suitor.

Mr. Sandford took an early opportunity to show me that his acquisitions were not confined to the classical refinements of the school. He seemed to have studied mankind in the true spirit of Chesterfield, and to have devoted much time to the cultivation of the lighter personal accomplishments. When we all felt ourselves a little accustomed to our new state of society at home, he began gradually to unfold these stores in reserve; and I found that he danced, and sang, and performed on several musical instruments with taste and skill. These graces were, of course, exhibited by the accident of *design*, and with the most refined *nonchalance;* seeming rather to despise them as trifles, and yet to think no gentleman could do without them. As I was seated, one day, upon the green, in the grove behind the mansion-house at H——, he sud-

denly made his appearance; and seizing my hand, avowed himself my most ardent and enthusiastic admirer. I mention this circumstance because the first seeds of a suspicion, that much of it was lip-service, were at this time first sown; not that I threw his hand from me and turned away in disgust; for the suspicion of which I speak was scarcely known at that time to myself. If I had taken myself to account, I might, indeed, have found it; but it was one of those singular impressions which spring up in the mind nearly unobserved, and yet influence every action of importance; first, scarcely operating on the conduct at all, but in the end affecting it decidedly. This produces a reaction, then the opposite state of unsuspiciousness, and so on, from one extreme to the other, until the mind becomes settled in permanent confidence or distrust.

At the time alluded to, this suspicion was nothing more than a flash across the mental vision, and in nowise operated upon my conduct; for to tell the truth, I was still under the dominion of those same girlish feelings with which I had first seen Mr. Sandford; and I suppose that the pleasure of the avowal was but too visible in my countenance, for when we had concluded our interview, which it is not necessary to describe more particularly, he was referred to my father. As I had expected, my father had but one objection—my age. He gave his consent readily, provided Mr. Sandford would wait until I had spent one more year at

school; this was also in accordance with my feelings, for I could not bear even then to contemplate marriage immediately before me. Not so my suitor; he became urgent with my father, and absolutely tiresome to me, with eternally harping upon the same subject, and that too after the most unanswerable reasons had been assigned by the family, and reiterated by me.

As I was sitting one night, while matters were in this state, in a little arbour in a secluded corner of our garden, from which there was but one way of egress, two persons approached and seated themselves on a bench immediately outside of the entrance. It was about nine o'clock on a dark night, and the distance to the house so great that the inmates could not have heard me if I had called with all the power of my voice. Under these circumstances, I sat trembling, while the two (men they seemed to be) began a conversation in an under tone of voice. I instantly concluded one of them to be Mr. Sandford, and was soon confirmed in that opinion, by ascertaining the subject of their conversation to be the postponing of the marriage. His companion seemed to be deeply chagrined, and honoured me with several not very flattering epithets, such as minx, obstinate, and provoking devil; and I often, during the interview, heard exclamations which were not so intelligible; as, for example, "was any thing ever so unlucky? and yet it seems reasonable! Ah, there's the difficulty of the case."

I was utterly at a loss to conceive how the postponement of the marriage could be so unlucky to any other than Mr. Sandford. He was evidently young; a year could not greatly affect his fortunes; and as to the fortunes of any other, they could have nothing to do with our marriage. Such was the tenor of my reflections, as I slowly walked towards the house after their departure, and meditated upon the singularity of what I had seen and heard. I could not in any way account for Mr. Sandford's seeing this intimate of his so clandestinely. "Why," thought I, "does he not introduce him to the family?" But the thought of there being a propriety in my communicating the circumstance to my father never entered my head, and I finally almost ceased to remember it; I was nevertheless resolved, without exactly knowing why, to delay the marriage at least for the year stipulated.

I was now under an engagement to be married in one year, and the period was to be spent in the city, in the completion of my very imperfect education. Soon afterward I took leave of my father and mother and my affianced husband, with the usual feelings of deep and momentary suffering with regard to the former, but with little sensation of any kind towards the latter; as long as the marriage could be contemplated at the distance of a whole year (a little lifetime in a young girl's estimation), I was contented and thoughtlessly happy. But this long, long year produced wonderful changes in my views of things. Towards the end of the

time, I began to dread and tremble whenever I contemplated the marriage immediately before me. I had now begun to form more consistent pictures of my own future. My imagination painted such a husband as I could fancy, and in very different colours from any in which I had ever seen Mr. Sandford; the first time I compared the two beings—the one of my imagination and the other my real and affianced husband, was one evening when with Isabel Hazlehurst. We were indulging our young hearts, in building gay and dreamy castles in the air; but the instant afterward, when my engagement came to my recollection, I was truly miserable. In fact, I did not love Mr. Sandford; nay more, he was now disagreeable to me; while I had viewed the completion of the engagement at a distance, and had never pictured in my imagination a rival to that gentleman, I was perfectly indifferent on the subject; I loathed the thoughts of the marriage, and hated Mr. Sandford because, I suppose, he interfered with my new fancies.

After reflecting and enduring this state of mind for some weeks, I resolved to break the subject to Isabel Hazlehurst, and to ask her advice. Accordingly, having given her the history of Mr. Sandford, as far as I knew it myself, and confided to her all my secret feelings, both past and present, I asked her advice; such are the beginnings of female intimacies. Isabel counselled that I should inform Mr. Sandford, as soon as I could see him, that I had changed my mind, or rather, that at the

time of my engagement, I was too young to have any mind of my own on the subject; that now my views were enlarged, and that I felt capable of judging for myself.

To my father, who, we concluded, was very anxious for the match, I was to write immediately, and candidly state my views, past and present; inform him of the interview which I had overheard in the garden between Mr. Sandford and his unknown friend, and earnestly beg his forgiveness for my fickleness.

This letter I wrote immediately to my father, and explained, or rather protested to him, at the same time, that there was no other suitor present or in expectation for my hand; that my change of views was owing solely to my improved reflection and more mature age, which, however, was advanced only some eight or ten months,—a little age of female experience.

CHAPTER XIII.

Before time enough had elapsed for me to receive an answer to my letter, Mr. Sandford suddenly made his appearance at the school, with the startling and alarming news that my father had been taken suddenly ill, and it being thought probable by his physicians that he would not recover, he was very desirous to see me before he died. I was almost heartbroken at this intelligence, and when I arrived next morning at my father's door, after riding post-haste nearly all night, I was ready to sink with fear and confusion, and a rush of thought connected with my various misfortunes, which seemed to be accumulating so fast upon me. I found my father frightfully altered, and too evidently near the close of his career; he grasped my hand convulsively, as he drew me towards him to receive a melancholy embrace. "Oh, Fanny!" said he, "your letter was near killing me."

"My dear father! did my letter make you ill?"

"No; I was seized before I received it; but it was enough to kill me."

"Do not say so, dear father; I will do as you desire; indeed, indeed, I will,—after you have heard all the circumstances."

He motioned with his hand for my mother, Mr. Sandford, and the nurse, to leave the room.

We were now alone, and he made a sign that I should be seated. His countenance, now that I had a good view of it, was indeed terribly altered. A stroke of the palsy had afflicted half his body, and one side of his face; one eye was bright and excited with the pleasure of seeing me, while the other was dim; the corner of his mouth drawn down, and all the features on that side relaxed and cadaverous; it was horrible to look upon! As if a person, in an awful moment, was making faces with one half of the countenance, and talking to you with the other,—or playing comedy with one side and tragedy with the other.

"Fanny," said he, "I know all the circumstances far better than you do; Mr. Sandford has satisfactorily explained the meeting in the garden to me; besides, my dear child, I know Mr. Sandford's whole history, and that of his family before him."

"But, my dear papa, I do not love him!"

"When, my dear Fanny, did you make that discovery?"

"Very lately, sir."

"Did you make it alone, or had you some friend or some book to assist you?"

"I had indeed a dear friend; but her advice was sought, not offered."

"Ah, I thought so! I knew it. Trust me, my dear child, that I understand what is good for you better than yourself. I have studied your dispo-

sition and that of Mr. Sandford long and closely, and have deliberately come to the conclusion, that he is exactly such a prudent, cautious, judicious young man as I should like to leave my family with when I am gone; besides, there are other powerful reasons, which I cannot mention just now."

"But, my dear father, may he not be too cautious and prudent?"

"There it is now, exactly as I expected; you have got your head full of some romantic nonsense from reading novels in the last year."

"Indeed, sir, you wrong me; I have not read a novel since I left home; they are not permitted to be brought into the school."

"No matter, no matter where you caught the disease, you have certainly been infected; but time presses,—I feel that I have but a short time to live,—I wish you to decide whether you will marry the man whom you have chosen, of your own free will, for your husband; if not, I must go to work again, and rearrange all my complicated affairs; but first tell me whether you have seen any other young gentleman whom you like better?"

"I have seen no young gentleman whom I particularly regard."

"Then decide the question with regard to Mr. Sandford, and I may say with regard to me, too; for I identify my happiness with his in this case, and perhaps it is the last which I may enjoy in this world."

I threw myself on my knees before him, seized his hand, and bathed it with tears, for I could scarcely speak: "Oh! my dear father, do not say so! indeed I cannot marry Mr. Sandford; I will do any thing else you ask me! I will live single all my days; I will give up all hopes of fortune; I will live poor and secluded if you will."

"I have none of these to ask," said he, solemnly; "I have made my last and only request, and you have rejected it; you may leave me."

"Oh, my dear father, do not drive me from you in displeasure, under such dreadful circumstances; my will is not my own in this case."

"Did you not tell me but now, that you had seen no other young man whom you liked better?"

"I did, and it is true; and yet I cannot control my affections."

"Enough! you may leave me!"

"Dear father, do not drive me from you while under your displeasure; I will be all you desire me to be in every thing but this."

"I have nothing more to say," replied he. "Your whims have thwarted the exertions and designs of more than one life-time. It is enough; we will henceforth number it among the things that have passed away."

"Dearest father, do not break my heart by this cold and settled displeasure. I have never been voluntarily undutiful till now, and God knows I would obey you if I could."

"Yes, yes; you will obey me in those things

in which it is your pleasure, as well as your duty, to obey! But you misunderstand me in this case; I put no commands upon you, nor was it ever my intention to do so; all I have ever done was for your good, not mine; now let the subject drop for ever!"

With this he rang the bell, and when the nurse appeared, he desired the rest of the family to enter.

From this moment he grew evidently worse; so that when the physician called again, he was startled by the change, and again bled him. My dutiful attentions were offered on every occasion, but he always appeared scarcely to notice them, and often, as if by accident, accepted those of Mr. Sandford; who, to tell the truth, acted upon this occasion with great tenderness and delicacy, both towards me and my poor father. This settled and cold displeasure towards myself, under such circumstances, was maddening; the next morning, after watching most of the night at his bedside unnoticed, I fell upon my knees, and entreated him to hear me; he turned his disfigured and wretched face slowly towards me, and said, "Say on; I am all attention."

"Oh, my father! I will marry Mr. Sandford!"

"Not by my orders," said he, solemnly.

"No, my dear father; of my own free will and choice!"

"And this is your settled determination; to be firmly adhered to, whether I live or die?"

"Yes; I have before Heaven solemnly promised, of my own free will, to marry Mr. Sandford at any time my dear father may choose to appoint; whether he lives or dies."

"Then you are still my consistent and devoted child; my dear Fanny, come to my arms." All my struggles to arrive at this conclusion were forgotten in the ecstacy of that embrace; melancholy it undoubtedly was, but it was necessary, and dear to my affections. The truth was, I saw, before this time, that my father's mind had suffered much from the peculiar disease with which he was afflicted, and believing, from what I saw, that his whole soul had been set upon this union during the days of his strength, I felt it to be my duty to make some sacrifice to his happiness in this time of his weakness; and, to speak the truth fully and freely, Mr. Sandford's truly delicate conduct (whether proceeding from cunning or good taste I will not undertake to say), rather led me to doubt my observations and consequent suspicions of his character.

Every face now wore a new aspect; even my own must have been more cheerful, for I was before wretched and miserable; now I had the joy proceeding from conscious rectitude in my duty to my poor father. My mother truly sympathized with all my feelings, and approved my conduct, though she deplored the necessity.

In a few days my father was able to sit up in his bed, and in less than two weeks to be rolled

about in a chair with wheels. Though I saw some of the causes thus removed which had united to coerce me into the dreaded marriage, yet I was firm and resolved in my purpose, for I saw that my father was a mere wreck of his former self, and that he might, and in all probability would, live many years in this feeble state of body and mind, depending upon the fulfilment of my voluntary promise for all the little consolation and comfort of which he was capable in this life. It seems to me to be a law of our nature, that when a powerful and vigorous mind is suddenly cut down to imbecility by disease or mental suffering, it almost always dwells with great pertinacity upon the ruling ideas and motives at the time of the attack. In consideration of this, I knew that the principal stimulus of his mind consisted in ruminating upon this marriage, and that to cut it suddenly away would be to cause his immediate dissolution.

CHAPTER XIV.

My father, having so far improved as to attain that melancholy state which the physician stated to be his probable zenith, by no means forgot the privilege with which I had invested him, of appointing the wedding-day, though he was thus far silent. That time was now appointed, and it having been determined that I should not return to school, the miserable interval was spent by me in alternate duties to my father, and the solitude of my own room. Mr. Sandford's conduct during this time was to me a riddle. He seemed to move along calmly and quietly, and to divide his time pretty much as I did my own. He seldom intruded his society upon me, unless I met him half-way. This I thought strange for a young and ardent lover, such as he had first exhibited himself to me; nevertheless it was pleasant, and I have no doubt was founded in the most consummate art, and judgment, not only of my character, but also of the depths which I had seen into his. Without any verbal communication, it is easy for two persons to understand each other thoroughly. The weakness of the one is the strength of the other.

During this most painful interval, we did not enjoy a single confidential, unrestrained interview.

His pride was either too great, or his judgment imperfect; he did not see clearly how far I could read his deep and designing character, and therein lay my strength.

I effected many discoveries at this time, which more ardent lovers seldom make so shortly before marriage, and which, I suppose, are oftener made after: necessity and pain were my teachers in this abstruse branch of human knowledge. A stranger, to have entered the room where Mr. Sandford and myself were sitting, would have said that we were a young couple who had quarrelled: so cold and formal was our intercourse. Not that I increased the distance designedly; for, to tell the truth without disguise, after mature and painful reflection, I was anxious that we should come to some amicable understanding of each other's feelings and views, and thereby form a kind of treaty for our mutual peace and my father's happiness. But Mr. Sandford's conduct confirmed beyond a doubt those suspicions of his primary motives that had been engendered in the interview which I had overheard; he seemed conscious of his own bad motives, and acquainted with my knowledge of them.

However, the time approached as rapidly as it ever did (and seemingly far more so) to the most anxious and impatient pair. My father grew no better, and as the day approached I grew no calmer. No one, who has not been similarly situated, can easily imagine the profound sadness of a

heart about to be united in a cold, formal, worldly sacrifice. When we directly think upon our hard fate, whatever it may be, and directly and boldly face the consequences, the pain is not half so great as when we forget the whole train of ideas for a moment, in gazing out upon the happiness of others, or the beauty of nature; it suddenly flashes over the memory, in the midst of our pleasing reveries, like some horrible spectre, and so it is when we sleep under such circumstances. There is, I believe, in the sleeping of every person, a space between awakening and profound sleep of the most singular nature. This little space is at once discovered by the truly miserable, if they have never done so before; and consists, as I have been informed by a medical gentleman who is a friend of mine, in the repose of all those parts of the body dependent upon the will. Let the philosophy of it be what it may, I only speak of the facts, which will be readily recognised by every person who has suffered. Nature has evidently designed this interval between sleeping and waking as one of pure and unalloyed delight, and I suppose it to resemble the happiness of the blessed more than any thing we have in this world; it is a period of oblivion to the ordinary mishaps of the day; under its influence minor ills dwindle into insignificance, and the more pleasing features of our lot in life pass in a calm but most delightful review before the recumbent mind. But let the main-spring to all this happy machinery—hope—be once taken

away, and the revery becomes a moral engine of torture; just as the oblivious feeling begins to steal gently over the senses, the spectre of our wrecked hopes starts up in our very path, and we tremble and startle into our wretched consciousness again. I speak of this because much of my most irremediable sorrow, at this time, was exhibited in this peculiar way. So long as I was awake to all my misery, and could summon judgment or moral and religious principles to my aid, I was not so wretched; but no sooner would I lay my throbbing temples on my pillow with these my moral defenders asleep, than my evil spectre was before me.

Oh! what wretched and sleepless nights did I pass during this interval! When I did sleep soundly, it was in that profound and deathlike exhaustion of mind, which more resembles the stupidity occasioned by some deadly narcotic, than the healthful slumbers of my school-days; and when I awoke, it was like a fresh burst of misery sweeping over the heart, as a new career of the same miserable rounds were again to be begun.

There is, in every young female mind, a healthful anticipation of a happy future, a looking forward to things not seen, a confident expectation of blessings yet to come, which, though not analyzed by us at that age, is nevertheless ever present and ever acting upon the naturally buoyant spirits; but, in my case, these healthful supports were suddenly knocked from under me, and I was left to look forward to a gloomy and unhappy destiny.

Escape seemed impossible; my father's very existence depended upon the fulfilment of that which was the cause of all this suffering to his daughter. He seemed totally ignorant of the sacrifice I was about to make.

How Mr. Sandford could agree to take me, upon the terms and with the feelings on my part towards him, which were but too evident, was at that time a profound mystery to me. The fortune which I could expect, though handsome, was not such as to hold out any lure for a man who sought that alone; besides, his time and happiness must necessarily, for a long time, be so burdened with the unfortunate state of our family, that an ordinary youth would have fled from us in dismay. My father, too, had expressly stipulated with him to reside in our house till his death or recovery. During this time, Mr. Sandford was as attentive to my father's helplessness as if he had been his own son, and this circumstance prevented the wretchedness which must have been visible upon my countenance from being more observed than it was, and thus necessarily affecting the rest of the family. My mother was little less wretched than myself; it is to the mother's sympathy that the daughter flies for relief; but in this case she could do little more than weep with me, and look wretched too; and thus was spent, between us, the last of those wretched days and nights which were valued by me—wretched as they were—as happy, in comparison to those which were so soon to follow.

CHAPTER XV.

The important day—the crisis of my destiny, had now arrived. The house was all bustle and confusion. Extra cooks were employed in the kitchen, and additional servants in the house. The bridemaids, whom it was thought proper to invite from the neighbourhood, arrived in the morning. Mr. Sandford set off also quite early to meet a party of gentlemen, and spend the day at the house of one of my father's friends in the neighbourhood. All persons and all things wore an external appearance the most blithe and frolicsome, such as is usual at our large country weddings of the better sort. As for myself, a stupor came over me entirely different from what I had expected from my previous anticipations: I found it now difficult to realize the truth that this was indeed my wedding-day. I stood up to be decked out and dressed for the sacrifice, like some stupid idiot, scarcely noticing the jests and playful sallies of my thoughtless and joyful attendants. My mother tried to look gay and cheerful before such of our most particular friends and relations as arrived early in the afternoon, but to me she seemed most miserable when she most affected gayety. My father was full of wretched mirth and humour, and presented a

strange contrast between his overflowing spirits and broken constitution, and my mother's sickly spirits and healthy person. He would be wheeled into the great hall of the house, where we then lived, to direct the proceedings and receive the company himself, as they severally arrived. He said too that he had a great secret by which he was going to surprise the whole company after supper, but more especially would it please the bridegroom and the bride. The house and the adjacent grounds began now to give some evidence of the expected gayeties within. Horses were crowded into stalls, both permanent and temporary; parties were walking about in various directions; and ladies, and girls, and boys, and servants crowded the apartments. Bandboxes and trunks were piled in pyramids in the various entries; carriages and gigs blockaded the several avenues without; voices were heard in all directions, and many a peal of laughter resounded through the swarming mansion, while the heart of her who should have been alive to all these demonstrations was stupified with sorrow. It was fortunate for me, however, that some little reflection and sadness are usually looked for, on such occasions, from the more sensible maidens, on the very eve of parting with home, and friends, and objects dear to the heart; otherwise my bewildered appearance must have attracted the attention of my female friends.

At length, the clergyman having arrived, and

the whole company being assembled in the largest room of the house, one of the bridemaids entered to announce the arrival of the bridegroom, and the readiness of him and his attendants to lead us to the expecting company. I was sitting in my own boudoir, dressed for the ceremony, gazing upon passing things like an indifferent spectator when the summons came. It shook my frame for an instant, but I soon mechanically arose and declared myself ready; all this must have been done in a very different spirit from what is usual on such occasions, when the heart is ready. Feeling, I suppose, there usurps more the place of formal speech. Thanks, however, to the kindness or the dulness of my attendants, my cold mechanical formality was not observed; no officious kindness was intruded upon me, to make my wretchedness palpable to all. How strange that on those occasions, when the mind is most requisite, when it is important that we should have all our thoughts about us, on the greatest and most solemn incident of our lives, they should be wandering, like the fool's eyes, to the ends of the earth. Such was the case on the present occasion. I was led by my destined husband into the midst of a crowd, which looked like the world assembled in judgment. The walls themselves seemed to have given place to a swarm of heads, extending as far as the eye could reach.

I suppose that the poor criminal on the scaffold, when about to suffer the extreme penalty of the

laws, must feel and see much as I did then; or, to speak more truly, that like me, he lacks those feelings which he would desire to have. The demand upon the mind is too great; there is such a rush of novel sensations, such a crowd of important ideas, such consequences concentrated into a single instant, that the poor object, whether bride or criminal, shrinks from the encounter, as the eye will naturally close when a million of objects demand attention at the same instant.

I was led to my place in the centre of this immense crowd, surrounded by my attendants, who were trembling far more than myself. The clergyman (of the Presbyterian denomination) already stood before us, and offered up a short prayer, imploring happiness and blessings upon our heads. Oh! how like a solemn mockery did his words fall upon my ear! and how like an involuntarily guilty creature did I feel, thus to stand in a solemn attitude, in such a presence, with such feelings! But if this prelude partially aroused my blunted sensibilities, how much more exquisitely did I feel the bitter pangs of hopeless and desperate remorse, when called upon, in the presence of God and those witnesses, to promise love and obedience to one whom I could not love! I could not utter, or signify even by a motion, the awful perjury. A solemn pause occurred in the ceremony. A pin might have been heard to drop, and the very hearts of the people seemed stilled in a profound and deathlike silence! How this would have termi-

nated, God only knows, had not some one fortunately whispered to one of the attendants to hand a glass of water, which was speedily done, and the ceremony hurried over in order that I might breathe the fresh air; not, however, before I was pronounced a lawful and wedded wife! In these trials of the conscience, how the soul clings to any little subterfuge, rather than admit to ourselves that we have committed a great sin. And thus it was with me. Slender as was this hold for my conscience, it was of infinite comfort for me to think, as I then did, that I had been a mere passive instrument in the hands of destiny.

But now that I was a wife, and receiving the congratulations of friends and relations to an interminable extent, the same lethargy came over me under which I had laboured ever since the fatal day had been appointed. Nor could all the devotion of my dear mother to the duties of hospitality which pressed upon her so oppressively, remove the cloud which hung over her spirits, and was but too plainly visible upon her usually calm and complacent countenance.

As is common at country weddings, a set supper had been provided for the guests, in the preparation of which all the young and old ladies of the neighbourhood, who pretended to skill in pastry and confectionary, had contributed their efforts. To this long array of towering cakes, and floating islands, and sparkling wines, we were soon summoned. I was led in due state, by my new-made

husband, to the head of the table, where my father had already been wheeled in his great arm-chair; and now commenced the hum and the din of a hundred voices; the rattling of knives; the running of servants; the politeness of beaux to their mistresses; the drinking of wine, and the telling of stories,—and the joke, and the repartee, and the laugh, which, though not uproarious, was deafening, from the number and the merriment of the guests.

When this state of confusion, and merriment, and enjoyment to most of those present, had lasted for some three-quarters of an hour, my father, who was as merry as the youngest and the gayest of the party, raised his great carving-knife, and bringing down the handle with three loud raps upon the table, astounded the company into silence as perfect as if they had been petrified.

"A true story! a true story!" was first uttered by my father, and then repeated along the table, more loudly as it went farther from its source, until the attention of the whole company had been thus gained, and anxious heads might be seen vying with each other to reach nearer the centre of the table, and thus catch the story as it went down the long line of guests. My father prided himself very much upon his judgment touching the quality of his wines, and a large number of bottles had been that day brought out of the cellar and placed in one of the closets of the room, under his immediate inspection. No one was privy to his designs, which he thus laid open.

"My friends! before I relate my short but true story, which, I say beforehand, relates to the bride and bridegroom, you must all pledge the young couple in some real old Madeira, which I have had in my cellar since my daughter's birth."

The servants now began setting the bottles along the table, one before each gentleman, until the whole table was supplied. Each poured out for the ladies within his reach; Mr. Sandford, of course, filled for me, and his father, who sat at my elbow, and who, I should have told you before, was introduced to me in the early part of the evening, and by whose voice I recognised instantly the strange nocturnal visiter of Mr. Sandford in the garden. It may be readily imagined that this discovery did not tend to tranquillize my feelings, or make me enjoy the present company in any very enviable degree. By some strange accident, or perhaps by a providential guidance, I happened to observe that the wine which had been poured out for me had rather a singular appearance, and I therefore concluded that I would merely touch it to my lips, as, indeed, was generally my practice. The pledge was soon given, when Mr. Sandford, bowing his head by way of thanks for the honour, as I supposed, raised the glass to his lips and drank the contents to the bottom. I imitated his example so far as to touch my lips to mine. The elder Mr. Sandford, I observed, had taken a mouthful of his, and had speedily ejected it on the floor. As soon as the toast was drank, I pointed to the bottle be-

fore Mr. Sandford, and remarked to my father (who was particularly touchy upon the subject), that he had given his principal guests a spoiled bottle of wine; at the same time I ordered one of the servants to throw it out, while my father replaced it from a supply in the cooler.

"The story! The story!" was now called for, from various quarters of the table.

"My friends," said my father, "my story is very simple and soon told. Perhaps there is more than one person present who recollects Mr. Thornton, the old bachelor, as he was called at the neighbouring village?"

"Yes, yes, we recollect him well," replied several of the older guests.

"Well!" continued my parent, "the wedding which we have met to celebrate to-night was made by him!"

I started! and many others exhibited evidence of as great surprise; while my father continued:—

"That Mr. Thornton was my only brother—my long-lost, shipwrecked brother Holcomb St. Clair. I see you are all amazed, but it is true. I did not, indeed, know of our relationship till the night of his death; when he revealed to me his name; how he had been picked up at sea by a vessel bound for New-Orleans; how he had commenced with nothing, and at length amassed a large fortune: not, however, before it was too late; for the object for which he toiled was no more. This he learned from a friend of his, who is now

present, the elder Mr. Sandford; and who had married the only remaining daughter of Mr. Moreton, my father's ancient enemy. You see, my friends, how, by the perseverance and determination of one man, the old feud has been healed, and two hearts made happy. Yet an old crone, who remains upon the land of the Moretons, intruded herself into my presence on this the day of my daughter's wedding, to prophesy and anathematize against this most unholy union, as she called it. My brother left his whole estate in the trusteeship of Mr. Sandford, Counsellor Bates, and myself, for the benefit of the young couple before you, provided they should ever be married; but at the same time earnestly entreating us to keep it a secret, each from his own child. And providing also, in case there should be no disposition on the part of the young people, after being thrown frequently together, to form the connexion, that my daughter Frances should then be lawfully entitled to one-half of his whole estate, and the remainder be advantageously invested for the purpose of establishing a free-school at the village hard by. Now, my friends, I feel it to be my duty to declare solemnly, before God and this assembly, that I have kept the trust and the secret reposed in me faithfully until the present moment; and I doubt not that my colleague, who is present, has been equally faithful; but of that he must speak for himself."

Mr. Sandford, senior, being thus called upon,

arose in his place, and, amid a good deal of coughing and hemming, said:—

"In the same solemn manner I declare before this assembly"—Here he stopped, and screamed out, reaching his arms half across the table towards his son—"My God! what is the matter?"

I now turned my eyes towards the object of his solicitude, and oh! the wretchedness of that countenance! I can even at this distance of time see fear, and despair, and death, written in characters too awful and legible to be mistaken. Before any one had thought of offering assistance, he had fallen to the floor; and raising himself upon his elbow, pointed to the wine-glass, for he was already speechless. Some of the by-standers, thinking this a sign to hand him drink, presented him water and wine, but his eyes were fixed. The room was now an alarming scene of confusion; some standing upon chairs, others upon tables; one recommending this, another that; some accounting for it in one way, and some in another. The fact is, that corrosive sublimate had been dissolved in some common wine, and carelessly left standing in the repository where my father had secreted his old and choice Madeira.

I remained on my knees by the side of my new-made husband, in a state of distraction which no pen can describe; and it was not the least of my afflictions to know within myself, that my sorrow was not such as ought to characterize a widowed

bride. He was now, indeed, a corpse, and that before any medical aid could be procured. I was borne to my chamber almost as lifeless as he to whom I had mechanically pledged my faith so short a time before.

CHAPTER XVI.

After the melancholy events just related, I know very little of those which took place around me for the first week. I have a confused recollection of seeing every one in deep mourning, and an expression of wo and sadness upon every countenance. I remember also a moving about my chamber upon tiptoe, conversation in whispers, and occasionally the visit of the doctor to the darkened room. One of the first things that I recollect distinctly, and unaccompanied with the overpowering lethargic feelings of the preceding weeks, was that one morning, while I was lying in a tranquil state of half sleeping, I felt some warm tears falling fast upon my face, and upon looking up to see from whom they came, saw my dear friend Isabel Hazlehurst standing over me. Never was her dear and beautiful face more welcome to my sight. I needed just such a presence; not that I was by any means fitted to enjoy her society, but the sight of her countenance brought such consolation to my mind, it tranquillized my nerves and composed my spirit.

But I was not suffered to improve in this natural and gradual manner. Few days had elapsed thus before she came into the room with something so

evidently struggling at her heart, that even I, prostrated as I was, demanded to know what more dreadful things were yet necessary to fill up the bitter cup of my destiny. She seated herself by the bed, and taking my hand, said, "My dear Fanny, you have great strength of mind; now is the time to call it into action."

"To what is this to lead, my dear Isabel? For God's sake, tell me at once."

"You know, dear Fanny," continued she, "that your father was far from being well when the dreadful accident happened."

"My God! is my father dead too?"

"He is alive, and wishes to see you; but I came to prepare you for seeing him much altered."

I will not dwell upon the melancholy particulars. My father had desired earnestly to see me. Alas! that meeting was the last we ever had in this world! and it seemed to me that all my sorrows had again assembled in presence before me. To crown all, my father—my own dear father—implored his child's forgiveness, calling himself criminal, guilty, and blind! God knows I had nothing to forgive. But the grave, in three short weeks, closed over the last of the St. Clairs,—over the last male of a once numerous, powerful, and wealthy house. Thus were my mother and myself left wretched widows; but we were miserable from very different feelings. She from too strong an attachment, *I* from too *little;* and yet I was as wretched and as miserable as I could have been if

my heart had been deeply concerned in the tragedy which commenced the series.

My cup was not yet full. When some three months had elapsed, and my health had become somewhat restored and my spirits a little more elastic, the servant one day brought me a letter from the village post-office, directed to Mrs. Frances Sandford. I opened it without dreaming that it was any thing more than a friendly letter from some of my old school friends; but oh, cruel destiny! all my former sufferings were light in comparison to those inflicted by this cruel letter. It deliberately charged me with murdering "my husband" on his bridal night. The cruel and tremendous train of too specious charges which it linked together with an ingenuity that Satan himself could scarcely have excelled, had well-nigh cost me my reason! It alluded to my not tasting the fatal wine,—my ordering the servant to throw out the evidence of my guilt as soon as my "hellish" work was completed,—my known aversion to the match, —my excuse for the bad wine,—and other lesser corroborating circumstances, which really threw over the whole charge a frightful plausibility.

I had ever heard the elder Mr. Sandford spoken of as a man of more than ordinary shrewdness and soundness of mind; I therefore could receive none of the cruel consolation derivable from his supposed insanity.

Mr. Chevillere has, I believe, witnessed, on more than one occasion, how this individual has pursued

me with this idea; becoming more annoying to me the more unsettled his mind became. His friends are now convinced of his lunacy, and have, it is said, safely secured him from further intrusions upon me. This has given me much consolation; for of late I have been afraid to move from home on account of his persecutions. Long after the occurrences just related, my mother was united in marriage to her cousin, Mr. Brumley. This alliance was eagerly urged upon her, when once proposed, by all her friends, and by none more ardently than myself. They were educated together, under the same roof, and from earliest youth had entertained the affection of brother and sister for each other.

I have now given Mr. Chevillere a glance at all those portions of our family history which it was necessary for him to know, in order to approve, as he undoubtedly will do, of my intention, long since formed, never to carry my personal misfortunes and their gloomy consequences into the bosom of a happy family; at all events, never while I am subject to the persecutions of that man whom he has so lately seen violate my feelings. Some of the leading incidents of this narrative have already been related, as before said, to Mr. Chevillere's honoured mother. She will, I am quite sure, approve of my decision. But Mr. Chevillere once propounded another question to me, which I promised then to answer at another time. It was "whether, if none of these things had ever hap-

pened, the offer of his hand would have been accepted by me." I will now candidly and honestly answer that question. My heart would, if I allowed it, dictate an answer in the affirmative.

Now, sir, let us part,—but as friends; more, I am sure, you will not now desire to be considered.

CHAPTER XVII.

V. Chevillere to B. Randolph.

(In continuation.)

"As you may well imagine, this narrative did not lie unread. Every page was greedily devoured, before I closed my eyes, which was late in the night. I lay late next morning; the family had breakfasted when I descended to the parlour. Mrs. Brumley, however, seasoned that meal to me with her delightful conversation, which was the more agreeable as no one intruded upon us.

"Announcing the object of my visit, I respectfully solicited her consent and co-operation. The one was charmingly granted, the other enthusiastically promised; I say enthusiastically, because that good lady was exceedingly anxious to adopt any laudable course which was likely to dispel her daughter's melancholy.

"Ah, Randolph! her language was too flattering for me to repeat verbatim; she, however, told me, that she was sure every feeling of her (admirable) daughter's heart leaned in my favour; that she had nevertheless not given way even to the first impulses of those emotions, because she considered it her duty never to carry her misfortunes into any

other family. 'But,' said she, 'this is a morbid sensitiveness, which you must overcome; and when once she is happily married, she will be again restored to her natural self and to happiness.'

"I found that she had walked to the banks of the river, where I soon found her seated on a rugged little stony seat, looking over upon the water and the blue cliffs, as melancholy as if it had been twilight instead of a beautiful, cool, unclouded morning. She looked up as my footsteps disturbed the pebbles in the bank. I was in my most happy mood, and springing to the little level, I seated myself on the grass at her feet, and seized her passive hand.

"'Did Miss Frances suppose that there was one single circumstance in her sad story which would not render her far more dear to my heart than ever? Could she have been in earnest when she once said that such a revelation would be a sufficient answer to my suit? Certainly not! Believe me, dear lady, the sheets which I read last night have made me a hundred times more determined than ever to prosecute my humble claims to this dear hand.'

"No answer was returned, but one plentiful shower of tears after another: these I thought favourable, and I proceeded: 'Your mother and mine unite their irresistible petitions with my feeble suit; certainly, then, after the concluding acknowledgment, which I will ever hold in my possession,

you cannot persist in your too refined notions of delicacy.'

"But, Randolph, I am too eager in rushing towards the conclusion, to relate all the particulars of the how and wherefore: she is mine! mine, Randolph; that is, after old Sandford's death: by heavens, I must 'put a spider into his dumpling' if he is not so kind as to die soon. My time now passes off here delightfully. Frances begins really to look cheerful, and I doubt not, when her tranquillity is more restored, will consent to an early day; seeing that, when once she is mine, she will be beyond the reach of her tormentor. Will that day ever come, Randolph? Will this beautiful creature really be mine? I can scarcely realize my own happiness; yet her eyes say so, and her very music speaks to my soul in anticipation of coming enjoyment.

"Oh! how I hate that old saw about a 'slip between the cup and the lip.' 'Tis all stuff; I will not believe a word of it; there is no philosophy in it: for if it had been so often true as its language imports, this world would have been, and still would be, nothing but one great and ludicrous scene of broken cups and spilt pleasures. Misery must be common when it becomes ludicrous; yet if all the world were standing gaping over their broken vessels, looking dismal at their loss, it certainly would turn tragedy into farce. The fact is, there must be a great preponderance of enjoyment in this world before tragedy can be affecting.

None feel losses so much as those who are rich. Providence has given us a fair world, and peopled it with beautiful creatures, and covered it with varying trees and flowers, seas and rivers, diamonds and minerals, delicious fruits and luxuries to gratify the palate and the eye, and charm the soul; and yet one of our standing thanks to the great Giver of these things is, 'there are many slips between the cup and the lip!' If the slips had been more numerous than the potations, the latter would have been noticed instead of the former. It is the rarity and the greatness of these slips which make them remarkable.

"There is a page of philosophy for you, with a vengeance! But you cannot expect me to be very sensible or very consistent under existing circumstances. Only reflect what a thumping there is against my ribs, whenever I think of the subject with which I commenced this epistle: a pretty story I made of it, indeed; but then it is natural that it should be so, after all. Does a man, when he climbs to an intoxicating height, turn round and philosophize on the steps by which he ascended? By no means. He turns himself and elevates his wings in this new heaven to which he has risen, as I now raised mine. He thinks of soaring in these new regions, or climbing to those still more exalted; but let me see if I can, by any strength of resolution, get back to common sense again.

"This once mysterious lady of the black mantle has wonderfully changed within the last few days.

She has actually laughed! yes, till the tears ran down her cheeks; and at what, do you suppose? At a certain epistle from a southern gentleman of about your dimensions! Yes, it is true. I know you will swear never to indite another to so faithless a correspondent; but I could not help it. She had a great curiosity to know more about my cousin; so I thought it would exhibit her in a favourable light to show her your first impressions. Unfortunately, I handed her the wrong letter, and as bad luck would have it, we had to peruse the whole before we came to the first one, which was a very natural consequence of the pack being turned upside down. I found that the letters themselves appeared to more advantage, too, when she read them. I could thus receive all the palpable substance of them from her exquisitely musical voice; besides seeing all the delightful effects of the thoughts, as they were beautifully reflected upon a transparent countenance, the features of which vibrated like the leaves of a sensitive-plant when too rudely assailed.

"The face is but a reflecting surface for the soul at last. All other beauty than that of the soul transferred to the features is earthy and grovelling. Oh, Randolph, how seldom does it fall to the lot of man to find such a treasure! Age seems almost necessary to bring that experimental wisdom which engages our respect and esteem, by which process beauty departs; fate seems generally to determine that no one individual shall have

a combination of all the good qualities at once; but here, Randolph, in the case of this most remarkable young lady, experience and wisdom have come before age had stolen away the beauty. Oh, rare and excellent concurrence of circumstances! What if they were the death of a presumptuous aspirant, unworthy to breathe in the same atmosphere with her. Hah! perhaps I am myself presumptuous? Methinks I have read somewhere of an enchantress, who slew a host of admirers in succession, for a like presumption! Shall I indeed possess this idol of all my faculties? Sanguine youth and southern blood say yes! Her guardians and mine say yes! Herself says yes! And by all that is resolute, naught but the Ruler of our destinies shall say no.

"Excuse the incoherent strain of this epistle, and believe me to be, far more coherently, your friend,

"V. CHEVILLERE."

CHAPTER XVIII.

B. Randolph to V. Chevillere.

"Rockfish Gap, Virginia.

"Dear Friend,

"Once more I behold as it were the dwelling-place of my fathers! Once more I stand upon these high places, and look down over the loved tracts of "the Old Dominion!" You know that I have always loved old Virginia, and, by my troth, I may now add young Virginia too. But before I tell you of our parting scene, permit me to say a few words of my older mistress.

"It always of late excites painful and melancholy ideas, when I can have an extended view of this highly-favoured country, as I now have from the table-land of this mountain-top. Here before me are eastern and western Virginia! The Tuckahoes* and the Cohees. From this rich and highly romantic spot a looker-on may see the onward march of events; and many things which

* In Virginia, the inhabitants east of the Blue Ridge are called *Tuckahoes*, and those on the west *Cohees*; as some allege, from the Scotch-Irish phrase "*quo'he*" (quoth he).

are not generally observed by those who are immediately under their influence; and it is this which excites my melancholy. But it is the eastern view which principally produces that effect. *There* are the dilapidated houses, and overgrown fields, and all the evidences of a desperate struggle with circumstances far beyond their control.

"Here, to the left, are the wide stretching and worn-out domains of some broken lord of the soil, with his wagons loaded, his carriage ready, his descendants collected, and his negroes in travelling array, about to take a final leave of the moss-grown hearths and graves of his ancestors. Many a tear is shed over the scenes of his younger days; many a longing, lingering look is cast behind him at the old weather-board mansion, in the architecture of the seventeenth century, where he and his fathers before him had dispensed their hospitality with a too generous hand. Assembled also in funeral sadness are the worn-out hounds, and the venerable setter, which had so often made glades and forests resound with their enlivening music; and swung upon the shoulders of one of the half-grown descendants, are the very horn and fowling-piece of more than one head of the family; the former of which had so often recalled hunter and hounds to the generous entertainments of the day and the evening, when the goblet and the song went round, and the enlivening cotillion closed the ruinous gayeties of the festival.

"I do not envy that man who is callous to these

hallowed feelings of the emigrant cavalier. Poor, exhausted, eastern Virginia! she is in her dotage. Her impassable roads protect her alike from the pity and the contempt of foreign travellers;* but with all her weakness, with all the imbecilities of premature age upon her, I love her still.

"On the western side, a totally different scene greets my eyes. *There* a long and happy valley stretches far as the eye can reach, with its green hills and cultivated vales, neat farm-houses, and fragrant meadows, and crystal springs, and sparkling streams, its prosperous villages, its numerous churches, and schools, and happy, happy people. There, Chevillere, our college days were spent, when all were joyous, and laughing, and frolicsome around us; when the happiness of the present hour was all that was asked or cared for; when the tumultuous impulses of young hopes and sanguine youth threw care and trouble to the winds, and buoyed us up upon the flood-tide of thoughtless happiness. There the spirit of the age is working out a gradual revolution, which, in its onward career, will sweep away the melancholy vestiges of a former and more chivalrous and generous age beyond the mountains; 'tis sad to look upon, but I do not repine at the necessity which produces these new impulses.

* Most of the late English travellers have bestowed little notice upon the Old Dominion. *Vide* Stewart, Hamilton, and Trollope. The Duke of Saxe Weimar indeed blundered through Virginia, and mistook her buzzards for eagles.

"Virginia has been the mother of states. Her sons have peopled the forests of the west, and now her turn has come to build up her own fortunes—destiny has willed this course of events, and man cannot gainsay it.

"But while I prate of the elder matron, I leave her young namesake neglected. A few days after the interview with your mother, mentioned in my last letter, as the sun was just sinking behind the towering vapours of the Santee, and the sombre shadows of the evening were throwing their lengthening outlines over the green, and the brilliant fire-flies were flashing their fitful rays over these southern scenes, I espied Virginia sitting at the low parlour window, with her head resting upon her hand, as she gazed out upon the setting sun, through the interstices of the rich vines which so tastefully festoon the windows. I walked into the room, more engaged upon my own thoughts than how I should most appropriately communicate them to her who was the object of them.

"'To-morrow,' said I, 'I leave Belville!' more as an exclamation than addressed to her.

"'To-morrow! said you?' exclaimed Virginia.

"'Yea, to-morrow, Virginia; why not to-morrow? the sooner I go, the sooner I will return.'

"'True, but I would rather you should stay now the longer, and be longer in returning.'

"'But you know that would derange all our plans respecting your cousin.'

"You see we have arranged it thus; I am to

return immediately from Virginia, when our nuptials will be celebrated in the good old southern style; immediately after which we will proceed, with all convenient despatch, to the home of my fathers, where, if your suit is likely to be crowned with success, we will then await your arrival with your bride; otherwise we shall proceed to New-York.

"But to return; morning came, and with it came the servant and horses to the door. If I had not been so confoundedly sad myself, I should have enjoyed Virginia's confusion most particularly. She thought it would not be appropriate to appear melancholy on the occasion. She therefore attempted to be gay, but fruitlessly: and when she discovered that your mother and I both saw through her too childish arts, she hastily left the breakfast table, without having tasted a mouthful. The fact was, as I closely observed her, I saw that her eyes were full, and that she must either let the tears come, or run for it; she chose the latter, of course. When the gloomy and nominal meal was over, your mother told me that I must seek Virginia to say *farewell*, as she would not return of her own free will. I bounded through the rooms of the second floor with a false alacrity, similar to the speed which a man employs when he is about to plunge headlong into a cold bath. I at length found her, the green shutters all closed, sitting in the corner of the darkened room, with a white handkerchief thrown over her face; I drew

it away, and found, as soon as my eyes became accustomed to the light, that she had been weeping. I could not bear this; seizing her therefore in my arms, and printing a parting blessing upon her lips, while mine made a gurgling sound in the throat for a *farewell* exclamation, I rushed out of the house, mounted my horse and galloped away, without even saying adieu to your mother. Oh! that wretched day! fifty times I would have turned back, if the fear of ridicule had not impelled me forward.

"And now, my dear fellow, the next that you hear or see of me will be either at the seat of the Randolphs with my bride or in New-York; till then, fare you well.

"B. RANDOLPH."

CHAPTER XIX.

V. Chevillere to B. Randolph.

"Oaklands, 18—

"Dear Friend,

"Give us joy, my dear fellow; for Lamar and myself are made men. Last evening, just about the same hour at which I came on shore from the "North America" steamboat, who should land at the same spot but Mrs. and Miss Hazlehurst, attended by Lamar, with his arm in a sling. Since that time, I have ascertained that he has not only triumphed over poor Arthur, but which is better, and more to be rejoiced at, he has triumphed over Isabel's scruples about going to the south and to a slave-country. Such was the state of things with him in the city, when a note from me, informing him of a like success on my part, induced him to propose, and to prevail upon the two ladies to make the present visit. Since this addition to our party, we have arranged every thing. The day is set, my dear fellow, and Lamar and myself will, at the same time and place, receive a legal title to the hands of two of the most interesting girls in these northern latitudes: so you may go back to Belville as soon as you like, and inform my mother

that you have my most hearty consent to your marriage with my cherished and beloved cousin. Yes; go, Randolph, and bring her to Virginia, where we will meet you and spend the Christmas-holydays. I suppose you think it strange that my letters become shorter and shorter with the increase of my subjects. But my feelings are not now in the writing mood; I do not feel so communicative—so desirous to commune with old friends: not that I regard you less, for you know that I do not; but that I have a *new outlet* for my confidence.

"Until we all meet again once more, believe me to be yours, most sincerely,

"VICTOR CHEVILLERE."

CHAPTER XX.

CONCLUSION.

On a certain evening, about —— months after the events related in the last chapter, and during those most jovial days in "old Virginia" between Christmas and New-Year's-day, the sun was just sinking in the western horizon, behind a long veil of fleecy and dappled winter clouds, tinged with the richest hues of crimson and pink; a gentle breeze was just rippling the red and dried-up leaves along the lawn, and monotonously sounded through the naked boughs of the grove of ancient oaks, which stood around and in front of the venerable domicil of the Randolphs; the hounds had sought the protection of the kennel from the chills of the evening, and the solitary bell of the ancient wether, as he led the little flock into the primitive-looking fold, could just be heard above the lowing of the few household cattle which still remained unsheltered; all external objects around the venerable establishment bore that delightful aspect of rural repose which is so soothing to those who yet retain, after the fierce struggles of the world, a heart susceptible of these simple emotions, and a conscience untainted by crime.

Not so profound, however, was the repose within the extensive walls of the old mansion. Lights were seen passing and repassing through the most uninhabited portions of the house, while all the lower and usually occupied apartments gave evidence of some rare occasion.

In the western wing and largest parlour of the establishment, a roaring hickory fire gave out its genial heat in no niggardly rays. The large branching silver candlesticks, which stood at each side of a full-length picture of General Washington, on the mantel-piece, were richly fringed with white bridal ornaments, after the good old fashion; and as lively a set of lads and lasses as ever moved through the figures of a cotillion, were keeping time to the impetuous thumping of their own hearts, and the long-sweeping bow-hands of two hereditary fiddlers stationed behind the door. In a little recess, formed by the old-fashioned projecting chimney, sat three youthful ladies; their chairs forming the figure of a rude triangle; the hands of the one in the centre locked in those of her companions, and their heads forming a lovely little constellation. Three happier brides never united their hands, hearts, and heads, than Virginia Bell Randolph, Frances Chevillere, and Isabel Lamar. It was heart-cheering to behold with what rapidity and gasping eagerness Virginia poured out the rich treasures of a long and, as she thought, an eventful journey, to her new friends on each side of her. A stranger, who should have entered at

that moment, would have declared that they were sisters, just met after a long and painful separation.

Along the sides of the antique and lofty parlour sat several old gentlemen, dressed in the fashion of *seventy-six*. Their small-clothes fastened at the knee with the buckles which their fathers wore in the days of "tobacco-money," and their hair powdered and tied behind the collars of their long-tailed coats. A few of these venerable remnants of a former and, at least, a more chivalrous age, are still left in eastern Virginia, to smoke their pipes, fight over their battles, and bewail the impoverishment of the land and the degeneracy of their descendants. The cocked hats and black cockades, it is true, have disappeared; but many of their contemporaries still linger upon the scene, as melancholy memorials of the too evident mortality of the venerated worthies who wear them. At the farthest extremity of the room from the fire, and on the opposite side of the door from the musicians, stood the three "Southerns." Randolph was holding his hands hard pressed against his sides, as Lamar related to him some of the adventures of the Kentuckian in New-York, which he thought Chevillere had not sufficiently descanted upon by letter. Chevillere stood in the middle with his arms folded, apparently listening, but with his eyes fixed upon a certain corner of the room, to which we have already directed the reader's attention.

Old Cato stood, with a small salver under his

arm, a little in the back-ground from the crowd near the door; his eye intently fixed upon those of his master's bride, and unconsciously moving a step forwards, if she happened to turn her head in that direction. If any one advanced towards or passed by him, his person as naturally bowed forward as the willow to the wind. Notwithstanding the hilarity of the scene, the time, and the occasion, his countenance was still serene and dignified; the only evidence of a contrary feeling being the almost imperceptible patting of his advanced foot to the cadences of the music.

"Cato," said Randolph, "tell the musicians, as soon as the present set have gone through the figures, to strike up one of Jessy Scott's* best Virginia reels." Turning to Randolph and Lamar, "We must initiate those three ladies in the corner into the mysteries of the Virginia reel." The set having gone through the figure, the three Southerns, who, it must be recollected, were well versed in the art, presented themselves before the three ladies already mentioned. They begged to be excused, pleaded ignorance of the figures, and declared that they would certainly be laughed at by all the young girls in the room. But no excuse

* Jessy Scott is a coloured gentleman, who lives at Charlotteville, Virginia; has three sons distinguished musicians; one of whom was educated in France. Few strangers visited Mr. Jefferson, during his life-time, who did not likewise visit Mr. Scott. He is an accomplished gentleman. We trust that he is yet alive, and able to play the Cameronian Rant.

could be taken. Randolph led out Mrs. Chevillere; Lamar, Mrs. Randolph; and Chevillere, Mrs. Lamar. The additional couples were soon arranged down the room; the ladies on one side and the gentlemen on the other, as is customary in the usual country-dance.

The order of the country-dance is in these simple figures reversed; the usual romping motion of hands round commencing, instead of ending, the set. The general effect of this rural figure is hilarious and exhilirating in the extreme, and, on the present occasion, did not lose credit by our novices. Few persons would have recognised in the bright and laughing countenance of Mrs. Chevillere, the sad and demure little recluse of the Hudson. But a few rounds were necessary to initiate the strangers completely into the apparently abstruse figure. We have seen these figures frequently attempted in Pennsylvania and New-York, but always to the music of some jig or Scotch strathspey. This is not correct; the time is about the same as that usually employed in cotillions, and the step slow and graceful. In this way each lady dances, at one stage of the reel, a kind of solo minuet, at the conclusion of which she carries on a mock flirtation with each gentleman of the set in succession. It must be apparent at once, to every dancing lady, how ridiculous this must appear when done to the tune of a sailor's hornpipe.

The reel being brought to a close, and soon after the more substantial entertainments of the evening

having been served up, carriages now began to draw up to the door, and such guests took their leave as did not form part of the family party for the holydays. After the bustle of departure, calling for shawls, cloaks, and mantles had somewhat subsided,—the three remaining happy pairs drew up their chairs around the large blazing chunk fire, and évidently prepared themselves for some remaining entertainment. The fiddlers, having stood up in the centre of the room, their instruments tied in green bags under their arms, and each having drank a long and wordy toast in strong waters to each of the brides, took their departure, with many bows, and scrapes, and motions of the hat; with each of which old Cato, unknowingly to himself, made a slight inclination of the head. Having closed the door, Cato advanced to a corner of the room, and placed a stand with lights at his master's right-hand, and then produced a large, coarse-looking letter. It was written upon rough-edged foolscap paper; was folded square as a chess-board, and evidently contained many sheets, written upon ruled black-lead pencil lines,—looking very much, upon the whole, like an old copy-book. This formidable package was addressed to "Victor Chevillere, Esquire, and Augustus Lamar, Esquire. Present."

It was no sooner opened, than (at the very sight of it) Lamar burst out into one of his long, irrepressible fits of laughter. "For mercy's sake, Chevillere," said he, "only wait till I compose my-

self a little, and wipe the tears from my eyes, before you begin that letter. But, tell me, do you really say you can make it all out?"

"I have spent two hours, I tell you, in deciphering it, on purpose that you might all enjoy it without interruption," replied he. "Here it is."

'Down low in old Virginny, 25th day of November, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and ——.

'DEAR GENTLEMEN,

'They tell me hereabouts you're married. Well, hurrah for old Kentuck, I say, and her sister Carolina. I'm married, too! yes, and I believe everybody's married, nearabouts, as far as I can learn. It's twisted strange, ain't it, when a feller gets half corned,* everybody reels round; and when a feller gets married, everybody else should get married just at that particular time.

'Yes, it's a fact; it seems to be goin about now like the influenza and the cholera, and the parsons are dragged about like country doctors in a panic. 'But keep up your heart, my hearty,' says I to the old gentleman that coupled us up, 'it will soon be over; for most of 'em won't have it but once, and it'll soon run through a neighbourhood; and I've been told it kills very few.'

'But I'm tetotally bamboozled if I ain't tellin you of the killed and wounded, before I've told you who fout, and whereabouts—but let it go, the

* Western term for drunk.

lead always comes first, and the powder afterward —a man must let off a little of the extra steam, you know, or he would burst his biler. I was always one of them sort of fellers that went upon the high pressure system.

'But ain't it a little particular now, that I should be settin here of a rainy day in Mr. Randolph's house—he that you gentlemen talked so much about—and be writing you this long letter; my nose close down on the paper, and strainin my eyes till every thing in the world looks like pot-hooks and hangers when I look up. But I rub my eyes, and at it again, for fear I might git off the trail; and my little wife, Betsy, she sits there, 'fraid to wink her eye lest she mout put me out, and I'll be hanged if she hasn't dropped a dozen stitches already in that stockin she's knittin, she says, jist because she can't keep her eyes off my face—with my eyes and mouth all workin up and down, like I was makin mouths at the paper, and could see my face in it. And so I jumped up and turned the table round, with my back to Betsy,—and now she's giglin at me, because, she says, she can see the hair on the crown of my head workin yit, and drops of sweat rollin down my temples this winter day. 'The fact is, Betsy,' says I, 'this pen you made me is like an old field-colt, a little skittish in the breakin; it goes along as stately and as stiff as a charger for a little while, until it comes to some of these hills and gullies in the paper, and then it begins to prance, and caper, and

git suple in the timbers, until down comes a great dab of ink, like a rider in the mud. There now,' says I, 'Betsy, I'm hanged if I wouldn't rather ride a three-year-old filly bare-backed through a cane-brake, than git a fair start on that pen. You kin hold on to the mane even if the filly does kick up behind; but this pen blots it down as bald as a pancake, no notice and no warnin nor nothin, nor no mane to hold on to.'

'Well, here I go again, on a new trail, with a fresh pen. A new broom sweeps clean, they say.

'I have read over now what I've writ, an I'm dadshamed if it ain't all up in snarls. I don't see how you'll ever git into it; and what's more, I don't see how you'll ever git out of it, when once you are in. I thought I had begun at the beginnin of my story, when I left you, and had got more than half-way through by this time. But I find that I've been poppen my bill into it, and out of it again, like a kingfisher in a mill-dam; or, maybe, I'm more like a feller lost in a rye-field, the rye higher than his head, dodging and poking about; thinking all the time he's goin straight through, when, in fact, he ain't gone a hundred yards from where he started. I can't see, no how, how you used to git on so slick through them long letters. It used to look mighty easy; but when a feller comes to the trial of it, it's a real job, I tell you. The great drops of sweat come pouring down every now and then on to the paper, and I jump back, thinkin its the pen lettin off the steam again; and sure enough,

the jump starts another great bald blot as black as a bullet hole; and that's the way I make so many big stops. You see, I mind my stops, as the schoolmaster used to say. Oh! if he had only seen this letter, if he wouldn't have ruled a page on my back. You see, I hav'n't got started yet; it's like a tangled skeene of thread; there's no way of gittin into it unless you break right in, like an ox into a corn crib.

'Oh! my stars and turnips! if I did'n't forgit to tell you how I found old Pete Ironsides; that's just what was the matter with me. I thought something was wrong; but hang me if ever I thought once that that something was old Pete. He spoke to me the minute I sot my foot inside the stable-door. 'Hello! Pete,' says I, 'stand up there;' and I'm a papist if he didn't laugh as natural as Mr. Lamar with his white teeth. Yes, he showed every tooth in his head: he didn't laugh loud, as one may say, but he laughed *long* though. Oh! it would have done you good to have seen that laugh; there was the red and white of his teeth and gums; I'm a steamboat if it didn't look like a ripe water-*million*.

'But whose house do you think Pete had been boarding at? At Betsy's father's. And who's Betsy? Why Betsy was the little girl I saw in the Circus. And seeing how well they had treated Pete, I thought, maybe, they mout treat his betters as well. And so I struck up to em; and a cleverer set of people you never saw *south of the Potomack*,

as Mr. Lamar used to say. The old man got quite in the notion of movin to the West; and sure enough, he's comin out there next spring, bag and baggage. And well he may, as I've carried off the flower of his flock. But I didn't run away with her; no, no. I asked the old man and old woman, and all the girls and boys; but I asked her first though.

'Well now, Betsy,' says I, after I had been sparkin some weeks, 'how would you like to go to old Kentuck?'

'Do you think father will go sure enough?' said she.

'Come now, Betsy, none of your playing sly; you know what I mean.'

'Law, now, Mr. Damon,' says she, 'you're such a funny man, a body never knows how to take you.'

'That's the very thing,' says I; 'take me for a husband.'

'Law, Mr. Damon;' and she put her arm round her eyes, but I pulled it down again.

'Now,' says I, 'Betsy, you must come up to the scratch now; no flinchin now.'

'So in about ten minutes, when I begun to think the jig was up with me, for she began to look serious,

'Well,' says she to me, 'you may ask father.'

'I looked over my shoulder just now at her.

'Oh!' says she, 'you're writing something about me now.'

'And with that she jumped up, and snatched

away the paper, and made this great dash you see here like a fishingpole and a turtle at the end of it.

'There now,' says I, 'Betsy, you have made a pretty spot of work of it.'

'Let me see where I have got to now. Ah! I see—we had a tare down sneezer of a wedding: the old folks were quite pleased, and I rather suspicion the young ones were not far behind them. After it was all over, and we had all got settled down agin to the regular old ways, I spoke up one day at dinner about starting next day to old Kentuck. The old lady and Betsy took the hint, and straightways tuned up their pipes.

'But the old gentleman, he was bothered to think how I was to get Betsy home with me; and to come right plump down with the plain truth like a centre shot, I was feelin my way a little when I began to talk about goin. So the old man he took the hint, and come up to the trumps like a white head, I assure you.

'Well,' says he, 'to be sure I have been thinking about that; and I have been studyin some time whether your horse will work in a one-horse carriage.'

'What, Pete Ironsides?' said I.

'Yes; Peter, to be sure,' said he.

'Why Pete would no more go inside of harness than a snappin-turtle would work in a horse-boat.'

'Well, then,' says he, 'you must swap him off, and get one that will; for I've got a clever little

one-horse carriage in my eye, which I'm goin to buy, and give to Betsy.'

'I wish I may run my head right into a steamboat biler, if I would any more part with Pete than I would part with Betsy.'

'But Betsy struck in here, and told the old man that she was goin to ride on horseback.

'That's the girl for me,' said I, and there it ended.

'At last the whining and pouting was over (and that's a kind of work that always makes my throat raw inside), and we were on the road; and, after two days' ride, as happy a pair as ever jogged over a turnpike.

'On the fourth day, at night, we got benighted near this house; and the rain came pouring down as if all the steamboats in Christendom had burst their bilers; and Pete began to get a little melancholy, and I had to sing to him; and Betsy laughed at me, rain and all. Ah! I like these laughin girls. But I'm gittin off the trail again.

'Well, I saw a light in these windows, away far off from the big road yonder. Betsey and I rode up to the door, and I hallooed and hallooed, but nobody came. At last I raised a whoop, and if I didn't wake the snakes and Junebugs in November, then say I'm a dandy, and eat molasses and pork, and never went to a Yankee singin-school. I'm rather of the opinion that I raised the bats out of a month's nap in these old oaks. Pete raised his ears, and if his thoughts could be found out, I'll bet he was on the look-out for the dogs and some var-

mint or other, to come sweepin by with a curley whoop.

'But I raised the old housekeeper, too, out of a deep sleep; she came stickin her head, with the lamp held up above it, through the window, and her gray hair hanging from under her nightcap, till she looked for all the world like a little hail-storm.

''Can a benighted traveller git a night's lodging?' said I.

''There is nobody at home,' said she; 'Mr. Beverley Randolph has gone to the Carolinas to git married.'

''Mr. Beverley Randolph?' said I.

''Ay, Mr. Beverley Randolph,' said she, 'as tidy a gentleman as ever walked in shoe-leather.'

'And then I made the woods ring again for gladness, to think what good luck always follows me. But the old woman looked as bewildered as a hound off the trail. But I soon put things to rights. 'Halloo, mother,' said I, 'Mr. Randolph's a particular friend of my particular friends Mr. Chevillere and Mr. Lamar.'

''Mr. Lamar and Mr. Chevillere!' said she, with her great big blue eyes as wide open and as big as a Liverpool chaney saucer; 'why, we expect them and their wives on here soon, to meet Mr. Randolph and his wife.'

'And then the old lady told us to get down, and go into the front porch out of the rain, until she came. After a while she came down all dressed,

and now that she had got wide awake and a sight of Betsy's pretty laughing face, she was quite polite.

'But she stared at me most confoundedly at first, and asked me if I had been to college with the young gentlemen. 'No,' I told her, 'we hadn't been to college together, but we had been on a northern campaign together against the Yankees;' but for the life of her she couldn't keep her eyes off me.

'She soon got us some supper, late as it was, and had the negroes called up to take care of our horses. In the morning, and that's to-day, the rain is still pourin down; so we have concluded to accept the old lady's invitation to stay till the weather clears up. She has been asking my wife something about my acquaintance with you, and since that she has been wonderful polite; nothing seems good enough for us now in the eyes of the old lady. But she still stares at me.

'Me at college with you! well, now, that's a good one; but I'll be run through a spinnin jinny, if I havn't seen as big fools as I am come through a college. I know a feller that's been clean through, and he writes little, if any, better than I do. He picks his words maybe a little more; but what's the difference between one that picks his steps through a mud-hole, and one that jumps clean over? I can tell the truth as well as he can, and I'm sure in a case of needcessity, as one may say, I could tell a lie that would make him ashamed to look a college in the face again. I git more off my

land than he does,—I'm a better judge of horse-flesh,—I can beat him at a foot-race, and throw him four falls out of five. But, above all, his book larning has made his head so weak he can't stand nothin at all. He gits corned on all occasions just at the very first blush of the thing, as one may say, and he never gits through a regular frolic unless he falls through a trap-door, or down two or three pair of stairs. His face looks like it was boiled in poke-berry juice and indigo, and hang me if I don't think he's a little flumucky altogether about the head. Most of this I rather suspicion mought be larned in York without a regular sheepskin. I suppose there's a sheep's head for every skin, according to nature.

'College spiles a great many people; not you and Mr. Lamar,—for, as I tell Betsy, I never see two gentlemen come out with so little blast and airs about them.

'But, as I was saying, it ruins a power of people; some gits halfway through like an ear of corn in a shelling machine,—and then it will go neither backwards nor forwards, and is jist good for nothin.

'Some kick up like wild colts at the first trainin to harness, and if they're cleverly broke of them tricks at the start, they work in harness all their days pretty well. But if they git the upper hand the first time, they'll be like runaway horses; they'll smash things, you may depend upon it, first chance. Some old regular-built harness nags go well right off at the start; they may be good at a regular tug, but they'll never make spirited tackies. Give

me your fiery-blooded colts, that takes a real tear-down blast at the start, and then behave themselves well all their lives afterward.

'Take an old field scrub out three or four times to a military parade, and he gits to prancing and snorting, and is worth nothing no more neither for work nor show. Now old Pete's what I call a well brought up horse; he won't have nothin to do with parading on one side nor harness on the other. When he's goin to do a thing, he says so at once, and there's an end of it. If a nigger comes behind him, he just backs his ears and kicks him, and then goes strait ahead again.

'Old Kentuck raises the finest horses in the universal—well, now, I wish I may be tetotally ballgusted, if here ain't another pretty piece of business. I started as fair as a poney-race to tell you all about colleges and such likes, and here I've got a-straddle of old Pete, and ridin away through a Kentuck colt-pen, like a gust of wind over a chaff bank.

'But I'll tell you what it is, strangers,—it's not sich an easy job to start right off and put down in black and white every thing that a feller's been doin for a month of Sundays back. Then there's all the lines to keep straight; for though Betsy ruled all the paper, I've a confounded hankering after the furrows between. Now talkin of furrows, I would rather plough an acre of new ground any day, than write down one side of a letter. But it must be done, and so here goes at it agin,—but

where did I leave off? Oh! I was a-straddle of Pete, confound him, in a Kentuck colt-pen; but I had to run and jump through the walls of a college to get there. But I must turn back, now, and see what I have writ and what I havn't.

"I have hardly writ a single thing I wanted to write, I'm jist now like I've been at times when I've been out catting.* I could catch every thing but cat—snakes, and turtles, and all other sort of water varmints except the things I wanted. And so it is now—I've been trying to fish up several things that's still at the bottom; but all I can do nothing will come up but the varmints. Now I could tell it to you in no time at all. So now as I have fished you up a mess of all sorts of odd creters, I may as well gather up all these papers and put marks on them, so that you will know which to begin with.

"And now it makes me so sorry I don't know what to do—to think I'm goin to tell you both farewell for ever and ever and ever. But let what will come, never forget that I am *yours*, till death.

"MONTGOMERY DAMON."

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And now, gentle reader, we will take a gentle leave of you, hoping that you have not been altogether displeased with the adventures of the Kentuckian and the Southerns.

* Throwing for cat-fish.

ADDENDA.

All persons who have occasion to address themselves to the public, find out, sooner or later, the advantage of putting their hearers, or readers, in a good-humour. If a lawyer can induce a jury to laugh during his exordium, his point is half gained already; and if a debutante on the political rostrum can produce a like effect, by a well-told anecdote, or a witty repartee, his election may be considered almost sure.

We confess to our kind readers who have travelled with us thus far (and to none else shall it be revealed) that we have put forth "the Kentuckian," with all his sins upon his head, with some such intention of betraying them into a smile of good-humour with us. We trust, therefore, that his adventures will be taken as nothing more than our introductory story in this our maiden effort to get into their good graces. This course was thought the more necessary by a southern aspirant, as there is evidently a current in American literature, the fountain-head of which lies north of the Potomac, and in which a southern is compelled to navigate up the stream if he jumps in too far south.

These views may in some measure, perhaps, apologize for the author's having chosen such a hero, and such a location, in preference to the Cavalier Refugees of Jamestown, of his own loved

native soil, around whose jovial memories there lives such a rich store of traditionary lore, and so many manuscript relics of antiquity fast crumbling into oblivion for want of some competent adventurer, to weave them into such a shape as would at once preserve the general features of historic truth, and throw around these venerable relics the richer and more attractive hues of romance. For want of a better and an abler pen, the humble author has made an attempt to sketch the lives and manners of these early cavaliers of Virginia, to preserve, before it is too late, some faint outlines of these refugees from whom are descended* so many of the illustrious men who have figured so largely upon this new theatre of human action and experiment, and from whom were likewise descended the fox-hunting, horse-racing, and jovial race of Virginians. These too are passing away, and will soon be, like their more chivalrous sires, food for the historian and the novelist.

Should the "Kentuckian in New-York" be received, therefore, in the same good-humour and good feeling in which the author makes this his first embarrassed, and perhaps awkward, bow before the public, he will very soon lay before them "The Recluse of Jamestown, a Tale of the Early Cavaliers of Virginia."

* Virginia is said to have ten native sons in the Senate of the United States at this time. This is put forth in no arrogance, but merely to show the truth of what we are stating.