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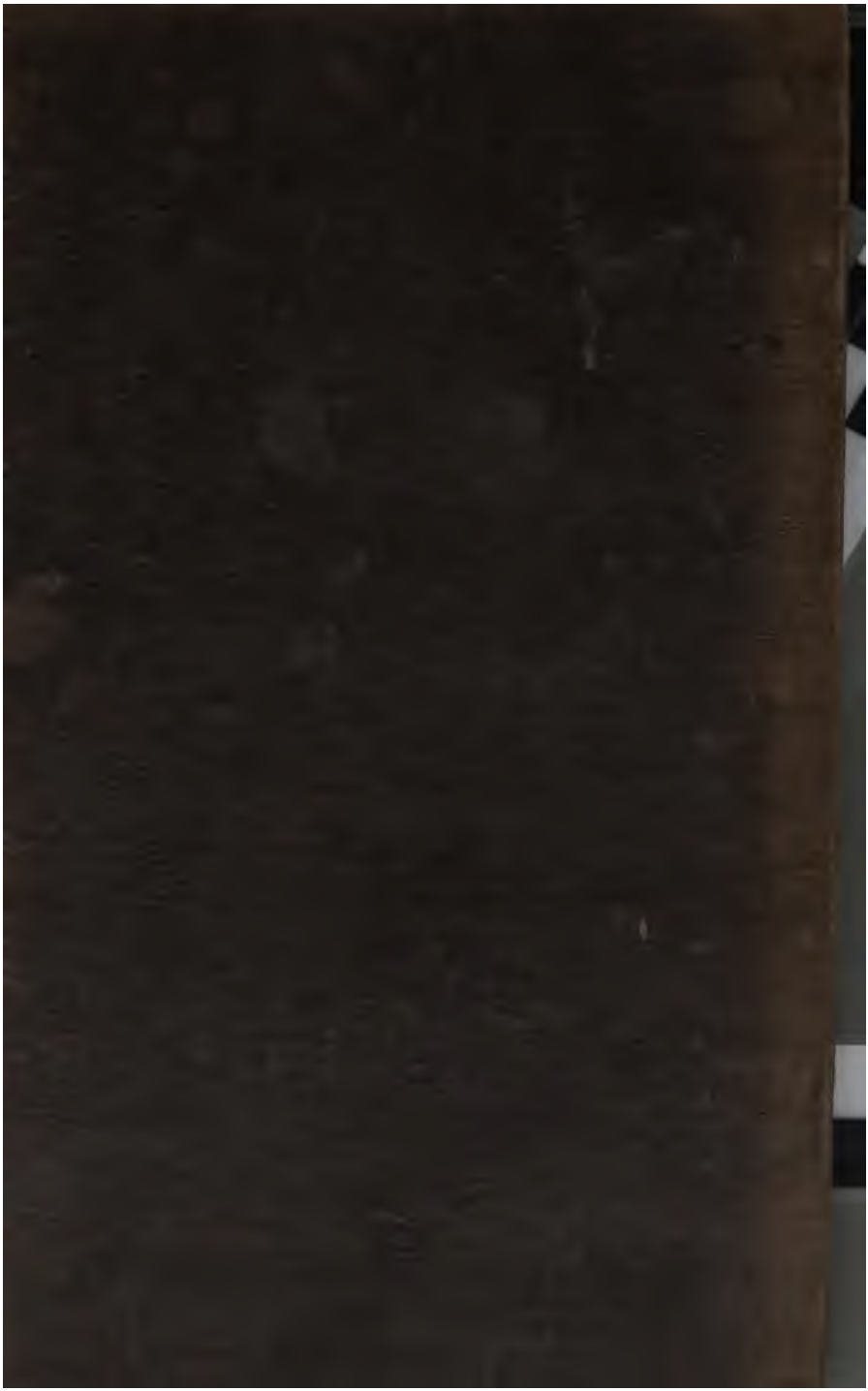

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To,

The Misses Kellogg

from their affectionate P

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THE PARTISAN:

A TALE OF THE REVOLUTION.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"THE YEMASSEE," "GUY RIVERS," &c.

W. G. Simms

"And Liberty's vitality, like Truth,
Is still undying. As the sacred fire
Nature has shrined in caverns, still it burns,
Though the storm howls without."

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

NEW-YORK:

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1835.

ADVERTISEMENT.

SPENDING a few weeks, some eighteen months ago, with a friend,* in the neighbourhood of the once beautiful, but now utterly decayed, town of Dorchester, South Carolina, I availed myself of the occasion to revisit the old, and, at one time, familiar ruins. When a boy, I had frequently rambled over the ground, and listened to its chronicles from the lips of one—now no more—who had been conversant with all its history. Many of its little legends were known to me, and the story of more than one of its inhabitants, of whom nothing now remains but the record in the burial-place, had been long since registered in my mind. These,—together with its own sad transition by repeated disasters, from the busy bustle of the crowded thoroughfare, to the silence and the desolation of the tombs—were well adapted to inspire in me a sentiment of veneration; and, with the revival of many old time feelings and associations, I strolled through the solemn ruins—the dismantled church—the frowning fortress, now almost hidden in the accumulating forests—reading and musing as I went, among the mouldering tombstones, and finding food for sweet thoughts and a busy fancy at every step in my ramble. The

* Mr. John W. Sommers, of St. Paul's Parish—a gentleman whose fine conversational powers and elegant hospitality need no eulogy from me for their proper appreciation among all those who know him.

walls of the fort, built of the shell and mortar, or tapia work, and still in tolerable preservation—the old church, tottering, but still erect, and the grassy hillocks marking the dwelling-places of the dead—are all that now remain in proof of its sometime existence, as the abiding-place of living man.

In this ramble, the restless imagination grew active in the contemplation of objects so well calculated to stimulate its exercise. Memory came warmly and vividly to its aid, and recalled a series of little events, carefully treasured up by the local tradition, which, unconsciously, my mind began to throw together, and to combine in form. Some of these had long before ministered to my own pleasurable emotions—why should they not yield similar pleasure to others? I revolved them over, thoughtfully, with this idea. The Revolutionary history of the colony was full of references to the neighbourhood; and numberless incidents, of a nature purely domestic, were yet so associated with some of the public occurrences of that period, that I could not well resist the desire to link them more closely together. The design grew more familiar and more feasible, the more I contemplated it; and though intervening difficulties, and other labours, have hitherto prevented my prosecution of the purpose, I have still continued to revolve it over as some unavoidable and favourite topic. To these circumstances, and to this desire, "The Partisan" owes its origin.

The work was originally contemplated as one of a series, to be devoted to our War of Independence. With this object, I laid the foundation more broadly and deeply than I should have done had I purposed merely the single work. Several of the persons em-

ployed were destined to be the property of the series;—that part of it, at least, which belonged to the locality. Three of these works were to have been devoted to South Carolina, and to comprise three distinct periods of the war of the Revolution in that state. One, and the first of these, is the story now submitted to the reader. I know not that I shall complete, or even continue the series. Much will depend upon the reception of the present narrative. I will not bind myself to the prosecution of an experiment, hazardous in many respects, and the success of which, is, at present, so problematical.

The "Partisan" comprises the leading events from the fall of Charlestown, to the close of 1780; and is proposed as a fair picture of the province—its condition, resources, and prospects—pending the struggle of Gates with Cornwallis, and immediately after the disastrous close of that campaign, in the complete defeat of the southern defending army. In the narrative, the various and very copious histories of the time have been continually before me. I have drawn from one, or from the other, as it seemed most to answer my purpose, or to accord with the truth. The work, indeed, is chiefly historical.

Even where the written history has not been found, tradition, and the local chronicles, preserved as family records, have contributed the rest. The story of Frampton, for example, greatly modified, indeed, in many respects, was one which I had heard in childhood. That of Col. Walton is a familiar one in Carolina domestic history—recorded and unrecorded. The minor events—the little ambuscade and sortie—the plans of fight—of forage—of flight and safety—are all

familiar features of the partisan warfare; and the title of the work, indeed, will persuade the reader to look rather for a true description of that mode of warfare, than for any consecutive story comprising the fortunes of a single personage. This, he is solicited to keep in mind, as one of my leading objects has been to give a picture, not only of the form and pressure of the time itself, but of the thousand scattered events making up its history. The very title should imply something desultory in the progress and arrangement of the tale; and my aim has been to give a story of events, rather than of persons. The one, of course, could not well have been done without the other; yet it has been my object to make myself as greatly independent as possible of the necessity which would combine them. A sober desire for history—the unwritten, the unconsidered, but veracious history—has been with me, in this labour, a sort of principle. The phases of a time of errors and of wrongs—of fierce courage—tenacious patriotism—yielding, but struggling virtue, not equal to the pressure of circumstances, and falling for a time, Antæus-like, only for a renewal and recovery of its strength—it has been my aim to delineate, with all the rapidity of one, who, with the mystic lantern, runs his uncouth shapes and varying shadows along the gloomy wall, startling the imagination and enkindling curiosity. The medium through which we now look at these events, is, in some respects, that of a glass darkened. The characters rise up before us grimly or indistinctly. We scarcely believe, yet we cannot doubt. The evidence is closed—the testimony now irrefutable—and imagination, however audacious in her own province, only ventures to imbody and model those features of

the past, which the sober truth has left indistinct, as not within her notice, or unworthy her regard.

I have entitled the "Partisan" a tale of the Revolution—it was intended to be particularly such. The characters, many of them, are names in the nation, familiar as our thoughts. Gates, Marion, De Kalb, and the rest, are all the property of our country. In the illustrations which I have presumed to give of these personages, I have followed the best authorities. The severity with which I have visited the errors of the former general, is sustained by all the writers—by Otho Williams, by Lee, by Johnson, and the current histories. There can be little doubt, I believe, of the truth, in his case, of my drawing. It may be insisted on, as of questionable propriety, thus to revive these facts, and to dwell upon the faults and foibles of a man conspicuous in our history, and one, who, in a single leading event, contributed so largely to the glory of its pages. But, on this point, I am decided, that a nation gains only, in glory and in greatness, as it is resolute to behold and to pursue the truth. I would paint the disasters of my country, where they arose from the obvious error of her sons, in the strongest possible colours. We should then know—our sons and servants, alike, should then know—how best to avoid them. The rock which has wrecked us once, should become the beacon for our heirs hereafter. It is only by making it so, that the vicissitudes of life—its follies or misfortunes—can be made tributary to its triumphs. For this reason I have dwelt earnestly upon our disasters; and, with a view to the moral, I have somewhat departed from the absolute plan of the story, to dilate upon the dangerous errors of the leading personages in the

events drawn upon. The history of the march of Gates's army, I have carefully elaborated with this object; and the reflecting mind will see the parallel position of cause and effect which I have studiously sought to make obvious, wherever it seemed to me necessary for the purposes of instruction. It is in this way, only, that the novel may be made useful, when it ministers to morals, to mankind, and to society.

THE PARTISAN.

CHAPTER I.

"Oh, grievous desolation! look, and see
Their sad condition! 'Tis a piercing sight:
A country overthrown and crushed—the scythe
Gone over it in wrath—and sorrowing Grief
Dumb with her weight of wo."

Our narrative begins in South Carolina, during the summer of 1780. The arms of the British were at that time triumphant throughout the colony. Their armies overran it. Charlestown, the chief city, had stood a siege, and had fallen, after a protracted and honourable defence. One-half of the military strength of the lower country, then the most populous region, had become prisoners of war by this disaster; and, for the present, were thus incapacitated from giving any assistance to their brethren in arms. Scattered, crushed, and disheartened by repeated failures, the whigs, in numerous instances, hopeless of any better fortune, had given in their adhesion to the enemy, and had received a pledge of British protection. This protection secured them, as it was thought, in their property and persons, and its conditions simply called for their neutrality. Many of the more firm and honourably tenacious, scorning all compromise with invasion, fled for shelter to the swamps and mountains; and, through the former, all Europe could not have traced their footsteps. In the whole state, at this period, the cause of American liberty had no head, and almost as little hope: all was gloomy and

unpromising. Marion, afterward styled the "Swamp Fox," and Sumter, the "Game Cock"—epithets aptly descriptive of their several military attributes—had not yet properly risen in arms, though both of them had been engaged already in active and successful service. Their places of retreat were at this time unknown; and, certainly, they were not then looked to, as at an after period, with that anxious reliance which their valour subsequently taught their countrymen to entertain. Nothing, indeed, could be more deplorably prostrate than were the energies of the colony. Here and there, only, did some little partisan squad make a stand, or offer a show of resistance to the incursive British or the marauding and malignant tory—disbanding, if not defeated, most usually after the temporary object had been obtained, and retreating for security into shelter and inaction. There was no sort of concert, save in feeling, among the many who were still not unwilling for the fight: they doubted or they dreaded one another; they knew not whom to trust. The next-door neighbour of the stanch whig was not unfrequently a furious loyalist—as devoted to George the Third as the other could have been to the intrinsic beauty of human liberty. The contest of the Revolution, so far as it had gone, had confirmed and made tenacious this spirit of hostility and opposition, until, in the end, patriot and loyalist had drawn the sword against one another, and rebel and tory were the degrading epithets by which they severally distinguished the individual whose throat they strove to cut. When the metropolis fell into the hands of the British, and their arms extended through the state, the tories alone were active and formidable. They now took satisfaction for their own previous trials; and crime was never so dreadful a monster as when they ministered to its appetites. Mingled in with the regular troops of the British, or forming separate bodies of their own, and officered from among themselves, they penetrated the well-known recesses which gave shelter to the fugitives. If the rebel resisted, they slew him without quarter; if he submitted, they hung

him without benefit of clergy: they spoiled his children of their possessions, and not unfrequently slew them also. But few sections of the low and middle country escaped their search. It was only in the bald regions of North Carolina that the fugitives could find repose; only where the most miserable poverty took from crime all temptation, that the beaten and maltreated patriots dared to give themselves a breathing-space from flight. In the same manner the frontier-colony of Georgia had already been overrun and ravaged by the conquerors; and there, as it was less capable of resistance, all show of opposition had been long since at an end. The invader, deceived by these appearances, declared in swelling language to his monarch, that the two colonies were properly subjugated, and would now return to their obedience. He knew not that,

> "Freedom's battle once begun,
> Bequeathed from bleeding sire to son,
> Though baffled oft, is ever won."

But, though satisfied of the efficiency of his achievements, and himself convinced of the truth of the assurances which he had made to this effect, the commander of the British forces did not suffer the slightest relaxation of his vigilance. Earl Cornwallis, one of the best of the many leaders sent by the mother-country to the colonies in that eventful contest, had taken charge of the southern marching army soon after the fall of Charlestown. He was too good a soldier to omit, or to sleep in the performance of any of his duties. He proceeded with due diligence to confirm his conquests; and, aptly sustained by the celerity and savage enterprise of the fierce legionary, Colonel Tarleton, the country was soon swept from the seaboard to the mountains. This latter able but cruel commander, who enacted the Claverhouse in South Carolina with no small closeness of resemblance to his prototype, was as indefatigable as unsparing. He plunged headlong into fight, with a courage the most unscrupulous, with little reflection, seeming rather to confide in the boldness and

impetuosity of his onset than to any ingenuity of plan, or careful elaborateness of manœuvre. Add to this that he was sanguinary in the last degree when triumphant, and we shall easily understand the sources of that terror which his very name was found to inspire among the undrilled, and, in half the number of instances, the unarmed militia which opposed him. "Tarleton's quarter" was the familiar and bitterly-derisive phrase by which, when the whigs had opportunities of revenge, his blood-thirsty treatment of the overthrown and captive was remembered and requited.

The entire colony in his possession—all opposition, worthy the name, at an end—the victor, the better to secure his conquest, marched an army throughout the country. His presence, for the time, had the desired effect. His appearance quelled disaffection, overawed all open discontents, and his cavalry, by superior skill and rapidity of movement, readily dispersed the little bands of Carolinians that here and there fell in his way. Nor was this exhibition of his power the only proceeding by which he laboured to secure the fruits of his victory. With an excellent judgment, he established garrisons in various eligible points of the country, in order to its continual presence: these stations were judiciously chosen for independent and co-operative enterprise alike; they were sufficiently nigh for concert—sufficiently scattered for the general control of an extensive territory. Rocky Mount, Ninety Six, Camden, Hanging Rock, Dorchester, and a large number of military posts beside, were thus created, all amply provided with munitions of war, well fortified, and garrisoned by large bodies of troops under experienced officers.

These precautions for a time compelled submission. The most daring among the patriots were silent—the most indulgent of the loyalists were active and enterprising. To crown and secure all, Sir Henry Clinton, who was at this period commander-in-chief of the southern invading army, proclaimed a general pardon, with some few exceptions, to all the inhabitants, for

their late treasonable offences—promising them a full reinstatement of their old immunities, and requiring nothing in return but that they should remain quietly in their homes. This specious and well-timed indulgence had its due effect; and, in the temporary panic produced by Lincoln's defeat, the fall of the metropolis, the appearance of an army so formidable as that of the British, and the establishment of military posts and fortresses all around them, the people generally put on a show of acquiescence to the authority of the invader, which few in reality felt, and which many were secretly but resolutely determined never to submit to.

Thus much is necessary, in a general point of view, to the better comprehension of the narrative which follows. The reader will duly note the situation of the colony of South Carolina; and when we add, that the existing condition of things throughout the Union, was only not so bad, and the promise of future fortune but little more favourable, all has been said necessary to his proper comprehension of the discouraging circumstances under which the partisan warfare of the South began. With this reference, we shall be better able to appreciate that deliberate valour, that unyielding patriotism, which, in a few spirits, defying danger and above the sense of privation, could keep alive the sacred fires of liberty in the thick swamps and dense and gloomy forests of Carolina—asking nothing, yielding nothing, and only leaving the field the better to re-enter it for the combat. We now proceed to the commencement of our narrative.

the town. The old monarch had, in this exposed situation, undergone repeated trials. At the commencement of the Revolution, the landlord, who really cared not who was king, had been compelled by public opinion to take down the sign, replacing it with another more congenial to the popular feeling. George, in the mean time, was assigned less conspicuous lodgings in an ancient garret. The change of circumstances restored the venerable portrait to its place, and under the eye of the British garrison, there were few more thorough-going loyalists in the village than Richard Humphries. He was a sociable old man, fond of drink, and generally serving his own glass whenever called upon to replenish that of his customer. His house was the common thoroughfare of the travelling and the idle. The soldier, not on duty, found it a pleasant lounge; the tory, confident in the sympathies of the landlord, and solicitous of the good opinion of the ruling powers, made it his regular resort; and even the whig, compelled to keep down his patriotism, not unwisely sauntered about in the same wide hall with the enemy he feared and hated, but whom it was no part of his policy at the present moment to alarm or irritate. Humphries, from these helping circumstances, distanced all competition in the village. The opposition house was maintained by a suspected whig—one Pryor—who was avoided accordingly. Pryor was a sturdy citizen, who asked no favours; and if he did not avow himself in the language of defiance, at the same time scorned to take any steps to conciliate patronage or do away with suspicion. He simply cocked his hat at the old-time customer, now passing to the other house; thrust his hands into the pockets of his breeches, and, with a manful resignation, growled through his teeth as he surveyed the prospect—"He may go and be d—d."

This sort of philosophy was agreeable enough to Humphries, who, though profligate in some respects, was yet sufficiently worldly to have a close eye to the accumulation of his sixpences. His household was

well served; for though himself a widower, his daughter Bella, a buxom, lively, coquettish but gentle-natured creature, proved no common housekeeper. She was but a girl, however, and, wanting the restraining presence of a matron, and possessing but little dignity herself, the house had its attractions for many, in the freedoms which the old man either did not or would not see, and which the girl herself was quite too young, too innocent, and perhaps too weak, often to find fault with. Her true protection, however, was in a brother not much older than herself, a fine manly fellow, and—though with the cautious policy of all around him suppressing his predilections for the time—a stanch partisan of American liberty.

It was on a pleasant afternoon in June, that a tall, well-made youth, probably twenty-four or five years of age, rode up to the door of the "George," and throwing his bridle to a servant, entered the hotel. His person had been observed, and his appearance duly remarked upon, by several persons already assembled in the hall which he now approached. The new comer, indeed, was not one to pass unnoticed. His person was symmetry itself, and the ease with which he managed his steed, the unhesitating boldness with which he kept on his way and gazed around him at a period and in a place where all were timid and suspicious, could not fail to fix attention. His face, too, was significant of a character of command, besides being finely intelligent and tolerably handsome; and though he carried no weapons that were visible, there was something exceedingly military in his movement, and the cap which he wore, made of some native fur and slightly resting upon one side of his thickly clustering brown hair, imparted a daring something to his look, which gave confirmation to the idea. Many were the remarks of those in the hall as, boldly dashing down the high-road, he left the church to the right, and moving along the market-place, came at once towards the "George," which stood on the corner of Prince and Bridge streets.

"A bold chap with his spurs, that," exclaimed Sergeant Hastings, of the garrison, who was a frequent guest of the tavern, and had found no small degree of favour with the landlord's daughter. "A bold chap, that—do you know him, Humphries?"

This question brought the landlord to the window. He looked intently upon the youth as he approached, but seemed at fault.

"Know him? why yes, I think I do know him, sergeant: that's—yes—that's—bless my soul, I don't know him at all!"

"Well, be sure, now, Humphries," coolly spoke the sergeant. "Such a good-looking fellow ought not to be forgotten. But he 'lights, and we shall soon know better."

A few moments, and the stranger made his appearance. The landlord bustled up to him, and offered assistance, which the youth declined for himself, but gave directions for his horse's tendance.

"Shall be seen to, captain," said the landlord.

"Why do you call me captain?" demanded the youth, sternly.

"Bless me, don't be angry, squire; but didn't you say you was a captain?" apologetically replied Humphries.

"I did not."

"Well, bless me, but I could have sworn you did —now didn't he, gentlemen?—sergeant, didn't you hear—"

"It matters not," the stranger interrupted; "it matters not. You were mistaken, and these gentlemen need not be appealed to. Have my horse cared for if you please. He has come far and fast to-day, and will need a good rubbing. Give him fodder now, but no corn for an hour."

"It shall be done, captain."

"Hark'ee, friend," said the youth angrily, "you will not style me captain again, unless you would have more than you can put up with. I am no captain, no colonel, no commander of any sort, and unless you

give me the army, will not wear the title. So, understand me."

"Ask pardon, squire; but it comes so common—ask pardon, sir;" and the landlord shuffled off, as he spoke, to see after his business. As he retired, Sergeant Hastings made up to the new comer, and with all the consequence of one having a portion of authority, and accustomed to a large degree of deference from those around him, proceeded to address the youth on the subject matter of his momentary annoyance.

"And, with your leave, young master, where's the harm in being captain or colonel? I don't see that there's any offence in it."

"None, none in the world, sir, in being captain or colonel, but some, I take it, in being styled such undeservedly. The office is good enough, and I have no objections to it; but I have no humour to be called by any nickname."

"Nickname—why, d—n it, sir—why, what do you mean? Do you pretend that it's a nickname to be called an officer in his majesty's troops, sir? If you do—" and the sergeant concluded with a look.

"Pistols and daggers! most worthy officer in his majesty's troops, do not look so dangerous," replied the youth, very coolly. "I have no sort of intention to offend captain or sergeant. I only beg that, as I am neither one nor the other, nobody will force me into their jackets."

"And why not, young master?" said the sergeant, somewhat pacified, but still, as he liked not the *nonchalance* of the stranger, seemingly bent to press upon him a more full development of his opinions. "Why not? Is it not honourable, I ask you, to hold his majesty's commission, and would you not, as a loyal subject, be very glad to accept one at his hands?"

There was no little interest manifested by the spectators as this question was put, and they gathered more closely about the beset stranger; but still keeping at a deferential distance from the sergeant. He, too, looked forward to the reply of the youth with some interest.

His head was advanced and his arms akimbo, and, stationed in front of the person he examined, in the centre of the hall, his clumsy compact person and round rosy face looked exceedingly imposing in every eye but that of the person for whose especial sight their various terrors had been put on. The youth seemed annoyed by the pertinacity of his assailant, but he made an effort at composure, and after a brief pause replied to the inquiry.

"Honourable enough, doubtless. I know nothing about the employment, and cannot say. As for taking a commission at his majesty's hands, I don't know that I should do any such thing."

The declaration produced a visible emotion in the assembly. One or two of the spectators slid away silently, and the rest seemed variously agitated, while, at the same time, one person whom the stranger had not before seen—a stout, good-looking man, seemingly in humble life, and not over his own age—came forward, and, with nothing ostentatious in his manner, placed himself alongside of the man who had so boldly declared himself. Sergeant Hastings seemed for an instant almost paralyzed by what appeared the audacity of the stranger. At length, detaching his sword partially from the sheath, so that a few inches of the blade became visible, he looked round with a potential aspect upon the company, and then proceeded—

"Hah!—not take a commission from the hands of his majesty—indeed!—and why not, I pray?"

Unmoved by the solemnity of the proceeding, the youth with the utmost quietness replied—

"For the very best reason in the world—I should scarcely know what to do with it."

"Oh, that's it!" said the sergeant. "And so you are not an officer?"

"No. I've been telling you and this drinking fellow, the landlord, all the time, that I am no officer, and yet neither of you seems satisfied. Nothing will do, but you will put me in his majesty's commission, and

make me a general and what not, whether I will or no. But where's the man?—Here, landlord!"

"Can I serve, sir?" said a soft voice, followed by the pretty maid of the inn, the fair Bella Humphries, whose person was now visible behind the bar.

"Yes, my dear, you can;" and as the stranger youth spoke, and the maid courtesied, he tapped her gently upon the cheek, and begged that he might be shown his apartment, stating, at the same time, the probability that he would be an inmate for several days of the tavern. The sergeant scowled fiercely at the liberty thus taken, and the youth could not help seeing that the eye of the girl sank under the glance that the former gave her. He said nothing, however, and taking in his hand the little fur valise that he carried, the only furniture, besides saddle and bridle, worn by his horse, he followed the steps of Bella, who soon conducted him to his chamber, and left him to those ablutions which a long ride along a sandy road had rendered particularly necessary.

The sergeant meanwhile was not so well satisfied with what had taken place. He was vexed that he had not terrified the youth—vexed at his composure—vexed that he had tapped Bella Humphries upon her cheek, and doubly vexed that she had submitted with such excellent grace to the aforesaid tapping. The truth is, Sergeant Hastings claimed some exclusive privileges with the maiden. He was her regular gallant—bestowed upon her the greater part of his idle time, and had flattered himself that he stood alone in her estimation; and so, perhaps, he did. His attentions had given him a large degree of influence over her, and what with his big speech, swaggering carriage, and flashy uniform, poor Bella had long since been taught to acknowledge his power over her heart. But the girl was coquettish, and her very position as maid of the inn had contributed to strengthen and confirm the natural predisposition. The kind words and innocent freedoms of the handsome stranger were not disagreeable to her, and she felt not that they interfered with the claims of

the sergeant, or would be so disagreeable to him, until she beheld the scowling glance with which he surveyed them.

In the hall below, to which the landlord had now returned, Hastings gave utterance to the spleen which this matter had occasioned.

"That's an impudent fellow—a very impudent fellow. I don't like him."

The landlord looked up timidly, and after a brief pause, in which the sergeant continued to pace the apartment, again ventured upon speech.

"And what do you think—what do you think he is, sergeant?"

"How should I know? I asked you: you know every thing; at least, you pretend to. Why are you out here? Who is he?"

"Bless me, I can't say; I don't know."

"What do you think he is?"

"God knows!"

"He certainly is an impudent—a very suspicious person."

"Do you think so, sergeant?" asked one of the persons present, with an air of profound alarm.

"I do—a very suspicious person—one that should be watched."

"I see nothing suspicious about him," said another, the same individual who had placed himself beside the stranger when the wrath of the sergeant was expected to burst upon him, and when he had actually laid his hand upon his sword. "I see nothing suspicious about the stranger," said the speaker, boldly, "except that he doesn't like to be troubled with foolish questions."

"Foolish questions—foolish questions! Bless me, John Davis, do you know what you're a-saying?" The landlord spoke in great trepidation, and placed himself, as he addressed Davis, between him and the sergeant.

"Yes, I know perfectly what I say, Master Humphries; and I say it's very unmannerly, the way in which the stranger has been pestered with foolish questions.

I say it, and I say it again; and I don't care who hears it. I'm ready to stand up to what I say."

"Bless me, the boy's mad! Now, sergeant, don't mind him—he's only foolish, you see."

"Mind him—oh no! Look you, young man, do you see that tree? It won't take much treason to tuck you up there."

"Treason, indeed! I talk no treason, Sergeant Hastings, and I defy you to prove any agin me. I'm not to be frightened this time o' day, I'd have you to know; and though you are a sodger, and wear a red coat, let me tell you there's a tough colt in the woods that your two legs can't straddle. There's no treason in that, for it only concerns one person, and that one person is your own self."

"You d—d rebel, is it so you speak to a sergeant in his majesty's service? Take that"—and with the words, with his sword drawn at the instant, he made a stroke with the flat of it at the head of the sturdy disputant, which, as the latter somewhat anticipated it, he was prepared to elude. This was done adroitly enough, and with a huge club which stood conveniently in the corner, he had prepared himself without fear to guard against a repetition of the assault, when the stranger, about whom the coil had arisen, now made his appearance, and at once interposed between the parties.

CHAPTER III.

"It is a written bondage—writ in stripes,
And letter'd in our blood. Like beaten hounds,
We crouch and cry, but clench not—lick the hand
That strikes and scourges."

Hastings turned furiously at the interruption; but the stranger, though entirely unarmed, stood firmly, and looked on him with composure.

"That's a bright sword you wear," said he, "but scarcely a good stroke, and any thing but a gallant one, Master Sergeant, which you make with it. How now, is it the fashion with English soldiers to draw upon unarmed men?"

The person addressed turned upon the speaker with a scowl which seemed to promise that he would transfer some portion of his anger to the newcomer. He had no time, however, to do more than look his wrath at the interruption; for among the many persons whom the noise had brought to the scene of action was the fair Bella Humphries herself. She waited not an instant to place herself between the parties, and, as if her own interest in the persons concerned gave her an especial right in the matter, she fearlessly passed under the raised weapon of Hastings, addressing him imploringly, and with an air of intimacy, which was, perhaps, the worst feature in the business—so, at least, the individual appeared to think to whose succour she had come. His brow blackened still more at her approach, and when she interfered to prevent the strife, a muttered curse, half-audible, rose to his lips; and brandishing the club which he had wielded with no little readiness before, he seemed more than ever desirous of renewing the combat, though at all its disadvantages. But the parties around gener-

ally interfered to prevent the progress of the strife; and Bella, whose mind seemed perfectly assured of Hastings' invincibility, addressed her prayers only to him, and in behalf of the other.

"Now don't strike, Master Sergeant—don't, I pray! John is only foolish, and don't mean any harm. Strike him not, I beg you!"

"Beg for yourself, Bella Humphries—I don't want any of your begging for me. I'm no chicken, and can hold my own any day against him. So don't come between us—you in particular—you had better keep away."

The countryman spoke ferociously; and his dark eye, long black hair, and swarthy cheek, all combined to give the expression of fierce anger which his words expressed, a lively earnestness not ill-adapted to sustain them. The girl looked on him reproachfully as he spoke, though a close observer might have seen in her features a something of conscious error and injustice. It was evident that the parties had been at one period far more intimate than now; and the young stranger, about whom the coil had begun, saw in an instant the true situation of the twain. A smile passed over his features, but did not rest, as his eye took in at a glance the twofold expression of Bella's face, standing between her lovers, preventing the fight—scowled on furiously by the one, and most affectionately leered at by the other. Her appeal to the sergeant was so complimentary, that even were he not half-ashamed of what he had already done in commencing a contest so unequal, he must have yielded to it and forborne; and some of his moderation, too, might have arisen from his perceiving the hostile jealousy of spirit with which his rival regarded her preference of himself. His vanity was enlisted in the application of the maiden, and with a becoming fondness of expression in his glance, turning to the coquette, he gave her to understand, while thrusting his sword back into the scabbard, that he consented to mercy on the score of her application. Still, as Davis held out a show of fight, and stood

snugly ensconced behind his chair, defying and even inviting assault, it was necessary that the sergeant should draw off honourably from the contest. While returning the weapon to the sheath, therefore, he spoke to his enemy in language of indulgent warning, not unmixed with the military threats common at the period—

"Hark you, good fellow—you're but a small man to look out for danger, and there's too little of you, after all, for me to look after. I let you off this time; but you're on ticklish territory, and if you move but one side or the other, you're but a lost man after all. It's not a safe chance to show rebel signs on the king's highway, and you have an ugly squinting at disaffection. My eyes are on you, now, and if I but see you wink, or hear you hint, treason,—ay, treason, rebellion —I see it in your eyes, I tell you,—but wink it or look it again, and you know it's short work, very short work, and a shorter journey, to the tight rope and the branching tree."

The speaker looked round significantly upon the company as he uttered a warning and threat, which, though addressed particularly to the refractory countryman, were yet evidently as much meant for the benefit of the rest. Not that the worthy sergeant had any reason for uttering language which, in all respects, seemed so gratuitous; but this was of a piece with the wantonly injudicious habits of his superiors, from whom, with the readiness of subordination, he made free to borrow, and, with as little discrimination, quite as frequently employed it, not less for the gratification of his vanity than for the exercise of his power. The speech had something of its usual effect,—keeping in silence those whose love of talk might have prompted to occasional remark, though without any serious feeling in the matter; and subduing thoroughly all demonstrations of dislike on the part of the few, who, feeling things more deeply, might be disposed rather to act than to speak, when under such provocation. However the persons around may have felt at the moment, they were gene-

rally prudent enough to be silent. Old Humphries alone, with uplifted hands, and somewhat touched with liquor, now seeing all danger over, came forward, and hobbling up to the sergeant, cried out, in reply—

"Why, bless us, sergeant, you talk as if you were among the enemies of his majesty, and not among his good friends and well-wishers. Now, I'm sure I can answer for all here. There's Jones and Baxter, Lyons and Tom Walker there—all true blue—right loyal good fellows, who drink the health of King George—God bless him!—whenever they can get a drink; and as for Jack Davis, bless us, sergeant, there's no better boy in Goose Creek, though he is cross and snappish when his fit's on, and no chicken either, as he says himself. He'll fight for his majesty any day, I know. There's no mistake in him—there's no mistake in any of the boys—I can answer for all that's here, except—" and here the landlord paused in one of the longest speeches he had ever made, and his eye rested doubtfully upon the person of the stranger.

"Except me," said the latter, coming forward, looking Hastings attentively in the face as he spoke, and at the same time placing his hand with some little emphasis upon the shoulders of old Humphries—"except me, Master Humphries, for whom you can say nothing—of whom you know nothing—but about whom you are excessively curious. You only know I am not a captain, nor yet a colonel; and as I have not satisfied your desires on these subjects, of course you cannot answer for my loyalty."

"Bless us, no; that I can't, stranger."

"But I can, Master Humphries, and that's enough for all parties; and I can say, as you have already said for these gentlemen, that my loyalty is quite as good as that of any around me, as we shall all see in season. And now that this quarrel is ended, let me only beg of the worthy sergeant here, that he may not be so quick to draw his weapon upon the man that is unarmed. The action is by no means so creditable to the sol-

dier, and one that he may, most probably, in time, come to be ashamed of."

The perfect coolness and self-possession of the stranger, in this brief interlude, confounded Hastings not less than it did the rest. He knew not in what character to behold him, and, but that he was rather stolid than otherwise, might have exhibited traces of that confusion which his mind certainly felt. But the air of superiority which the other manifested, annoyed him too greatly to give way to doubt or indetermination; and he was about to answer roughly, when a remark which Davis made, of a churlish nature, to the coquettish Bella Humphries, who still lingered beside the sergeant, attracted the latter's attention, and giving a glance to the speaker, he threw his collected spleen in that quarter, while addressing the girl—

"See, now, that's the good you get for saving him from punishment. He doesn't thank you at all for what you've done."

"No, that I don't!" cried the incorrigible Davis: "I owe her as little thanks as I owe you kindness,—and I'll pay off both some day. I can hold my own without her help; and as for her begging, I don't want it—I won't have it—and I despise it."

"What's that?" cried Hastings, with a show of returning choler.

"Nothing, sergeant, nothing; don't mind what he says; he's only foolish, and don't mean any harm. Now take your hand away from the sword, I beg you."

The girl looked so prettily, as she prayed him to be quiet, that the soldier relented. Her deferential solicitude was all-influential, and softened much of the harsh feeling that might have existed in his bosom. Taking her arm into his own, with a consequential strut, and throwing a look of contempt upon his rival as he passed, the conqueror moved away into the adjoining apartment, to which, as his business seems private at present, we shall not presume to follow him.

His departure was the signal for renovated life in several of those persons who, in the previous scene,

seemed quiescent enough. They generously came forward to Davis with advice and friendly counsel to keep himself out of harm's way, and submit, most civilly, like a good Christian, to the gratuitous blow and buffet. The most eloquent among them was the landlord.

"Now, bless me," said he, "John, my dear boy, why will you be after striving with the sergeant? You know you can't stand against him, and where's the use? He's quite too tough a colt for you to manage, now, I tell you."

"So you think, Master Humphries—so you think. But I'm not so sure of it, now, by half. I can stand a thump as well as any man—and I haint lived so long in Goose Creek not to know how to give one too. But how you stand it—you, I say, Dick Humphries—I don't altogether see."

"Eh, John—how I stand it? Bless us, what do you mean, boy? He don't trouble me—he don't threaten me—I'm a good subject to his majesty."

The youth laughed irreverently, and the stranger, who had been standing apart, but still within hearing, noted the incident with a considerable show of interest in his countenance.

"And what do you laugh for, John? Don't, boy—I pray you, don't. Let's have a glass together, then say what you mean. Good old Jamaica! Won't you join us, stranger?"

The youth declined, and Davis proceeded—

"My meaning's soon said, Master Humphries. I'm sorry to see—" and here, with a praiseworthy delicacy, he whispered in the old man's ear his objections to the large degree of intimacy existing between the British sergeant and his pretty daughter.

"Oh, go, John! there's no harm, boy. You're only jealous 'cause she turned you off."

"Turned me off, indeed!" responded the other, indignantly and aloud—"turned me off! No, Master Humphries—not so bad neither. But it's no use talking—you'll know all in time, and will wish you had

If Frampton and Raysor had not taken to the swamp, the old lady would have been let alone, and the boy wouldn't have been whipt. Aint they in arms now against his majesty?"

"Yes; and if his majesty goes on after this fashion there will be a few more, I can tell you. Now, you yourself, Dick Humphries, I put it to yourself, whether the thing's right, and whether we ought to stand it. Now, I know you of old, and know you're no more a loyalist than—"

"Hush! Bless us, John Davis, how you talk, boy! hush, hush!" and with an air of the greatest trepidation, looking around and perceiving that, though the stranger appeared to be reading very earnestly from the pages of the "Royal (Charlestown) Gazette," he was yet within hearing, the landlord led his companion farther from the door, and the conversation, as it proceeded to its conclusion, was entirely lost to all ears but their own. It was not long before Humphries returned to the hall, and endeavoured to commence a sort of desultory dialogue with the stranger guest, whose presence had produced the previous quarrel. But this personage seemed to desire no such familiarity, for scarcely had the old man begun, when throwing down the sheet he had been reading, and thrusting upon his head the rakish cap which all the while had rested on his knee, he rose from his seat, and moving rapidly to the door of the apartment, followed the steps of Davis, whom he beheld pursuing his way along the main bridge road and towards the river. The path was clear in this quarter; not a solitary being, but themselves, was to be seen—by them at least. In the centre of the bridge—a crazy structure of ill-adjusted timber thrown over a point of the stream where it most narrowed—the pursuing stranger overtook the moodily-wandering countryman. He stopped him in his progress till he could come up with him, by a friendly hail; and freely approaching him, tendered him his open hand in a cordial salutation. The other grasped it with honest pleasure.

"Master Davis, for such, I believe, is your name," said the stranger, frankly, "I owe you thanks for so readily, though I must say rashly, taking up my quarrel. I understand that your brush with that soldier-fellow was on my account; and though, like yourself, I need nobody to fight my battles, I must yet thank you for the good spirit which you have shown in this matter."

"No thanks, stranger. I don't know what name to call you—"

"No matter; names are unnecessary, and the fewer known the better in these doubtful times. I care not to utter mine, though it has but little value. Call me what you please." The other looked surprised, but still satisfied, and replied after this fashion—

"Well, squire, as I said, you owe me no thanks at all in this affair, for though I did take up the matter on your hook, it was because I had a little sort of hankering to take it up on my own. I have long had a grudge at that fellow, and I didn't care much on whose score it began, so it had a beginning."

"He has done you wrong?" half affirmatively, half inquiringly, said his companion.

"Reckon he has, squire, and no small wrong neither; but that's neither here nor there, seeing there's little help for it."

"How! no help for it! What may be the nature of this injury, for which a man with your limbs and spirit can find no help?"

The countryman looked at the speaker with a curious expression, in which a desire to confide, and a proper hesitancy in intrusting his secret thoughts to a stranger, were mingled equally. The other beheld the expression, and readily divining the difficulty, proceeded to remove it.

"This man has wronged you, friend Davis: you are his match—more than his match; you have better make and muscle, and manage your club quite as well as he his broadsword:—why should you not have justice if you desire it?"

"If I desire it!" cried the other, and his black eye sparkled. "I do desire it, squire; but there's odds against me, or we'd a-been at it afore this."

"What odds?"

"Look there!" and as Davis replied he pointed to the fortress upon the opposite hill, a few hundred yards off, where the cross of Great Britain streamed high among the pine-trees, and from the entrance of which, at that very moment, a small body of regulars were pouring out into the street, and proceeding with martial music to the market-place.

"I see," replied the other—"I see; but why should they prove odds against you in a personal affair with this sergeant? You have justice from them surely."

"Justice!—such justice as a tory captain gives when he wants your horse, and don't want to pay for it." Davis replied truly, in his summing up of British justice at that period.

"But you do not mean to say that the people would not be protected, were complaints properly made to the officers?"

"I do; and what's worse, complaint only goes after new hickories. One man was strapped up only yesterday, because he complained that Corporal Townes kicked his wife and broke his crockery. They gave him a hundred lashes."

"And yet loyalty must have its advantages, more than equal to this usage, else"—and a smile of bitter scorn played upon the lips of the speaker as he finished the sentence—"else there would not be so many to love it so well and submit to it so patiently."

The countryman gazed earnestly at the speaker, whose eyes were full of a most searching expression, which could not be misunderstood.

"Dang it, stranger," he cried, "what do you mean—who are you?"

"A man—one who has not asked for a British protection, nor submitted to their hickories;" and the form of the stranger was elevated duly as he spoke, and his eye was lighted up with scornful fires, as his re-

ference was made sarcastically to the many in the neighbourhood who had done both. The man's face was flushed when he heard this reply; the tears gathered in his eyes, and with a bitter emphasis, though in low tones, as if he felt all the shame of his acknowledgment, he replied—

"God curse me, but I did! I was one of those who took a protection. Here it is—here's the paper. Here's where I sold my country, and put myself down in black and white, to be beaten like a dog with hickories. But it's not too late; and look you, stranger, I believe you're true blue, but if you aint, why it's all the same thing—I care not—you may go tell quick as you please; but I will break the bargain."

"How?—speak!" and the form of the other was advanced and seemed to dilate, as he watched the earnest glow in every feature of his companion.

"How?—by tearing up the paper: see"—and, as he spoke, he tore into small bits the guaranty of British protection, which, in common with most of his neighbours, he had been persuaded to accept from the commandant for his security, and as a condition of that return, which he pledged at the same time, to his duty and his allegiance.

"Your life is in my hands," exclaimed his companion, deliberately. "Your life is in my hands."

"Take it!" cried the countryman, and he threw himself upon his guard, while his fingers clutched fiercely the knife which he carried in his bosom. His small person, slight but active, thrown back, every muscle in action and ready for contest; his broad-brimmed white hat dashed from his brow; his black glossy hair dishevelled and flying in the wind; lips closely compressed, while his deep, dark eye shot forth fires of anger, fiercely enlivening the dusky sallow of his cheek —all gave to him a most imposing expression of animated life and courage in the eye of his companion.

"Take it—take the worthless life!" he cried, in low but emphatic accents. "It is worthless, but you will fight for it."

The other regarded him with a look of admiration sobered into calm.

"Your life is in my hands, but it is safe. God forbid, Master Davis," said he, with solemnity, "God forbid that I should assail it. I am your friend, your countryman, and I rejoice in what you have done. You have done well and nobly in destroying that evidence of your dishonour; for it is dishonour to barter one's country and its liberties for dastardly security—for one's miserable life. You have done well; but be not rash. Your movement must be in quiet. Nothing rash, nothing precipitate. Every step you now take must be one of caution, for your path is along the steeps of danger. But come with me—you shall know more. First secure those scraps; they may tell tales upon you; a quick hand and close eye may put them together, and then your neck would be fit game for the halter yon sergeant warned you of. But what now—what are the troops about?"

The countryman looked, at his companion's question, and beheld the troops forming in the market-place, while the note of the bugle at intervals, and an occasional sullen tap of the drum, gathered the crowd of the village around them.

"It's a proclamation, squire. That's the market-place, where they read it first. They give us one every two or three days, sometimes about one thing, sometimes another. If the cattle's killed by the whigs, though it may be their own, there's a proclamation;* but we don't mind them much, for they only tell us to be quiet and orderly, and, Heaven knows, we can't be more so. They will next go to the church, where they will again read it. That's nigher, and we can get round in time to hear what it is. Shall we go, squire?" The other expressed his willingness, and leaving the bridge, they proceeded in the direction of the crowd.

* We have two or three grave proclamations of this sort on record, issued by the British generals in Carolina.

CHAPTER IV.

"————Keep thy counsel well,
And fear not. We shall mate with them in time,
And spoil them who would strike us. We are free,
And confidently strong—have arms and men—
Good fellows in the wood, that will not fly
When blows are to be borne."

By a short path the stranger and his companion moved from the bridge to the place of gathering. It was not long before they found themselves in the thick of the crowd, upon the green plot in front of the church, from the portals of which the heavy roll of the drum commanded due attention from the populace. The proclamation which the commander of the garrison at Dorchester now proceeded to read to the multitude, was of no small importance. Its contents were well calculated to astound and terrify the Carolinians who heard it. It was one of the many movements of the British commander, unfortunately for the cause of royalty in that region, which, more than any thing besides, contributed to arouse and irritate that spirit of resistance on the part of the invaded people, which it should have been the studious policy of the invaders to mollify and suppress. The document in question had been just issued by Sir Henry Clinton, declaring all paroles or protections granted hitherto to be null and void, and requiring the holders of them, within twenty days, to resume the character of British subjects—taking up arms in the promotion of his majesty's cause, against their brethren, under pain of being treated as rebels to his government. The motive of Sir Henry for a movement so exceedingly injudicious, may be only conjectured from the concurrent circumstances of the time. The continental army, under De Kalb, was on its way to the South—Gates had been ordered to com-

mand it—and this intelligence, though not generally known to the people of Carolina, could not long be withheld from their possession. It was necessary to keep them from any co-operation with their approaching friends; and no more effectual mode, simply considered by itself, could have been suggested to the mind of the Briton than their employment under his own banners. This apart, the invasion of the adjoining states of Virginia and North Carolina had been long since determined upon, and was now to be attempted. Troops were wanted for this purpose, and no policy seemed better than to expend one set of rebels upon another. It was also necessary to secure the conquered province; and the terrors of the hangman were providently held out, in order to impel the conquered to the minor risks of the bayonet and shot. The error was a fatal one. From that hour the declension of British power was precipitately hurried in Carolina: the people lost all confidence in those who had already so grossly deceived them; for the condition of the protection or parole called for no military service from the citizen who took it. He was simply to be neutral in the contest; and however unworthy may have been the spirit consenting even to this condition, it cannot be denied that a foul deception had been practised upon them. The consequences were inevitable; and the determined hostility of the foe was coupled, on the part of the Carolinians, with a wholesale scorn of the want of probity manifested by the enemy they were now not so unwilling to encounter.

From the church-porch the proclamation was again read to the assembled multitude. The crowd was variously composed, and various indeed was the effect which it produced among them. The stranger and his companion, at a little distance, listened closely to the words of the instrument; and a smile of joy, not unmarked by Davis, played over the features of the former as he heard it read. The latter looked his indignation: he could not understand why such a paper should give pleasure to his comrade, and could not

forbear, in a whisper, demanding the occasion of his satisfaction.

"It pleases you, squire? I see you smile!"

"It does please me—much, very much," responded the other, quickly, and with emphasis, but in a whisper also.

"What!" with more earnestness, said the countryman—"what! does it please you to listen to such villany as this? I do not understand you."

"Not so loud, comrade; you have a neck, and these fellows a rope: besides, there's one to the left of us whose looks I like not."

The other turned in the direction signified, and saw the propriety of his companion's caution, as he beheld within a few feet the harsh features of the notorious Captain Huck, a furious and bloody tory-leader, well known, and held in odious estimation, throughout the neighbourhood. The stranger went on, still whispering—

"Look pleased, friend Davis, if you can: this is no time to show any but false colours to the enemy. I am pleased, really, as you think, and have my reason for being so, which you shall know in good time. Take breath, and listen."

The paper was finished, and the detachment moved on its way to the "George Tavern," the crowd generally following; and there it was again read. Our two friends kept together, and proceeded with the multitude. The stranger was eminently watchful and observant: he noted well the sentiment of indignation which all faces manifested; there could be no doubt of that expression. The sober farmer, the thoughtless and gay-hearted planter of the neighbourhood, the drudge, the mechanic, the petty chapman—all had in their looks that severe soberness which showed a thought and spirit, active, and more to be respected, as they were kept so well restrained.

"God save the king!" cried the officer, as he concluded the instrument, from the steps of the tavern.

"Ay, God save the king, and God bless him, too!"

cried old Humphries, at the entrance. A few only of the crowd gave back the cry, and even with them the prayer was coldly uttered; and there was nothing like that spirit which, when the heart goes with the decree of the ruler, makes the welkin ring with its unregulated rejoicings.

"You are silent: you do not cry with the rest," said one at the elbow of the stranger. He turned to behold the features of the tory-captain, of whom we have already spoken, who now, with a scrutinizing glance, placed himself close beside the person he had addressed. The mean cunning—the low, searching expression of his look—were eminently disgusting to the youth, who replied, while resuming his old position—

"What? God save the king? Did I not say it? It's very natural; for I'm so used to it. I'm quite willing that God should save his majesty—God knows he needs it."

This was said with a very devout countenance, and the expression was so composed and quiet, that the tory could say nothing, though still not satisfied, seemingly, with much that was in the language. It sounded very like a sneer, and yet, strictly speaking, it was perfectly unexceptionable. Baffled in this quarter, the loyalist, who was particularly desirous of establishing his own claims to British favour, now turned with a similar inquiry to Davis; but the countryman was ready, and a nudge in the side from his companion, had any thing been wanting, moved him to a similar answer. Huck was not exactly prepared to meet with so much willingness on the part of two persons whose movements he had suspected, and had been watching; but concluding them now to be well-affected, he did not scruple to propose to them to become members of the troop of horse he was engaged in raising. To the stranger he first addressed himself, complimenting him upon his fine limbs and figure, and insisting upon the excellent appearance he would make, well-mounted and in British uniform. A smile of sovereign contempt overspread the youth's features as he listened to the

tory patiently to the end. Calmly, then, he begged permission to decline the proposed honour.

"Why, you are loyal, sir?" he asked, seeming to doubt.

"Who denies it?" fiercely replied the stranger.

"Oh, nobody; I mean not to offend: but, as a loyal subject, you can scarce withhold yourself from service."

"I do not contemplate to do so, sir."

"And why not join my troop? Come, now, you shall have a lieutenancy; for, blast me, but I like your looks, and would be devilish glad to have you. You can't refuse."

"But I do," said the other, calmly—almost contemptuously.

"And wherefore?" Huck inquired, with some show of pique in his countenance and manner—"wherefore? What better service? and, to a soldier of fortune, let me ask you, what better chances than now of making every thing out of these d—d rebels, who have gone into the swamps, leaving large estates for confiscation? What better business?"

"None: I fully agree with you."

"And you will join my troop?"

"No!"

The man looked astonished. The coolness and composure with which the denial was made surprising him not less than the denial itself. With a look of doubt and wonderment, he went on—

"Well, you know best; but, of course, as a good citizen, you will soon be in arms: twenty days, you know, are all that's allowed you."

"I do not need so many: as a good citizen, I shall be in arms in less time."

"In whose troop?—where?"

"Ah, now we come to the point," was the sudden reply; "and you will now see why I have been able to withstand the tempting offers you have made me. I am thinking to form a troop of my own, and should I do so, I certainly should not wish so much success to yours as to fall into your ranks."

"Indeed! Well, I'm glad, any how, that his majesty is likely to be so well served with officers. Have you yet applied for a commission to the commandant?"

"No; nor shall I, till my recruits are strong enough to make my appearance respectable."

"That's right! I know that by experience. They never like you half so well as when you bring your men with you: they don't want officers so much as men; and some of the commands, if they can chouse you out of your recruits, will not stop to do so; and then you may whistle for your commission. I suppose your friend, here, is already secured for your squad?"

The tory referred to Davis, who did not leave his companion to reply; but, without scruple, avowed himself as having already been partially secured for the opposition troop.

"Well, good luck to you. But I say, comrade, you have commanded before—of course, you are prepared to lead?"

"I have the heart for it," was the reply; and as the stranger spoke, he extended his arms towards the tory captain, while elevating his figure to its fullest height; "and you can say yourself for the limbs. As for the head, it must be seen if mine's good for any thing."

"I doubt it not; and service comes easy after a brush or two. But wouldn't you like to know the colonel?"

"Who?—Proctor—the colonel in command here?"

"The same."

"In time, I'll trouble you, perhaps, to help me to that knowledge. Not yet; not till I get my recruits."

"You are right in that; and, talking of the recruits, I must see after mine; and, so, a good-evening to you, and success. We shall meet again." The tory moved among the separate groups as he spoke, and the stranger turned to Davis, while he muttered—

"Ay, we shall meet again, Master Huck, or it will be no fault of mine. If we do not, Old Nick takes marvellous care of his own. But, ha! comrade, keep you here awhile: there is one that I would speak with."

At a little distance apart, at one wing of the tavern, stood a man, attired in the blue homespun common to the country wear, among the humbler classes; and with nothing particular to distinguish him, if we may except a face somewhat more round and rosy than belongs usually to the people dwelling in Dorchester and its neighbourhood. He was like them in one respect—having a sidelong, indirect movement, coupled with a sluggish, lounging, indifferent gait, which is the general feature of this people, unless when roused by insult or provocation. In his hand he carried a whip of common leather, which he smacked occasionally, either for the sharp, shot-like sounds which it sent forth, or when he desired to send to a greater distance that most grumbling of all aristocrats, the hog, as it approached him. The quick eye of the stranger had singled out this personage; and, leaving Davis where he stood, and moving quickly through the straggling groups that still clustered in front of the tavern, he at once approached him confidently as an old acquaintance. The other seemed not to observe his coming, until our first acquaintance, speaking as he advanced, caught his notice. This had no sooner been done, than the other was in motion. Throwing aside his sluggishness of look, he recognised by a glance the stranger youth, and his head was bent forward to listen, as he saw that he was about to speak. The words of our old acquaintance were few, but significant—

"I am here before you—say nothing—lead on, and I will follow."

With a nod, the person addressed looked but once at the speaker; then, without a word, moving from his easy position against the tavern, and throwing aside all show of sluggishness, he led the way for the stranger; and, taking an oblique path, which carried them in a short time into the neighbouring woods, they soon left the village behind them. Davis had been reluctant to separate from the companion to whom he had so readily yielded his confidence. He had his doubts—as who could be without them in that season of general

distrust?—but when he remembered the warm, manly frankness of the stranger—his free, bold, generous, and gentle countenance—he did not suffer himself to doubt for a moment more that his secret would be safe in his possession. This, indeed, was the least of his difficulties. The fair coquette of the inn had attracted him strongly, and, with a heavy heart, he turned into the "Royal George;" and, throwing his form at length upon a bench, he solaced himself with an occasional glance at Bella Humphries, whose duties carried her to and fro between the bar and the sitting-room; and with thoughts of that vengeance upon his enemy which his new position with the stranger seemed to promise him.

Meanwhile, following the steps of the individual he had so singled out, the latter kept on his way until the village had been fairly passed; then, plunging down a little by-path, into which the former had gone, he soon overtook him, and they moved on closely together in their common progress. The guide was a stout able-bodied person, of thirty years, or perhaps more—a rough-looking man, one seemingly born and bred entirely in the humble life of the country. He was powerful in physical development, rather stout than high, with a short, thick neck—a head round and large, with eyes small, settled, and piercing—and features even solemn in their general expression of severity. He carried no visible weapons, but he seemed the man to use them; for no one who looked in his face could doubt that he was full of settled purpose, firm in his resolve, and reckless, having once determined, in the prosecution of the most desperate enterprise.

The way they were pursuing grew more and more tangled as they went, gradually sinking in level, until the footing became slightly insecure, and at length terminated in the soft oozy swamp surface common to the margin of most rivers in the low country of the south. They were now close on the banks of the Ashley, which wound its way, perceptible to the two in occasional glimpses, through the close-set foliage by which they were surrounded. A few more strides

through the copse and over the miry surface, brought them again to a dry elevation, isolated by small sluices of water, and more closely wrapped in brush and covering. Here their progress was arrested, for they were now perfectly secure from interruption. In all this time, no word had been exchanged between the parties; but the necessity for farther caution being now over, they came to a pause, and the silence was broken as follows by our last-made acquaintance:—

"We are safe here, Major Singleton, and can now speak freely. The sharpest scout in the British garrison could not well come upon us without warning, and if he did, would do so by accident."

"I'm glad of it, for I'm heartily tired, and not a little impatient to talk with you. But let us be at ease."

They threw themselves upon the ground—our elder acquaintance, whom we now know as Major Singleton, with an air of superiority which seemed familiar, choosing the most favourable spot, while the other remained standing until his companion had adjusted himself; and then took his seat respectfully on the ridgy roots of the pine-tree spreading over them.

"And now, Humphries," said Singleton, "what of my sister—is she safe, and how did she bear the journey?"

"Safe, major, and well as could be expected, though very feeble. We had some trouble crossing the Santee, but it did not keep us long, and we got on tolerably well after. The whole party are now safe at 'The Oaks.'"

"Well, you must guide me there to-night, if possible; I know nothing of the place, and but little of the country. Years have passed since I last went over it."

"What! have you never been at 'The Oaks,' major? I was told you had."

"Yes, when a boy; but I have no distinct memory on the subject, except of the noble trees, the thick white moss, and the dreamy quiet of all things around. The place, I know, is beautiful."

"You may well say so, major; a finer don't happen

when you first came up—I thought you were unknown in these parts?"

"You thought rightly; I am still unknown, but I learned to know something of him you speak of, and circumstances threw us together." Here Singleton related the occurrences at the tavern, as already known to us. Humphries, who was the son of the landlord, gave close attention, and with something more than ordinary interest. He was not at any time a man to show his feelings openly, but there was an increased pressure of his lips together as that portion fell upon his ear which described the interference of his sister, the fair coquette Bella, for the protection of her cast-off lover. His breathing was far less free at this point of the narrative; and when Singleton concluded, the listener muttered, partly in soliloquy and partly in reply—

"A poor fool of a girl, that sister of mine, major; loves the fine colours of the jay in spite of his cursed squalling, and has played upon that good fellow, Davis —Prickly Ash, as we sometimes call him in the village—till he's half out of his wits. Her head, too, is half turned with that red coat; but I'll cure her of that, and cure him too, or there's no virtue in twisted bore. But, major, did you do any thing with Davis?"

The answer was affirmative, and Humphries continued—

"That's a gain, sir; for Davis is true, if he says it, and comes of good breed: he'll fight like a bull-dog, and his teeth shall meet in the flesh. Besides, he's a great shot with the rifle, like most of the boys from Goose Creek. His old mother kept him back, or he'd a-joined us long ago, for I've seen how his thoughts run. But it's not too late, and if the word's once out of his mouth, he's to be depended on—he's safe."

"A few more will do. You have several others, have you not, gathering in a safe place!" said Singleton.

"In the swamp—thirteen, true as steel, and ready for fight. They're only some six miles off, and can

be brought up in two hours, at notice. See, this river comes from the heart of the Cypress Swamp, where they shelter; and if there be no tory among us to show them the track, I defy all Proctor's garrison to find us out."

"We must be among them to-morrow. But the evening wears, and the breeze freshens up from the river: it is sweet and fresh from the sea—and how different, too, from that of the forests! But come—I must go back, and have my horse in readiness for this ride to 'The Oaks,' where you must attend me."

"Your horse! Where is he?" asked the other, quickly.

"In your father's stable."

"He must not be suffered to stay there; if he is, you will not have him long. We must hide him out, or that black-hearted tory, Huck, will be on his quarters before three days: he's beating about the country now for horses as well as men."

"See to it, then, for I must run no such risk. Let us return at once," said Singleton.

"Yes; but we take different roads: we must not know each other. Can you find the way back alone, major?"

"Yes—I doubt not."

"To the left now—round that water; keep straight up from the river for a hundred yards, and you fall into the track. Your horse shall be ready in an hour, and I will meet you at supper."

They parted—Singleton on his way as directed, and Humphries burying himself still deeper in the copse.

CHAPTER V.

"It needs but to be bold—be bold—be bold—
Everywhere bold. 'Tis every virtue told;
Courage and truth, humanity and skill,
The noblest cunning that the mind can will,
And the best charity."

It was not long before Singleton reached the tavern, which he now found crowded. The villagers of all conditions and politics had there assembled, either to mutter over their doubts or discontents, or to gather counsel for their course in future, from the many, wiser than themselves, in their own predicament. There, also, came the true loyalist, certain to find deference and favour from the many around him, not so happy or so secure as himself in the confidence of the existing powers. The group was motley enough, and the moods at work among them not less so. Some had already determined upon submission,—some of the weak—the time-serving—such as every old community will be found to furnish, where indolent habits, which have become inveterate, forbid all sort of independence. Some fluctuated, and knew not what to do, or even what to think. But there were others, Singleton imagined, as he looked into their grave, sullen features, full of thought and pregnant with determination, who felt nothing so strongly as the sense of injustice, and the rebel-daring which calls for defiance at every hazard. "Vengeance! my men!" he muttered to himself, as, passing full into the apartment, he became at once visible to the group. The old landlord himself was the first person who confronted him after that familiar fashion which had already had its rebuke from the same quarter.

"Ah, captain! (the brow of Singleton darkened)—squire I mean—I ask pardon, squire; but here, where

every man is a captain, or a colonel, or something, it comes easy to say so to all, and is not often amiss. No offence, squire—it's use, only, and I mean no harm."

"Enough, enough! good Master Landlord! Least said, soonest mended. Shall we soon have supper?"

The ready publican turned to the inner door of the apartment and put the same question to his daughter, the fair Bella; then, without waiting for her reply, informed the inquirer that many minutes would not elapse before it would be on table.

"Six o'clock's the time of day for supper, squire—six for supper—one for dinner—eight for breakfast—punctual to the stroke, and no waiting. Heh! what's that you say, Master Dickenson?—what's that about Frampton?"

Humphries turned to one of the villagers whose remarks had partially met his ear, and who had just entered the apartment. The person so addressed came forward; a thin-jawed, sallow countryman, whose eyes were big with the intelligence he brought, and who seemed anxious that a well-dressed and goodly-looking stranger like Singleton should have the benefit of his burden.

"Why, gentlemen, the matter with Frampton's strange enough. You all know he's been out several days, close in the swamp. He had a fight, stranger, you see, with one of Huck's dragoons; and he licked the dragoon, for all the world, as if he'd a licked him out of his skin. Now the dragoon's a strong fellow enough; but Frampton's a horse, and if ever he mounts you the game is up, for there's no stopping him when he gets his hand in. So, as I tell you, the dragoon stood a mighty slim chance. He first brought him down with a backhanded wipe, that came over his cheek for all the world like the slap of a water-wheel—"

"Yes, yes, we all heard that; but what was it all about, Dickenson?—we don't know that, yet," cried one of the group which had now formed around the speaker.

"Why, that's soon told. The dragoon went to Framp-

ton's house when he was in the swamp, and made free with what he wanted. Big Barney, his elder son, went off in the mean while to his daddy, and off he came full tilt, with Lance his youngest lad along with him. You know Lance, or Lancelot, a smart chap of sixteen: you've seed him often enough."

"Yes, yes, we know him."

"Well, as I tell you, the old man and his two boys came full tilt to the house, and 'twas a God's mercy they came in time, for the doings of the dragoon was too ridiculous for any decent body to put up with, and the old colt could'nt stand it no how; so, as I tell you, he put it to him in short order. He first gave him a backhanded wipe, which flattened him, I tell you; and when the sodger tried to get up, he put it to him again so that it was easier for him to lie down than to stand up; and lie down he did, without a word, till the other dragoons tuk him up. They came a few minutes after, and the old man and the youngest boy Lance had a narrow chance and a smart run for it. They heard the troops coming down the lane, and they took to the bush. The sodgers tried hard to catch them, but it aint easy to hook a Goose-Creeker when he's on trail for the swamp, and splashing after the hogs along a tussock. So they got safe into the Cypress, and the dragoons had nothing better to do than go back to the house. Well, they made Frampton's old woman stand all sorts of treatment, and that too bad to find names for. They beat her too, and she as heavy as she could go. Well, then, she died night afore last, as might be expected; and now the wonder is, what's become of her body. They laid her out; and the old granny that watched her only went into the kitchen for a little while, and when she came back the body was gone. She looked out of the window, and sure enough she sees a man going over the rail with a bundle all in white on his shoulder. And the man looked, so she swears, for all the world like old Frampton himself. Nobody knows any thing more about it; and what I heard, is jist now what I tell you"

The man had narrated truly what he had heard; and what, in reality, with little exaggeration, was the truth. The company had listened to one of those stories of brutality, which—in the fierce civil warfare of the South, when neighbours were arrayed against one another, and when, on one side, negroes and Indians formed allies, contributing, by their lighter sense of humanity, additional forms of terror to the sanguinary warfare pursued at that period—were of almost daily occurrence. Huck, the infamous tory captain, of whom we have already obtained a slight glimpse in the progress of our narrative, was himself of a character well fitted, by his habitual cunning and gross want of all the softening influences of humanity, to give countenance, and even example, to crimes of this nature. His dragoons, though few as yet in number, and employed only on marauding excursions calling for small parties, had already become notorious for their outrages of this description. Indeed, they found impunity in this circumstance. In regular warfare, under the controlling presence of crowds, the responsibility of his men, apart from what they owed or yielded to himself, would have bound them certainly in some greater restraints; although, to their shame be it said, the British generals in the South, when mortified by defeat and vexed by unexpected resistance, were themselves not always more tenacious of propriety than the tory Huck. The sanguinary orders of Cornwallis, commanding the cold-blooded execution of hundreds, are on record, in melancholy attestation to this day of the atrocities committed by the one, and the persecutions borne by the other party, during that memorable conflict.

It could easily be seen what was the general feeling during this recital, and yet that feeling was unspoken. Some few shook their heads very gravely, and a few, more daring yet, ventured to say, that "it was very bad, very bad indeed—very shocking!"

"What's very bad, friends? what is it you speak of as so shocking?" was the demand of one just entering. The crowd started back, and Huck himself stood among

them. He repeated his inquiry, and with a manner that left it doubtful whether he really desired to know what had been the subject of their remarks, or whether, having heard, he wished to compel some of them to the honest utterance of their sentiments upon it. Singleton, who had listened with a duly-excited spirit to the narrative of the countryman, now advanced deliberately towards the new-comer, whom he addressed as in answer to his question—

"Why, sir, it is bad, very bad indeed, the treatment received, as I learn, by one of his majesty's dragoons, at the hands of some impudent rebel a few nights ago. You know, sir, to what I allude. You have heard, doubtless."

The bold, confident manner of the speaker was sufficiently imposing to satisfy all around of his loyalty. Huck seemed completely surprised, and replied freely and with confidence—

"Ay, you mean the affair of that scoundrel, Frampton. Yes, I know all about it; but we're on his trail, and shall soon make him sweat for his audacity, the blasted rebel."

"Do you know that his wife died?" asked one of the countrymen, in a tone subdued to one of simple and inexpressive inquiry.

"No—and don't care very greatly. It's a bad breed, and the misfortune is, there's quite too many of them. But we'll thin them soon, and easily, by God! and the land shall be rid of the reptiles."

"Yes, captain, we think alike," said Singleton, familiarly—"we think alike on that subject. Something must be done, and in time, or there will be no comfortable moving for a loyalist, whether in swamp or highway. They have it in their power to do mischief, if not taken care of in time. It is certainly our policy to prevent our men from being ill-treated by them, and to do this, they must be taken in hand early. Rebellion grows like nut-grass when it once takes root, and runs faster than you can find it. It should be seen to."

"That is my thought already, and accordingly I have a good dog on trail of this lark, Frampton, and hope soon to have him in. He cannot escape Travis, my

lieutenant, who is now after him, and who knows the swamp as well as himself. They're both from Goose Creek, and so let dog eat dog."

"You have sent Travis after him, then, captain?" inquired a slow and deliberate voice at Huck's elbow. Singleton turned at the same moment with the person addressed, recognising in the speaker his own lieutenant, the younger Humphries, who had got back to the tavern almost as soon as himself. Humphries, of whose Americanism we can have no sort of question, had yet managed adroitly, and what with his own cunning and his father's established loyalty, he was enabled, not only to pass without suspicion, but actually to impress the tories with a favourable opinion of his good feeling for the British cause. This was one of those artifices which the necessities of the times imposed upon most men, and for which they gave a sufficient moral sanction.

"Ah, Bill, my boy," said Huck, turning as to an old acquaintance, "is that you!—why, where have you been?—haven't seen you for an age, and didn't well know what had become of you—thought you might have gone into the swamps too with the skulking rebels."

"So I have," replied the other calmly—"not with the rebels, though. I see none of them to go with—but I have been skirting the Cypress for some time, gathering what pigs the alligators found no use for. Pigs and poultry are the rebels I look after. You may judge of my success by their bawling."

In confirmation of what Humphries had said, at that moment the collection of tied pigs with which his cart had been piled, and the tethered chickens undergoing transfer to a more fixed dwelling, and tumbled from the mass where they had quietly but confusedly lain for an hour or two before, sent up a most piteous pleading, which, for the time, effectually silenced the speakers within. A moment's pause obtained, Humphries reverted, though indirectly, to the question which he had put to the tory captain touching the pursuit of Framp-

ton by Travis; and, without exciting his suspicion by a positive inquiry, strove to obtain information.

"Travis will find Frampton if he chooses,—he knows the swamp quite as well—and a lean dog for a long chase, you know,—that is, if you have given him men enough."

"I gave him all he wanted: ten, he said, would answer: he could have had more. He'll catch him, or I'm mistaken."

"Yes, if he strikes a good route. The old paths are washed now by the freshet, and he may find it hard to keep track. Now, the best path for him to take, captain, would have been up over Terrapin Bridge by Turkey Town. That will bring him right into the heart of the swamp, where it's most likely Frampton hides."

"Terrapin Bridge—Turkey Town," said the other, seeming to muse. "No, he said nothing of these places: he spoke of—"

"Droze's old field," exclaimed Humphries, somewhat eagerly.

"Yes, that's the name; he goes that route; and I remember he spoke of another, where he said the waters were too high."

"Ay—and does he think to find Frampton on the skirts?—and then, what a round-about way by Droze's! eh! neighbours?—he can't be there before midnight. But, of course, he went there in time," said Humphries, insinuating the question.

"Only two hours gone," replied the other, giving the desired intelligence; "but he won't do more than stretch to the swamp to-night. He wants to be ready to make a dash with the daylight upon them, when he hopes to find the fellow not yet out of his nest."

Humphries looked approvingly as he heard the plan, and he exchanged glances of intelligence at intervals with Singleton, who listened attentively to this dialogue, which had wormed out the secret of one of those little adventures of Huck's party, in which his command was most generally employed. The look of Singleton spoke clearly to Humphries his desire of the

strife; and the other, with a due correspondence of feeling, was yet prudent enough to control its expression in his features. In the mean time, Huck, who had long been desirous of securing Humphries for his troop, now pressed the latter more earnestly than ever upon that subject. Taking him aside, he detailed to him in an under-tone the thousand advantages of profit and position which must result to him from coming out in arms for his majesty, and in his, Captain Huck's, particular command of cavalry. It was amusing to observe how much stronger became his anxiety whenever his eye rested upon the form of Singleton, whom he now regarded in the light of a rival leader. The eye of young Humphries, also, glanced frequently in the same direction, as, from a previous knowledge of the character of Singleton, he felt how impatient he would be until he could make the attack which he saw he contemplated upon the marauding party which had been sent out under Travis. It was in such little adventures that the partisan warfare of Carolina had its origin.

Humphries, closely pressed by Huck, had yet ingenuity enough to evade his application without offending his pride or alarming his suspicions. He made sundry excuses simply as to time, leaving the tory to infer that in the end the recruit would certainly be his.

"You will soon have to come out, Bill, my boy; and dang it, but there's no better chance than you have in my troop. You shall be my right-hand man, for I know you, old fellow—and blast me, but I'd sooner trust you than any chap of the corps. I may as well put you down."

"No, not yet: I'll be ready to answer you soon, and I can easily make my preparations. You have arms a-plenty?"

"Soon shall have. Three wagons are on their way from Charlestown with sabres and pistols especially for us."

"I shall, no doubt, want some of them, and you shall

then hear from me. There is time enough in all next week."

"Yes; but be quick about it, or there will be no picking; and then you have but twenty days, remember. The proclamation gives but twenty days, and then Cornwallis has sworn to treat as rebels, with the utmost severity of the law, all those who are not in arms for his majesty—just the same as if they had fought against him. See, I have it here."

He took from his pocket the proclamation, and with it a private order, which was issued by the commander-in-chief to all the subordinate commands, giving directions for the utmost severity, and prescribing the mode of punishment for the refractory, nearly in the language and to the full effect of Huck's representations. Humphries looked grave enough at these crowding evidences, but resisted, by well-urged evasions, the exhortations of the tempter. The tory captain was compelled to rest satisfied for the present, assured that he had held forth especial inducements to the countryman which must give his troop a preference in his eye over any claims that might be set up by the rival recruiting officer, as he considered Singleton. With a hearty shake of the hand, and a few parting words in whisper to his companion, he left the hotel to make his way—a subtle sycophant with his superiors—to the presence of Colonel Proctor of the Dorchester garrison, from whom he had received his commission.

Singleton, while this episode of Humphries and the tory had been going on, employed himself in occasional conversation with the landlord and sundry of the villagers in another end of the apartment. In this conversation, though studiously selecting topics of a nature not to startle or offend the fears or the prejudices of any, he contrived, with no little ingenuity, to bring about, every now and then, occasional expressions of their feelings and opinions. He saw, from these few and brief evidences, that their feelings were not with their rulers—that they subscribed, simply, to a hard necessity, and would readily seek the means of relief, did

they know where to find it. He himself took care, while he uttered nothing which could be construed into an offence against loyalty, to frame what he did say in such a guise that it must have touched and ministered largely to the existing provocations. He could see this in the burning indignation strong in every countenance, as he dwelt upon the imperative necessity they were now under of taking up arms in obedience to the proclamation. His urging of this topic was, like that of Huck, ostensibly the obtaining of recruits for his contemplated troop. His policy was one frequently acted upon in that strange warfare, in which the tories, when defeated, found few conscientious scruples to restrain them from falling into the ranks and becoming good soldiers along with their conquerors. Such devices as that which he now aimed to practise were freely resorted to; and the case was not uncommon of a troop thus formed under the eye of the enemy, and, in his belief, to do the battles of the monarch, moving off, *en masse*, the first opportunity, and joining with their fellow-countrymen, as well in flight as in victory. Such, however, was scarcely now the object of the stranger: he simply desired that his loyalty might pass unquestioned; and he put on a habit, therefore, as a disguise, which but too many natives wore with far less scruple, and perhaps with some show of grace. It may be said, as highly gratifying to Singleton, that in the character thus assumed he made no converts.

But the bell for supper was now ringing, and taking his way with the rest, he passed into the inner apartment. Bella Humphries presided, her brother taking a seat at the other end of the table, and ministering to the guests in that quarter. Singleton was assigned a seat, possibly by way of distinction, close to the maiden, who smiled graciously at his approach. Still she looked not so well satisfied. Neither of her squires was present, and her eye wandered from side to side among her unattractive countrymen at the table, resting at last, as with a dernier hope, upon the manly but handsome face and person of our adventurer. While she

did so, he had an opportunity of scanning her features more narrowly. She was very girlish, certainly very youthful, in appearance, and her face was decidedly handsome. He saw, at a glance, that she was incapable of any of that settled and solemn feeling which belongs to love, and which can only exist along with a strongly-marked character and truly elevated sentiments. Her desire was that of display, and conquest made the chief agent to this end. It mattered not how doubtful was the character of her captives, so that they were numerous; and Singleton felt assured that his simple Goose Creek convert, Davis, but for the red coat and the command, stood quite as good a chance in the maiden's heart as the more formidable sergeant. How long he would have watched the features which seemed not unwilling to attract his eye, we may not say; but his gaze was at length disturbed by the entrance of Davis, who, taking his seat at the opposite corner of the table, now appeared in a better and a more conciliating humour. He addressed some country compliment to Bella, which she was not displeased to listen to, as she was perfectly satisfied to have a swain, no matter who, in the absence of the greater favourite. She answered some few remarks of Singleton and Davis with a pretty, childish simplicity, which showed that, after all, the misfortune of the girl was only a deficiency in the more interesting points of character, and not the presence of an improper or a wanton capriciousness of feeling.

Meantime the supping proceeded, and towards its conclusion, Humphries the brother, giving Davis a look and a sign, which the latter seemed to comprehend, left the apartment. Davis followed him; and they were gone about a quarter of an hour, which time had been spent by Singleton in a lively chat with the girl, when, through the window, he saw the face of a man, and the motion of a hand which beckoned him. In a moment after the person was gone; and suffering some few seconds to elapse, he also rose and obeyed the signal. He took his way into the yard, and under

the shadow of a tree, at a little distance from the house, distinguished the person of Humphries. Singleton at once approached him—the other motioned silence, seeing him about to speak, and led him to the stable, where all was perfectly in shadow.

"We are safe now," said he. Singleton immediately addressed him, and with some show of impatience, on a subject which had much employed his thoughts during the past hour.

"Humphries, say, can we not strike at that fellow Tracy? Is it possible to do any thing with his detachment?"

"Travis, not Tracy, major," replied the other. "It is possible, sir; and there is a strong chance of our success if we manage well, and if so be you can postpone going to 'The Oaks' to-night."

"True," said the other; "I should like very much to go, but this movement of Tracy—or Travis, you say—gives us a good beginning, which we ought on no account to miss. Besides, we should put your men on their guard—are they not in danger?"

"Not if they watch well; but there's no answering for new hands. They must have practice before they can learn, and down here they've had but little yet. They're not like your Santee boys I've heard you tell of."

"Willing soon will! But let us move. I'll say no more of 'The Oaks' to-night at least. We can move there to-morrow. Of course you lead the route, for I know nothing about it."

"Trust to me; and, major, go back to the house quietly. Wait till you hear my whistle three times—thus. It's an old signal, which you'll have to learn here, as our little squad all knows it, and knows nothing else by way of music. Meantime I'll get things in readiness, and set Davis to carry out the horses to the bush."

"Is he bent to go with us?" was Singleton's question.

"True as steel. A little weak o' heart, sir, about that foolish girl—but that's all the better, for it makes him hate the British the more. Here he comes. You

had better go now, major, and let us be as little seen together as may be. You'll mind the whistle—thus, three times ;" and in a low tone Humphries gave him the signal. Singleton went towards the house, in the shadow of which he was soon lost from sight, while Humphries and Davis proceeded to the farther arrangements.

It was not long before these were completed, and with a rush of pleasure to his heart, Major Singleton heard the thrice-uttered note—the signal agreed upon —directly beneath his chamber window. He rose at the sound, and silently descending the stairs, passed through the hall, where, in something like uncomfortable solitude, the fair Bella sat alone. She looked up as she heard his footsteps, and the gracious smile which her lips put on, was an invitation to make himself happy in a seat beside her. But he resisted the blandishment, and lifting his hat as he passed, with a smile in return, he soon disappeared from her presence, and joined the two who awaited him. All were ready for departure, but Davis craved a few minutes' indulgence to return to the house.

"Why, what should carry you back, Davis?" asked Humphries, peevishly.

"Nothing, Bill; but I must—I will go," said the other.

"I see, I see: you will be as foolish as ever," exclaimed the former, as the lover moved away. "The poor fellow's half mad after my sister, major, and she, you see, don't care a straw about him. She happened to smile on him at supper-table, and he takes it for granted he's in a fair way. We must wait for him, I suppose; and if I know Bella, he won't keep us long."

Meanwhile, the seat beside her, which her smile had beckoned Major Singleton to occupy, had been comfortably filled by Davis. The girl was not displeased to see him: she was lonesome, wanted company, and liked, as all other coquettes do, to have continually in her presence some one or other of the various trophies of her conquest—she cared not materially which. Her

graciousness softened very greatly the moody spirit of her swain, so that he half-repented of that rashness which was about to place him in a position calculated, under every probability, to wrest him, for a time at least, from the enjoyment of that society which he so much coveted. Her gentleness, her good-nature, her smiles—so very unfrequent to him for so long a time—almost turned his brain, and his professions of love grew passionate, and he himself almost eloquent in their utterance. Surely, there is no tyranny like that of love, since it puts us so completely in subjection to the character which deliberate reason must despise. In the midst of his pleading, and while she regarded him with her most gracious smile, the voice of the obtrusive Sergeant Hastings was heard in the tap-room, and the sweet passages of love were at once over between the couple. "As rocks that have been rent asunder" was their new position. The maiden drew her chair a foot back from its place, and when Davis looked into her face, and beheld the corresponding change in its expression, he rose up, with a bitter curse in his throat, which he was nevertheless too well-behaved to utter. He wanted no better evidence of her heartlessness, and with a look which said what his tongue could not have spoken, he seemed to warn her that he was lost to her for ever. His determination was at length complete, and rapidly passing the luckier sergeant, who now entered the apartment, he was soon again in company with the two he had left in waiting. Humphries smiled as he saw the desperate manner of his comrade, but nothing was said, and the three together made their way on foot, till, leaving the village, they entered the forest to the right, and found the clump of trees to which their horses had been fastened. In a moment they were mounted and speeding with the wind towards the close and scarcely penetrable estuary known as the Cypress Swamp, and forming a spacious reservoir for the Ashley, from which, by little and little, widening as it goes, it expands at length, a few miles below, into a noble and navigable river.

CHAPTER VI.

"Stretch out thy wand before thou set'st thy foot;
'Tis a dim way before thee, and the trees
Of bygone centuries have spread their arms
Athwart thy path. Now make thy footing sure;
And now, God cheer us, for the toil is done."

NIGHT had fairly set in—a clear starlight night—before the three set forth upon their proposed adventure. To Major Singleton, who was a native of the middle country, and had lived heretofore almost exclusively in it, the path they now travelled was entirely unknown. It was necessary, therefore, to move on slowly and with due circumspection. But for this, the party would have advanced with as much speed as if they were pursuing the common highway; for, to the other two, accustomed all their lives to the woodland cover and the tangled recesses of the swamps, their present route, uncleared, in close thicket growth, and diverging as it continually did, was, nevertheless, no mystery. Though delayed, however, by this cause, the delay was much less than might have been expected; for Singleton, however ignorant of the immediate ground over which they sped, was yet thoroughly versed in forest life, and had traversed the longer and denser swamps of the Santee, a task, though similar, infinitely more difficult and extensive than the one now before him. After a little while, therefore, when his eye grew more accustomed to the peculiar shades about him, he spurred his good steed forward with much more readiness than at their first setting out, and it was not long before the yielding of the soil beneath his hoofs and the occasional plash of the water, toge-

ther with the more frequent appearance of the solemn and ghostly cypresses around them, gave sufficient indication of the proximity of the swamp.

They had ridden some five miles, and in all this time no word had been spoken by either of the three, except when, here and there, an increased difficulty in the path led Humphries to the utterance of some caution to his companions. They were now close upon the cypress causeway, and the swamp was gathering around them. Their pace grew slower and more fatiguing, for the freshet had swept the temporary structure over which they rode, and many of the rails were floating in their path. Little gaps were continually presenting themselves, many of which they saw not, but which, fortunately for their safety, were generally avoided by the horses without any call for interference on the part of their riders. Stumbling sometimes, however, they were warned not to press their animals; and picking their way with as much care as possible, they went on in single file, carefully and slowly, over the narrow and broken embankment. It was at this part of their progress that Humphries broke out more freely into speech than he had done before, for his usual characteristic was that of taciturnity.

"Now, I do hate these dams and causeways; our people know nothing of road-making, and they ridge and bridge it, while our bones ache and our legs go through at every step we take in going over them. Yet they won't learn—they won't look or listen. They do as they have done a hundred years before, and all your teaching is of no manner of use. Here is this causeway now—every freshet must break its banks and tear up the poles, yet they come back a week after, and lay them down just as before. They never ask if there's a way to build it, which is to make it lasting. They never think of such a thing. Their fathers did so a hundred years ago, and that's reason enough why they should do so now."

"And what plan have you, Humphries, by which to make the dam solid and strong against the freshets,

such as we have, that sweep every thing before them, and sometimes give us half a dozen feet of water for a week, over a road that we have been accustomed to walk dryshod?"

"To be sure there is a way, major, and with far less labour. There's no use in building a road unless you give it a backbone. You must run a ridge through it, and all the freshets make it stronger, for they wash the refuse and the mud up against it, instead of washing it away. You see all good roads rise in the centre. The waters run off and never settle, which they always do in the hollows between these poles. You fell your tree, always a good big one, to make your ridge—your backbone; and if it be a causeway like this, running through a swamp, that you would build, why, you fell your dozen trees, or more, according to the freshet's call for them. You lay them side by side, not across, but up and down the road, taking care to put the big ones in the centre. So you may run it for miles, heaping the earth up to the logs. A road made after that fashion will stand a thousand years, while such a thing as this must always be washing away with every freshet. It takes, in the first place, you see, a great deal more of labour and time, and a great deal more of timber, to build it after this fashion; then, it takes more dirt to cover the rails—a hundred times the quantity—and unless they're well covered, they can't be kept down; they will always come loose, and be floating with every rain, and then the water settles heavily in their places and between them. This can't be the case where you lay the timber up and down, as I tell you. It must stand fast; for the rain can't settle, and the earth gathers close to the ridge, and hugs it tighter the more the water beats on it. Besides, building it this way, you use heavy timber, which the waters can't move at any season. But here we stop; we have no farther use for the causeway to-night; there's our mark. See to that white tree there; it's a blasted pine, and it shines in a dark night as if it was painted. The lightning peeled it from top to toe. It's a'most two

years since. I was not far off in the swamp, catching terapins, when it was struck, and I was stupified for an hour after, and my head had a ringing in it I didn't get rid of for a month."

"What, do we go aside here?" inquired Davis, who did not seem to relish the diversion, as the first plunge they were required to make from the broken causeway was into a turbid pond, black, and almost covered with fragments of decayed timber and loose bundles of brush.

"Yes, that's our path," replied Humphries, who resolutely put his horse forward as he spoke.

"This is about one of the worst places, major, that we shall have to go through, and we take it on purpose, so that we may not be tracked so easily. Here, when we leave the causeway, we make no mark, and few people think to look for us in the worst place on the line. No, indeed; most people have a love to make hard things easy, though they ought to know that when a man wants to hide, he takes a hole, and not a highway, to do it in. Here, major, this way—to your left, Davis—through the bog."

The party followed as their guide directed, and after some twenty minutes' plunging, they were deep in the shadow and the shelter of the swamp. The gloom was thicker around them, and was only relieved by the pale and skeleton forms of the cypresses, clustering in groups along the plashy sides of the still lake, and giving meet dwelling-places to the screech-owl, that hooted at intervals from their rugged branches. Sometimes a phosphorescent gleam played over the stagnant pond, into which the terapin plunged heavily at their approach; while on the neighbouring banks the frogs of all degrees croaked forth their inharmonious chant, making the scene more hideous, and certainly adding greatly to the sense of gloom which it inspired in those who penetrated it. A thousand other sounds filled up the pauses between the conclusion of one and the commencement of another discordant chorus from these admitted croakers—sounds of alarm, of invitation, of

exulting tyranny—the cry of the little bird, when the black-snake, hugging the high tree, climbs up to the nest of her young, while, with shrieks of rage, flapping his roused wings, the mate flies furiously at his head, and gallantly enough, though vainly, endeavours to drive him back from his unholy purpose—the hum of the drowsy beetle, the faint chirp of the cricket, and the buzz of the innumerable thousands of bee, bird, and insect, which make the swamps of the South, in mid-summer and its commencement, the vast storehouse, in all its forms, of the most various and animated life—all these were around the adventurers, with their gloomy and distracting noises, until they became utterly unheeded at last, and the party boldly kept its onward course into their yet deeper recesses.

"Well, Humphries," said Major Singleton, at length breaking the silence, "so far, so good; and now what is our farther progress, and what the chances for trapping this Travis? Will he not steal a march upon us, and be into the swamp before daylight?"

"Never fear it, major," replied the other, coolly enough, while keeping on his way. "You remember, sir, what Huck gave us of his plan. He will place himself upon the skirts of the swamp, high above the point at which we struck, and keep quiet till morning. He will be up betimes, and all that we must do is to be up before him. We have a long ride for it, as it is one part of our work to stop him before he gets too far into the brush. I know his course just as if I saw him on it."

"Yes; such indeed may have been the plan; but is there no chance of his departing from it? A good leader will not hold himself bound to a prescribed course, if he finds a better. He may push for the swamp to-night, and I am very anxious that we should be in time to strike him efficiently."

"We shall, sir," replied the other, calmly; "we shall have sufficient time, for I know Travis of old. He is a good hound for scent, but a poor one for chase. He goes slow to be certain, and is always certain to

be slow. It's nature with him now, though quick enough, they say, some twenty years ago, when he went out after the Cherokees. Besides, he has a long sweep to make before he gets fairly into the swamps, and the freshet we have had lately will throw him out often enough, and make his way longer. We shall be in time."

"I am glad you are so sure of your man, Humphries. I would not like to lose a good chance at the party. A successful blow struck in this quarter, and just at this moment, would have a fine effect. Why, man, it would bring out those fellows handsomely, whose ears are now full of this protection business, which troubles them so much. If they must fight, they will see the wisdom of taking part with the side which does not call upon them to strike friends or brethren. They must join with us to a man, or go to the West Indies, and that, no doubt, some of the dastards will not fail to do in preference. God help me, but I can scarce keep from cursing them, as I think on their degradation."

"Bad enough, major, bad enough when it's the poor man, without house and home, and nothing to live for and nothing to lose, who takes up with the enemy and fights his battles; but it's much worse when the rich men and the gentlemen, who ought to know better, and to set a good example, it's much worse when they're the first to do so. Now I know and I feel, though I expect you won't be so willing to believe it, that, after all, it's the poor man who is the best friend of his country in the time of danger. He doesn't reckon how much he's to lose, or what risk he's to run, when there's a sudden difficulty to get through with. He doesn't think till it's all over, and then he may ask how much he gains by it, without getting a civil answer."

"There's truth in what you say, Humphries, and we do the poor but slack justice in our estimation of them. We see only their poverty, and not their feelings and affections; we have, therefore, but little sympathy,

and perhaps nothing more than life and like wants in common with them."

"That's a God's truth here, major, where the poor man does the fighting and the labour, and the rich man takes protection to save his house from the fire. Now, its just so with this poor man Frampton. He was one of Buford's men, and when Tarleton came upon them, cutting them up root and branch, he took to the swamp, and wouldn't come in, all his neighbours could do, because the man had a good principle for his country. Well, you see what he's lost;—you can't know his sufferings till you see him, major, and I won't try to teach you; but if there's a man can look on him, and see his misery, and know what did it, without taking up sword and rifle, I don't want to know that man. I know one that's of a different way of thinking, and willing to do both."

"And I another!" exclaimed Davis, who had been silent in their ride hitherto.

"Is Frampton here in the swamp—and shall we see him to-night?" asked Singleton, curious to behold a man who, coming from the poorest class of farmers in the neighbourhood, had maintained such a tenacious spirit of resistance to invasion, when the more leading people around him, and indeed the greater majority, had subscribed to terms of indulgence, which, if less honourable, were here far more safe. The sufferings of the man himself, the cruel treatment his wife had undergone, and her subsequent death, also contributed largely to that interest which, upon hearing his simple but pathetic story, the speaker had immediately felt to know him.

"We shall see him in an hour, major, and a melancholy sight it is; you'll be surprised, and if you aint very strong of heart, it will go nigh to sicken you. But it does good to see it for one's self; it makes one strong against tyranny."

"It grows very dark here."

"That's water before you, and a good big pond too," said Davis.

"This is the track, major;" and Humphries led the way to the left, inclining more in the direction of the river. A sullen, child-like cry, succeeded by a sudden plunge into the water, indicated the vicinity of an alligator, which they had disturbed in his own home; the rich globules of light, showering over the water around him, giving a singular beauty to the scene, in every other respect so dark and gloomy. They kept continually turning in a zigzag fashion almost at every step, to avoid the waving vine, the close thicket, or the half-stagnant creek, crowded with the decayed fragments of an older and an overthrown forest.

A shrill whistle at this moment, thrice repeated, saluted their ears. It was caught up in the distance by another, and another, in a voice so like, that they might almost have passed for so many echoes of the same.

"Our sentries watch closely, major; we must answer them, or we may sup on cold lead," said Humphries. As he spoke, he responded to the signal, and his answer was immediately followed by the appearance of a figure emerging from behind a tree that bulged out a little to the left of the tussock upon which they were now standing. The dim outline only, and no feature of the new-comer, was distinguishable by the group.

"Ha! Warner, you watch?—all's well; and now lead the way. Are all the boys in camp?"

"All!" was the reply; "and a few more come in from Buford's corps who know Frampton."

"And how is he?—does he know them?"

"He's in a bad fix, and knows nothing. You can hardly get a word out of him since his wife's come."

"His wife! Why, man, what do you think of?—his wife's dead!" exclaimed Humphries with surprise.

"Yes—we know that; but he brought her, all the same as if she was alive, on his shoulders, and he won't give her up. There he sits, close alongside of her, watching her all the time, and brushing the flies from her face. He don't seem to mind that she's dead."

"Great God!" exclaimed Singleton, "the unhappy man is mad. Let us push on, and see what can be done."

Without a word farther, following their new guide, Warner, they advanced upon their way, until the blaze of a huge fire, bursting as it were out of the very bosom of the darkness, rose wavingly before them. The camp of the outlawed whigs, or rebels, as they were styled by the enemy, lonely and unattractive, on a little island of the swamp, in a few moments after rose fully in their sight; and plunging into the creek that surrounded it, though swimming at that moment, a bound or two carried them safely over, and they stood in the presence of their comrades.

CHAPTER VII.

"Do I not live for it? I have no life,
But in the hope that life may bring with it
The bitter-sweet of vengeance."

The gloomy painter would have done much with the scene before them. The wild and mystic imagination would have made it one of supernatural terrors; and fancy, fond of the melancholy twilight, would have endowed the dim shadows, lurking like so many spectres between the bald cypresses, with a ghostly character, and most unhallowed purpose. Though familiar with such abodes, Singleton, as he looked upon the strange groupings thrown along the sombre groundwork, was impressed with a lively sense of its imposing felicity. They stood upon an island in the very centre of the swamp—one of those little islands, the tribute ooze of numerous minor water-courses, hardening into solidity at last. These, beating their feeble tides upon a single point, in process of time create the barrier which is to usurp their own possessions. Here, the rank matter of

the swamp, its slime and rubbish, resolving themselves by a natural but rapid decomposition into one mass, yield the thick luxuriance of soil from which springs up the overgrown tree, which heaves out a thousand branches, and seems to have existed as many years—in whose bulk we behold an emblem of majesty, and, in whose term of life, standing in utter defiance of the sweeping hurricane, we have an image of strength which compels our admiration, and sometimes the more elevated acknowledgment of our awe. Thus, gathering on this insulated bed, a hundred solemn cypresses mingled their gaunt, spectral forms with the verdant freshness of the water-oak—the rough simplicity and height of the pine—all intertwined and bound together in the common guardianship of the spot, by the bulging body of the luxuriant grape-vine, almost rivalling in thickness, and far surpassing in strength, the trees from which it depended—these formed a natural roof to the island, circumscribing its limits even more effectually than did the narrow creek by which it had been isolated, and through which the tribute waters of this wide estuary found their way, after a few miles of contracted journeying, into the bed and bosom of the Ashley.

A couple of huge fires, which they had seen in glimpses while approaching, were in full blaze upon the island; one, the largest, near its centre; the other somewhat apart, upon a little isthmus which it thrust forth into the mouth of the creek. Around the former lay a singular assemblage of persons, single, or in groups, and in every position. There were not more than twenty in all, but so disposed as to seem much more numerous to the casual spectator. Three, in the glare of the fire, sat upon a log at cards, one at either end, and the third, squat upon the ground beside it. A few slept; some were engaged in conversation, while one, more musical than his neighbours, broke into a song of some length, in which the current situation of the things around him underwent improvisation. A stout negro prepared the evening meal, and passed between the card-players and the fire to their occasional inconve-

nience; their sharp but unheeded denunciations being freely bestowed at every repetition of the offence. The dress and accoutrements of this collection were not less novel, and certainly far more outré, than their several positions and employments. Certainly, taste had but little share in their toilet arrangements, since the hair of some of them flew dishevelled in the wind, or lay matted upon their brows, unconscious of a comb. The faces generally of the party were smeared, and some of them absolutely blackened, by the smoke of the pine-wood fires which at night were kept continually burning around them. This had most effectually begrimed their features, and their dresses had not scrupled to partake of the same colouring. These, too, were as various as the persons who wore them. The ragged coat, the round-jacket, and sometimes the entire absence of both, in the case of some individual otherwise conspicuous enough, destroyed all chance of uniformity in the troop. There was but one particular in which their garb seemed generally to agree, and that was in the coonskin cap which surmounted the heads of most of them—worn jantily upon the side of the head, with slips that flapped over the ears, and the tail of the animal depending from front or rear, tassel-fashion, according to the taste of the wearer. Considering such an assemblage, so disposed, so habited, in connection with the situation and circumstances in which we find them, and we shall form no very imperfect idea of the moral effect which their appearance must have had upon the new comers. The boisterous laugh, the angry, sharp retort, the ready song from some sturdy bacchanal, and the silent sleeper undisturbed amid all the uproar, made, of themselves, a picture to the mind not likely to be soon forgotten. Then, when we behold the flaming of the torch in the deep dark which it only for a moment dissipates, and which crowds back, as with a solid body, into the spot from which it has been temporarily driven—the light flashing along and reflected back from the sullen waters of the creek,—listening, at the

same moment, to the cry of the screech-owl as the intruder scares him from his perch—the plaint of the whippoorwill, in return, as if even the clamour of the obscene bird had in it something of sympathy for the wounded spirit,—these, with the croaking of the frogs in millions, with which the swamp was a dwelling-place among a thousand, were all well calculated to awaken the most indifferent regards, and to compel a sense of the solemn-picturesque even in the mind of the habitually frivolous and unthinking.

With the repeated signals which they had heard from their sentries on the appearance of the new comers, the scattered groups had simultaneously started to their feet, and put themselves in a state of readiness. The signals were familiar, however, and spoke of friends in the approaching persons; so that, after a few moments of buzz and activity, they generally sank back sluggishly to their old occupations,—the card-players to finish their game, and the less speculative, their sleep. Their movement, however, gives us a better opportunity to survey their accoutrements. The long cumbrous rifle seemed the favourite weapon, and in the hands of the diminutive, sallow, but black-eyed and venturous dweller in the swamps of the lowlands, across whose knee we may here and there see it resting, it may confidently be held as fatal at a hundred yards. A few of them had pistols—the common horse-pistol—a weapon of little real utility under any circumstances. But a solitary musket, and that too without the bayonet, was to be seen in the whole collection; and though not one of the party present but had his horse hidden in the swamp around him, yet not one in five of the riders possessed the sabre, that only effective weapon of cavalry. These were yet to be provided, and at the expense of the enemy.

The immediate appearance of Major Singleton, as he followed Humphries up the bank, once more called them to their feet. He had been expected, yet few of them personally knew him. They knew, however, that he was high in favour with Governor Rutledge,

and bore his commission. Of this they had been apprized by Humphries, who had been the recruiting officer of the troop. They now crowded around him with a show of curious examination, which was narrow and close without being obtrusive. With that manly, yet complaisant habit which distinguished him, he soon made himself known to them, and his opening speech won not a little upon their hearts. He unfolded his commission, delivered an address from the executive, in which a direct and warm appeal was made to their patriotism, and concluded with some remarks of his own to the same effect, which were all enthusiastically received. His frank, fearless manner, fine eye, and manly, though smooth and youthful face, took admirably with them, and at once spoke favourably to their minds in support of his pretensions to govern them. This command they at once tendered him; and though without the material for a force called for by the commission which he bore, yet, in those times, it was enough that they loved their leader and were not unwilling to fight with an enemy. Major Singleton was content to serve his country in an humbler command than that which his commission entitled him to hold. Acting, therefore, as their captain for the present, he made Humphries his lieutenant. Him they had long known, and he was a favourite among them. He, indeed, had been chiefly instrumental in bringing together their scattered elements, and in thus forming the nucleus of a corps, which, in the subsequent warfare, contributed in no slight degree to the release of the country from foreign thraldom. In Humphries they had a good officer and every confidence, though it was obvious enough, that while full of courage, calm, collected, and not easily moved, he yet lacked many of those essentials of superior education and bearing, without which militia-men are not often to be held in order. He was not sufficiently their superior to stand apart and to command them; and the inferior mind will never look to its equal in the moment of emergency. Though ready and acute

enough in the smaller details of military adventure—the arrangement of the ambuscade, the rapid blow at the rear, or the plan for striking at the foragers of an enemy—he was yet rather apt to go forward with than to command his party. He trusted rather to his presence than to the superior force of his character, to urge upon them the performance of their duties; and, conscious of this, though ready at all times to lead, he yet shrank from the necessity of commanding. This capacity can only result successfully from an habitual exercise of authority. It was with no small satisfaction, therefore, that he placed his recruits under the control of Major Singleton, although, it may be said, that such a transfer of his command was rather nominal than real; Humphries still counselling in great part the particular business of adventure which Singleton was the better able to command. The latter had yet to acquire a knowledge of localities which could only be obtained by actual experiment.

"And now, major, soldiers without arms are not apt to fight well. Come, sir, with me, and see our armory. It's a queer one, to be sure, to those used to a better; but it must serve where there's no choice. This way, sir—to the left. Here, Tom, bring a chunk."

The black led the way with a blazing brand, until their farther progress was arrested by the waters of the creek. In the centre of the stream grew a cypress of immense size, much larger than any of its surrounding companions. Motioning Singleton to wait, Humphries waded into the water almost up to his middle, until he reached the tree, into which, taking the blazing brand from the black, he entered, returning in a few moments with half a dozen fine sabres, which, one after the other, he threw from him to the bank.

"This is all our stock in trade, major; and you have your choice of them till we can get a better. This, if I know the signs of the weather, we shall do before long. Meanwhile, as the stuff's good, they will answer our present purpose."

Singleton pressed the points of the weapons severally to the earth, testing the elasticity of the steel, then accommodating the hilt to his grip, declared himself suited. Humphries made a selection after him, and the remaining four were subsequently distributed among chosen men, to whom commands in the little corps were assigned. As rebels, heretofore, the short-shrift and sure cord must have been their doom if taken. The commission of the state, and a due register of their names in the books of the orderly, now secured them in the immunities of regular warfare, and made that comparatively innocent which before was obnoxious to death and degradation.

We have spoken of two several fires as conspicuous upon the island at the approach of Singleton, the one upon the centre, the other, and smaller one, at its remotest extremity. Of the use made of the former, we have already seen something; the other, while it had caught the eye of Major Singleton, had been too remote to enable him to distinguish the employment or character of the various persons who yet closely encircled it. He could see that there were several figures sitting around the brands, which seemed to have been but loosely thrown together, as they had now fallen apart, and only gave forth a flickering blaze at intervals, denying that constant light, without which he could not hope to gain any knowledge of the persons, even at a far less distance. These persons had not moved at his approach, and had remained stationary all the while he was employed in making himself known to those who were to be his comrades. This alone would have been enough to attract his attention; and, in addition, he saw that those around him, when bending their glances off in the direction of his own, shook their heads with an air of solemnity, and, though saying nothing, were yet evidently influenced by a knowledge of some circumstances connected with the mysterious group, of a painful character. Observing the inquiring look of Major Singleton, Humphries approached, and whispered him that the party

at the opposite fire consisted of Frampton, his two sons, and the dead body of his wife, and proposed that they should go to him. The major at once consented.

"You'll see a sad sight, Major Singleton—a sad sight!—for the man is crazy, let them say what they may. He don't know half the time what he says or does, and he scarcely feels any thing."

They moved over in the prescribed direction, and approached without disturbing the chief personage of the group. The elder son, a youth of twenty, looked up at their coming, but said nothing. It was evident that he, and he alone, had been weeping. The other son, a tall fine-looking lad of sixteen, seemed inspired with harsher feelings as his eye gazed from the face of the father to that of the mother, whose dead body lay between the two, her head on the lap of the elder son, over whose arms her hair streamed loosely—long, and delicately brown and glossy. She had evidently been a woman of some attractions. Her person was well formed and justly proportioned, neither masculine nor small. Her features were soft and regular. The face was smooth, but had been bruised, seemingly as if she had fallen upon it; and there were blotches upon the cheek and forehead, which may have been the consequence of blows, or might be the natural evidence of that decay which was now strongly perceptible. The face of the chief mourner, who sat silent at her feet, looking forward into her face, was a fine one, as well in its mould as in its expression. It was that of a splendid savage. There was enough of solemn ferocity in it for the murderer, enough of redeeming sensibility to soften, if not to subdue, the other more leading attributes of its character. His skin was dark like that of the people generally of that neighbourhood. His eyes were black and piercing; and a burning spot on each cheek, seemed to have borrowed from the red glare of the fire at his side a corresponding intensity of hue. His lips were parted; and the lower jaw seemed to have been thrown and

kept down spasmodically. Through the aperture glared the tips of the small and white teeth, sometimes closed together by a sudden convulsive jerk, but immediately relaxing again and resuming their divided position.

He took no sort of notice of the new-comers, until, throwing himself alongside of the younger boy, Humphries took the hand of the mother into his own, and gazed over upon her face. Frampton then gave him a look—a single look; and as their eyes met, those of Humphries intuitively filled with water. The bereaved wretch, as he saw this, laughed sneeringly and shook his head. There was no misunderstanding the rebuke. It clearly scorned the sympathy, and called for the sterner tribute of revenge. The elder son then carried on a brief conversation in an under tone with the lieutenant, which was only audible in part to Singleton, who sat on the root of a tree opposite. He gave the particulars of his mother's removal in this dialogue, and of the resolute doggedness with which his father had hitherto resisted the burial of the body.

"It must be buried at once," said Humphries more earnestly to the youth. The father heard him, and glaring upon him with the eyes of a tiger, the desolate man bent forward and placed his hand resolutely over the body, as if determined not to suffer its removal.

"Nay, but it must, Frampton;—there's no use in keeping it here: and, indeed, there's no keeping it much longer. Hear to reason, man, and be persuaded."

The person addressed shook his head, and maintained his hold upon it for a moment in silence; but all on a sudden, half rising to his feet, he shook his fists fiercely at the speaker, while his expression was so full of ferocity, that Humphries prepared for, and every moment expected, attack.

"You have lied to me, Humphries!" he exclaimed with difficulty, as if through his clenched teeth.—"You have lied to me;—you said he should be here,—where is he? why have you not brought him?"

"Who? brought who?" demanded the other earnestly.

"Who!"—and as the maniac half shrieked out the word in sneering repetition, he pointed to the body, while he cried, with a fierce laugh, between each pause in his words—"who!—did he not strike her—strike her to the ground—trample upon her body—great God!—upon her—my wife?" And, as the accumulated picture of his wife's injuries rose up before his mind while he spoke, his speech left him, and he choked, till his face grew livid in their sight, and yet he had no tears. He soon recovered enough to speak again with something like a show of calmness.

"You said you were my friend—that you would bring him to me—that I should kill him here—here, even while mine eyes yet looked upon her. Liar! where is he? Why have you not brought him?"

"I am no liar, Frampton, and you know it. I never promised to bring the dragoons to you; but I am willing to lead you to them."

"Do I want a leader for that?—you shall see:" and he relapsed after this reply into the same solemn stupor which had marked his looks at the first coming of the two. Humphries proceeded with temper and coolness—

"It is time, Frampton, to be a man—to bear up against your losses, and think how to have revenge for them."

"I am ready. Speak not to me of revenge—speak not; I am thirsting—thirsting for blood!" was the reply.

"Yet, here you sit moping over your losses, while the red-coats are in the swamp—ay, hunting us out in our own grounds—Huck's dragoons, with Travis at their head."

The man was on his feet in an instant. There was a wild glow now visible in his face, which completely superseded the sombre fixedness of its previous expression. All now was summary impatience.

"Come!" said he, waving his hand impatiently, and convulsively grasping his bosom with his fingers—"come!"

"It is well. I now see you are in the right mood for vengeance, and I have made all arrangements for it. Here is a sword; and this, Frampton, is our commander, Major Singleton. He is now our leader, and will put us in the dragoons' tracks in short order."

The maniac turned stupidly to Singleton, and bending his head with a strange simper on his lips, simply repeated the word "Come!" with which he showed his willingness for the adventure. Humphries whispered Major Singleton to take him at his word, and move him off to the rest of the party, while he gave directions for the interment of the body. Singleton did so, and without any show of reluctance, Frampton followed him. Once did he stop suddenly, turn quickly round, and seem about to retrace his steps; but seeing it, Singleton simply observed, as if to himself—

"We shall soon be upon the dragoons, and then—"

The object was gained, and the distracted, desolate creature followed, like a tame dog, the lead of his commander. He listened in gloomy silence to the arrangements, as they were agreed upon, for the encounter with Travis. He knew enough of that sort of fighting to see that they were judiciously made; and, satisfied with the promise which they conveyed to his mind of the revenge which he desired, he offered no suggestion, nor interfered in the slightest degree with any of their plans. Still, not a word which had been uttered among them escaped his appreciation. He was now fully awakened to a single object, and the reasoning faculties grew tributary to the desire of his mood when that became concentrated. He saw that the proposed plans were the best that could be devised for the encounter, and he looked to that now for the satisfaction of his thirst.

Humphries having given his directions duly for the interment of the body, now returned to join in the deliberations with the rest. His opinion was adopted by Major Singleton, who, giving orders that all things should be in readiness, himself saw to the execution of certain minor resolves, and then dispersing his

sentries, proceeded to enjoy the three hours of slumber which had been allotted before the necessary start to intercept Travis.

It was an hour after midnight when the guards aroused them with the preparations for their movement. The night was still, clear, and calm. The winds were sleeping, or only strove with a drowsy movement along the tops of the trees, the highest above the swamp. Sweetly the murmurs of the creek around them, swollen by the influx of the tide from the sea, which is there strongly perceptible, broke upon the ear, as the waters, in feeble ripples, strove against the little island, and brought with them a sense of freshness from the sea, which none feels more pleasantly than he who has been long wandering in the southern forests. Not a lip had yet spoken among the troops, and save the slight cry of the capricious insect, and the sound produced by their own early movement in bustling into action, there was nothing in that deep stillness and depth of shadow calculated in the slightest degree to impair the feelings of solemnity which, in his own abode, Silence, the most impressive of all the forest divinities, exacts from his subjects. With a ready alacrity, obeying the command of their leader, the troopers were soon in saddle, forming a compact body of twenty men, Frampton and his two sons included; the very boys being thus early taught in the duties of the partisan. Following in such order as the inequalities of the swamp would permit, they were soon advanced upon their route through bog and through brier, slough, forest, and running water—a route, rugged and circuitous, and not always without its peril. In three hours, and ere the daylight yet dappled the dun east, they skirted the narrow ridge where the arrangement of Singleton placed them, and over which the scouting party of Travis was expected to pass. There, with hostile anxiety, and well prepared, they confidently awaited the arrival of the enemy.

CHAPTER VIII.

"There shall be joy for this. Shall we not laugh—
Laugh merrily for conquest, when it takes
The wolfdog from our throats, and yields us his?"

Travis, the faithful coadjutor of the tory Huck, was on his march into the swamp before daylight. As Humphries had anticipated, he took the path, if so it might be called, on which the ambuscade had been laid for him. He might not have done so, had he dreamed for an instant of the existence in this quarter of such a body of men as that now preparing to receive him. Looking on his object, however, simply as the arrest of Frampton, and the scouring of the swamp of such stragglers besides as might have been led for shelter into its recesses, he adopted the route which was obviously most accessible, and most likely, therefore, to be resorted to by the merely skulking discontent. The half-military eye, looking out for an enemy in any respect equal, would have either studiously avoided the ridge over which Travis now presumed to ride, or would have adopted some better precautions than he had troubled himself to take. It was naturally a strong defile, well calculated for an easy defence, as only a small force could possibly be of use upon it. But two persons could ride abreast in the prescribed direction, and then only with great difficulty and by slow movement; for little gullies and fissures continually intersected the path, which was circuitous and winding, and, if not always covered with water and swamp, quite as difficult to overcome, from its luxuriant growth of umbrage. Though an old traveller in such fastnesses, these obstructions were in no sort pleasant to the leader of the party, who, being a notorious grumbler, accompanied every step which he took with

a grunting sort of commentary, by way of disapprobation.

"Now, may the devil take these gullies, that go as deep when you get into them as if they were made for him. This is a day's chase, and the next time Huck wants a hunt, he shall seek it himself. I like not this service. It's little less than a disparagement of the profession, and speaks not well for an old soldier."

The leader spoke with feeling, and no little emphasis, as his steed scrambled up the bank from the slough in which his legs had been almost fastened, the slimy ooze of which, left by the now-receding tide, rendering the effort to release himself a matter of greater difficulty than usual. The grumbling continued, even after he had gained the tussock.

"Thou a soldier!" cried one who rode up behind him, and who spoke in terms of familiarity indicating close companionship—"thou a soldier, Hunks, indeed! What should make thee a soldier?"

"Am I not, Clough?" was the reply.

"And wherefore dost thou grumble, then?"

"Wherefore? Because, being a soldier, I am sent upon any but a soldier's service. A dog might do this duty—a dog that you had well beaten."

"And what better service, Hunks, couldst thou have to keep thee from grumbling? Art thou, now, not a sorry bear with a sore head, that kindness cannot coax, and crossing only can keep civil! Send thee on what service Huck may, it is all the same; thou wilt grumble at the toil, even when it likes thee best. What wouldst thou have—what would please thee?"

"By Saint Jupiter, but he might ask, at least! He might give a man a choice," responded the other, gruffly. "It's but a small favour I ask, to be suffered to choose for myself whether I shall work for my master on hill or in hole—with a free bit, or hand to hand, close struggle with a hungry alligator in his wallow."

"And thou wouldst choose the very service he now puts thee to. What! do we not all know thee—and who knows thee better than Huck? He sees thou art

the best man for the swamp; that thy scent is keen with the bloodhound, thine eye like the hawk's, and thou art quick for fight as the colonel's bullpup. It is because he knows thou art fond of this sort of venture that he puts thee upon it; and what thou grumblest at, therefore, it will be out of thine own wisdom to show, even if thou didst wish it, in truth, which I believe not."

"It's a dog's life only, this scenting swamps for the carrion they had better keep—wearing out good legs and horses, and making soldiers do the duty of a hungry dog. Rot it, but I'll resist after this! Let them send others that are younger, and like it better. I'll give it up—I'll do no more of it."

"Say so to Huck, and lose command of the scouts—the best game thou hast ever played at, if the baggage-wagons speak true," was the reply. "What! shalt thou grumble to do what thou art best fitted for? What wouldst thou be after—what other service would please thee?"

"Thou mayst see me in a charge yet, Sergeant Clough," replied Travis, boastfully, "provided thou hast blood enough to stop until it's over. When thou hast seen this, thou wilt ask me no child's questions. What! because I am good at the swamp, am I therefore worth nothing on the highway? It were a sorry soldier that could not take clear track and bush and bog alike, when the case calls for it, and do good service in all. But thou shalt see, some day, and grow wiser."

"Well, thou dost promise largely, like an old debtor; but, to my mind, thou art just now where thou shouldst be—in the swamps; for, truth to speak, thou lovest them—thou lovest the wallow and the slough—the thick ooze which the alligator loves, and the dry fern-bank where he makes his nest; thou lovest the terapin because of his home, not less than of the good soup which he gives us; and the ugly moccasin, and the toad, and the frog—the brown lizard and the green—the swamp-spider, with its ropy house and bagging black

body—all these are favourites with thee, because thy spirit craves for thee a home like that which they abide in."

"It is a goodly place, with all that company thou speakest of: the air is pleasant to the sense, and the noises—there is no music like the concert the frogs make for thee at sunset."

"Said I not? Why, man, thou quarrellest with kindness when thou ravest at Huck for sending thee to the swamp. Thou wert feverish and impatient this morning until thou wert fairly in it, with its mud and water plashing around thee; and now thou art here, with the trees crowding upon us so thickly that the sun looks not under them once in the whole year, thou creepest like a terapin upon thy journey, as if thou didst greatly fear thou wouldst too quickly get through it; a barren fear, this, for we see but the beginning: the bog deepens, and the day grows darker as we go. Thou art slow, Travis."

"Saint Jupiter, Master Clough, wouldst thou lead? Thou art a better swamp-sucker than Ned Travis, and he born, as I may say, in a bush and cradled in a bog, and his first breeches, like mother Eve's petticoat, made out of bulrushes! Go to, friend, and be modest!"

"Ay, when thou art wise, and can go without counsel. Once more, Travis, but I do think thy snail's pace were better mended."

"Teach Goose Creek, would you? Talk not so loudly, Sergeant Clough, of running through the Cypress, or the gray-squirrel will look down and laugh. He's up betimes this morning, and knows more of a long leap through a broad swamp like this of the Ashley than comes to thy wisdom. Speak before him with becoming reverence, for he watches thee from the pine-top above thee."

The sergeant, who was an Englishman, looked upward with due simplicity, and received in his face the dismembered and decayed branch which the playful animal threw down, as he leaped away from the tree they were passing.

"Now, d—n the rebel! That were a hanging matter for one of Washington's cavalry."

"Ay, could you catch him!" replied Travis, with a laugh at the discomfiture of his companion, who busied himself in freeing his face from the dust of the decayed branch.

"See what thou gettest for thy stupidity. Think you gray-jacket knew not all you were saying? He did: not a word escaped him; and, believe it or not, his tribe have quite as much understanding as we, though, to be sure, they have not the same tongue to make it known. It's a God's truth, now, that squirrel has been outstanding sentinel for his company, just as ours watches for us; and look where they go, all around us, and all in the same direction! See to yon pine, how full of them! It bends and shakes, big as it is, as they leap off to the next tree. They are all off, just as the sentinel gave them notice. Every now and then, as we drew nigh, he piped up squeak after squeak, and every one different, as much as to say, 'Now they come—nigher, nigher, nigher!'—and when he thought it time to move, he tumbled the dry branch into your open mouth, and made off with his last signals."

"Pshaw! what nonsense you talk!"

"Nonsense! Saint Jupiter, but it's true as turpentine! There's no truth, if that be not. Why, man, I go farther: I do believe, in my conscience, that they understand arithmetic and navigation. Don't you think he told his fellows how many we were, and what route over the water we were going to take? You see they have taken a different direction altogether."

"You think I swallow your fool stories?" said Clough.

"Quite as easy to swallow, and better food than the branch the squirrel threw thee: but if thou believe not, I care not. Rot thee, for an infidel, having as little belief as brains! Thou art worse than Turk or Hebrew, and should have no water from me wert thou famishing."

"Thou canst scarce deny it here," was the reply, as

the squad, one after the other, struggled through a quagmire that spread across the path.

"Nor would I here; I am charitable: take thy fill of what is before thee. But hold up, men; we are on the broad track. This tussock runs for a hundred yards, widening to a fork; and I've a mind that you shall go through the worst part of it, Sergeant Clough, that you may get more wisdom in swamp-sucking. Close up, men—up!"

They passed over the broad path in a few moments, until they reached a point from which ran out another route, clearly indicated upon the sky, by an opening through the trees, which let in, for the first time after their entrance, the unobstructed sunlight.

"To the right now, men—to the right! It's the worst track, but carries us soonest to the heart of the swamp, and we can pass it now without swimming: the waters are going down, and it will not be so bad, after all."

"Is it worse, Travis, than what we have passed?" inquired Clough, rather anxiously.

"Worse!" exclaimed Travis, turning shortly upon the speaker, with a sneer; "Saint Jupiter! said I not you should learn swamp-sucking? You'll drink before you come out. But the water's fresh."

"Fresh, here in the swamp?"

"Ay, fresh enough—fresh from the sea, unless the tide's gone clean down. But on; do not fear; it looks worse than it tastes. On, and follow me close!"

They dashed after their leader as he gave the word, but their progress was much slower than before.

In the mean while, let us turn our eyes upon the party in waiting for them. Following the suggestions of his lieutenant, Humphries, Major Singleton had disposed of his men at convenient distances for mutual support along the more accessible ridge which the party of Travis had originally pursued. The design had been a good one; for it was not to be supposed that one who had shown himself so careful in selecting the least obstructed route, would willingly leave it, in pref-

erence to another, so indirect and difficult of passage as that upon which Travis had now turned his horse. The ambuscade had been well laid, and must have been successful, but for this circumstance. Major Singleton himself, being in advance, was the first to perceive this change of movement, which, taking place just when his anxieties were most aroused, was productive of an exaggerated degree of disappointment. He cried out to Humphries, who lurked in a low bush on the opposite bank, and saw not so readily—

"They leave the track, Humphries! they have turned off to the right—we are foiled!"

The lieutenant rose from his recumbent position, and saw the truth of his commander's suggestion. To effect a change of ambuscade at this moment was hopeless; and there remained but one mode, and that was, to persuade them to return to the path from which they departed. At first, he thought to throw himself immediately in their way; and, being well known, and looked upon as loyal by all the dragoons, he thought he might lure them back by misrepresentations of one kind or another. This thought he abandoned, however, as he still desired to keep himself from detection, which he could not hope, should any of them escape to tell the story.

"There is but one way, major," he exclaimed, while smearing his visage with the mud around him, and leaping boldly forth on foot upon the broad path—"there is but one way, sir: keep your men fast, while I make myself visible to Travis. I will run upon the bank, and make them hear me. They will follow the tussock, and, by the time I am in cover, you will have them between you. The rest of the work is yours."

He waited not for an answer, but the next instant was seen by Singleton coursing along the tussock towards the route taken by Travis. When upon the highest point, and perceptible to them, he broke a dried stick, with a sharp, snapping sound, which reached the quick ear of their leader. Travis turned instantly, and ordered a halt.

"Hold up, men—hold up a moment! See you nothing to the left?"

All eyes were turned in the required direction, but they failed to distinguish any object in particular, other than belonged to the region.

"Look, Clough, your eyes are younger than mine—look to the left, beyond the big water-oak, close by the blasted pine—the very highest point of the tussock we just left."

"I see, I see!" cried one of the troopers: "it's a man."

"Now I have it! You are right, Wilkins—it's a man—a stout fellow, and must be Frampton," cried Clough; "the very dog we seek."

"No, 'tis not the man we seek," was the reply of Travis, who had been watching intently. "This is a short stout man, not of more inches than myself; Frampton, though stout, is tall. But he is our game, be he who he may. All are outlaws here, and rebels for the rope. Here, Corporal Dricks, have your string in readiness: we shall doubtless need a cast of your office, and the noose should be free for service. Ride close, and be ready. Ha! he scents—he sees us! He is on the wing, and we must be quick and cautious. After him, Clough, to the left—right, Wilkins! Get upon the tussock, and, if he keeps it, you have him. Ride, boys! To the left, Clough—to the left! He can't clear the pond, and we are sure of him!"

Half of the troops dashed after the suspicious person, who was our acquaintance Humphries; the other half, slowly returning, re-entered the old trail, and kept their way towards the flying object and the pursuit. The lieutenant found no difficulty in misleading his pursuers, having once drawn them back to their original direction. They urged the chase hotly upon him, but he knew his course, and was cool and confident. Doubling continually through bog and through brier—now behind this, now under that clump of foliage or brush—he contrived to boggle them continually in perpetual intricacies, each more difficult than the other, until he not

only led them into the very thick of the ambuscading party, still maintaining his original lead upon them, but he scattered them so far asunder, that mutual assistance became impossible. It was then that, gathering himself up for breath along the edge of a bank, he coolly wiped the moisture from his brows, looking from side to side, as he heard the splashing in the water or the rustling in the brush of his bewildered pursuers. He, meanwhile, fairly concealed from their sight by a thick cluster of cypresses that rose out of the bay before him, conceiving the time to have arrived for action, gave the shrill whistle with which his men were familiar. The pursuers heard it reverberate all around them from a dozen echoes of the swamp; they, gave back, and there was a pause in the chase, as if by common consent. The sound had something supernatural and chilling in it; and the instinct of each, but a moment before so hot upon the heels of the outlaw, was now to regain his starting-place, and recover his security with his breath. But retreat was not so easy, and prudence counselled too late. They made the effort, however; but to succeed was denied them. The word of command reached their ears in another voice than that of their own leader, and in the next instant came the sharp cracking report of the rifle—two, three, four. Travis went down in the first shot: they beheld his fall distinctly, as he stood upon the highest point of the ridge, which was visible for a hundred yards round. For a moment more, the enemy remained invisible; but Major Singleton now gave his orders shrilly and coolly—"Steady, men—in file, open order—trot!" And then came the rush of the charge, and the stragglers beheld the flashing sabres dealing with the few troopers who held the broad ridge of the tussock. The tories fought well; but the surprise was too sudden, and too little prepared for, and they fought at disadvantage. Still, as they remembered the unsparing character of their own warfare, and were conscious of innumerable outrages, such as had driven Frampton to outlawry, they stood their ground bravely enough. Parrying the first

strokes of their assailants, who had every advantage, they dashed aside from the path, and strove to escape by plunging in every direction through the swamp. But with the loss of the ridge, which Singleton with his few troopers now traversed in all directions, they lost all chance of extrication. They floundered from slough to slough, while, dismounting and on foot, the whigs pursued them. The cry for quarter on all hands ended the combat, and the survivors were drawn forth to become prisoners. They threw down their arms generally, and were spared; one who resisted was cut down by Davis, who had shown himself a true man in close contest; and one strove to escape by turning back upon his path, and plunging on through the swamp in an opposite direction to that taken by the rest: but there was an eye upon him, quickened by hate, and a deadly hostility which nothing could blind—a footstep which he could not evade. The fugitive was the sanguinary corporal of Huck—a wretch who always carried the cord at his saddle-bow for sudden executions, and enjoyed nothing so well as its employment. His pursuer was the maniac Frampton. That fierce man had singled out this one antagonist, and throughout the brief struggle, in which he bore an active part, had never once withdrawn his glance from him. But for this, the wretch might have escaped; and even then, had not guilt or fear paralyzed his energy or judgment, his chances might have been good; but he held too long to his horse, and lost that time, in trying to urge him along the track he had taken, which on foot might have availed him more effectually. The animal became entangled in some water-vines, and before he could get him free, or even get from his back, the pursuer was plunging into the swamp, with drawn sword waving overhead, and but a few paces from him. Leaping from his steed, which he left struggling, he made for the opposite bank, and reached it before Frampton had yet got through the slough. But even this advantage did not serve him long. Though brave enough, the corporal seemed at that moment to lack much of his

wonted firmness. Probably he knew the pursuer, had heard his story, and dreaded his vengeance. It was not improbable, indeed, that he himself had been one of those concerned in the assault upon Frampton's wife. If so, the flight of the one and the concentrated pursuit of the other were both natural enough. Guilt must always despair its charm in the presence of the true avenger. Still, for a moment, there was a show of spirit. He wheeled, and confronted the pursuer with a word of defiance; but the moment after, he turned again in flight. He ran over the tussock upon which both of them now stood, and, bounding through a pond that lay in his way, made off for a close cover of cypresses that grew at a little distance. Should he gain that cover, his safety would most probably be certain, as he would then have gained on Frampton, and had long since been out of reach of the rest. But if the one ran with the speed of fear, madness gave wings to the other. The fugitive looked over his shoulder once as he flew, and he could see in the eye of his pursuer that there was no pity, but death; and utterly vain must be his cry for quarter. Perhaps he felt a conviction of this from a due consciousness of what he had deserved from his own atrocities. The thought increased his speed; but, though capable and elastic enough, he could not escape the man who rushed behind him. Defying wood, water, and every obstruction, the fierce wretch pressed close upon the fugitive. The corporal felt the splashing of the water from his adversary's feet; he knew that the next moment must be followed by the whirl of the sabre, and he sank motionless to the ground. The blow went clean over him; but though it carried Frampton beyond him, yet he did not fall. The maniac soon recovered, and confronted the corporal, who now found it impossible to fly: his hope was in fight only. But what was his lifted weapon against that of his opponent, wielded by his superior strength, made terrible by madness! The sword was dashed aside—dashed down in the heavy sweeping stroke with which the other prefaced the conflict.

"Mercy! mercy!" cried the corporal, as he saw that it was all over. A howl like that of the wolf was the only response, and the weapon bit through the bone as the arm was unavailingly thrown up to resist it. The stricken member hung only by the skin and a part of the coat-sleeve. The steel was already in the air—

"Mercy, Frampton! have mercy—"

The speech was silenced, as, crushing through bone and brain, the thick sword dug its way down into the very eyes of the pleader. The avenger knelt upon the senseless body, as it lay at his feet, and poured forth above it a strain of impious thanksgiving to Heaven for so much granted and gained of the desired vengeance. His wild, wolfish laugh, at intervals while he prayed, taught the rest of the party where to look for him.

CHAPTER IX.

"It is all dim—the way still stretches out
Far in the distance. We may nothing see,
Till comes the season in the dawning light."

It was an easy victory, and won without loss. Wiping his bloody sword upon the mane of his steed, Major Singleton rode up to his captives, who, by this time, were all properly secured. Four persons had fallen in the conflict, and among these was their leader, Travis. He was shot dead upon the spot. Clough was severely wounded in the breast, though perhaps not mortally, and lay gasping, but without a groan, upon the ground where he had fallen, and around which the surviving prisoners were grouped. Three others had fallen, either killed outright or mortally wounded: two of these by the sabre, not including the corporal, who fell by the hand of Frampton, and who was at once rolled into the swamp. The prisoners, five in

number, were natives, generally of the very lowest class, and just the sort of men to fight, according to the necessity of the case, on either side. Such, indeed, were the tories throughout the state, with very few exceptions. Without leading principles, and miserably poor—not recognised, except as mercenaries, in the social aristocracies which must always prevail in slave-holding nations—they had no sympathy with the more influential classes,—those who were the first to resist the authority of England. The love of gain, the thirst for rapine, and that marauding and gipsy habit of life which was familiar to them, were all directly appealed to in the tory mode of warfare. They were ready on any side which offered them the greatest chance for indulging in these habits; and the sudden preponderance of British power after the fall of Charlestown determined the major part of this class of people in favour of the invaders. The tories forming Huck's cavalry were all of this sort; and the small detachment just overthrown by Singleton had no sympathy with their leader, only as his known character promised them plunder. Defeat had no attraction in their eyes; and, as that is always the true cause which is triumphant, they now freely tendered themselves, with clamorous tongues, and to the no small chagrin of the wounded Clough, as recruits for Singleton. The Briton denounced their perfidy in fearless language, and threatened them terribly with the vengeance of Huck and Tarleton; but the remote fear is no fear with the vulgar. They seldom think in advance of the necessity, and the exhortation of their wounded officer had no visible effect. They persisted in their determination to fight on the right side, and earnestly asserted their love of country, alleging that force only had placed them in the ranks of the enemy. Major Singleton conferred with Humphries on the course to be taken in this matter. The latter knew most of the parties, but had been prudent to keep from sight, and they had not seen him, only in the brief glimpse which they had of him in the pursuit, when, at such a distance, perpetu-

ally moving, and with his face well smeared with the rank ooze from the creek around him, he must have been unknown, except upon the narrowest examination, even to the mother that had borne him. It was still his policy to keep from sight in connection with his whig partisans; for, passing in Dorchester as a loyal citizen—a character in part obtained through his father's loudly-voiced attachment to the existing powers—he was of far greater advantage to the cause of the country than he possibly could have been even in active military service. He obtained intelligence with singular adroitness, conveyed it with despatch, and planned enterprises upon what he knew, with no little tact and ingenuity. To remain unknown, therefore, or only known as he had been heretofore, in close connection with loyalty alone, was clearly the policy of our lieutenant.

There was one man from whom Humphries seemed willing to withhold his confidence. He counselled his commander to accept the services of the remaining four, recommending that they should be so distributed among the men who had been tried, as to defeat any concert between them, should they feel any motive to disaffection. In this manner it was also thought a proper bias would be given to their minds, which, as they both knew, were sufficiently flexible to find but little difficulty in conforming to any circumstances which should for a moment take the shape of a necessity.

"But the fifth—the other fellow—the blear-eyed—what of him? You say nothing of him, Humphries."

Singleton pointed through the copse as he spoke, where the individual referred to leaned against a tree, a little apart from the rest; his head cast down, his arms relaxed beside him, one leg at ease, while the whole weight of his body rested upon the other. The features of his face were dark and unprepossessing—dark and sallow; his cheeks lank and colourless; a small nose; retreating forehead, covered with long thin black hair, that streamed from under a broad white hat, something the worse for wear. A strange protrusion of

his eyes gave his face a sinister expression, which was not before lacking to produce distrust, or even dislike, in the mind of the observer. Humphries gazed on him a moment before he spoke, then, as if satisfied, he proceeded to reply—

"I know nothing against the chap, major; but the truth is, I don't like him. Indeed, I know nobody that does. His right name is Blonay, but we all know him better by the name of Goggle—a nickname which he got on account of his eyes. Something has hurt them when young, which, you see, makes him stare when he looks at you."

"Well, but we must not refuse him because he has got a blear eye; we are too much in need of men to stand upon trifles. Know you nothing against him?"

"The blood's bad that's in him. His father was a horse-thief, and they do say, a mulatto or an Indian. As for himself, the worst is, that we know nothing about him; and that's no good sign, major, in a country where everybody knows the business of everybody. How he lives, and where and by what means he gets his bread, is a secret. He will not work; but see him when you will, you see him as you see him now—one half of him sleeping, while the other half takes the watch. Not that he can't move when the time comes for it—or rather when he's in the humour for it. Touch him close upon his goggle eye, and he's up in arms in a moment. He will fight like a wildcat, too, and that's in his favour; but the worst is, he fights with a bad heart, and loves to remember injuries. I do believe they keep him from sleep at night. He's not like Carolinians in that; he can't knock at once and have done with it, but he goes to bed to think about it, and to plan when to knock, so as never to have done with it. He loves to keep his wrongs alive, so that he may always be revenging."

"Still, I see nothing, lieutenant, that should make us discourage his desires; and, truth to say, it is far easier for us now to keep doubtful friends in our ranks, moving with us, and continually under our eye,

than positive enemies in our camp in the form of prisoners, whom we are bound to keep guard over. We can manage our allies if they show signs of bad faith, although we risk something, doubtless, even by the partial-confidence. Better do this than break up our little force watching those who profess themselves friends, and may yet prove so."

"You may be right, major, and I only speak perhaps from an old prejudice; but keep an eye upon him, for he certainly will keep one on you. Even now he is looking slyly to this bush, although he can't see or hear either of us, but, after the old fashion, to find out what he can. If he were only honest, he'd be a spy among a thousand."

"I will see to him in particular, and if it be possible to drill honesty into him, something may be got out of him yet. We must take him."

"Very good, sir;—and you now go back into the camp?"

"Yes: we must put the wounded man into some sort of care, though he will suffer, wanting attendance."

"Leave that to me, sir. You take him into camp, and I have two men to come out this very day, one of whom is a sort of doctor—good as any one hereabout. He used to drench horses in Dorchester; and some of the grannies did say, that there were no drinks like those made by Doctor Oakenburg—that was because he put more of brandy in them than any thing else; and if a Dorchester granny loves one thing more than another, after opium, it is brandy; and sometimes, liking them equally well, she takes both together. He, major, and the old negro, with some one of the troop, will be guard enough, and Frampton's son Lance can stay with them in the swamp. He's quite too young to be of much service, and will only learn what's bad, going with the troop."

"I have thought better of that, and shall endeavour to attach the boy to myself, and probably, in the end, place him at 'The Oaks' with my uncle. But time wears, and we must move for the camp. I shall take

these men into service, and place the wounded man under the charge of one of the troopers, and your doctor can relieve him."

"He comes to-day, with another—a fat overgrown creature, just fit for the camp, though he fights well and is true," was the reply of Humphries.

Having thus counselled, the two proceeded to confer apart upon other matters connected with their enterprise. To visit "The Oaks" during the day, where his uncle and sister resided, was the object of Singleton; but his desire was also to intercept the supply of arms and ammunition of which Huck had spoken as on their way to Dorchester. They were looked for hourly, and could not be very remote. It was determined, therefore, to intercept them, if practicable, as an acquisition of the last importance. To arrange their route, plan the place of their next meeting, provide the means of intelligence, and concert what local measures might seem necessary in future, was the work of but little time between the two; and this done, Humphries, withdrawing silently from the cover in which this conference had been carried on, unperceived by the rest, made his way by a different route out of the swamp, and keeping the forest all the way, was, after no long time, safely in Dorchester—looking for all the world as pacific and quiet as ever—without weapon of any kind, as, with a wonted precaution, he had left his sword in the woods, safely hidden, and his hands now grasped only the common wagon-whip, which he handled with a dexterity which seemed to indicate but little acquaintance with any more dangerous or deadly instruments.

Major Singleton, in the mean while, had returned to his troop. They had been busied during his absence in collecting the scattered horses and arms, and repairing their own little losses. The captives were loud in their desire to be received among them; and, as rebellion loves company, the whigs were not unwilling to receive an accession, even from their late enemies. Major Singleton declared his acceptance of their ser-

vices, taking care to address himself particularly to the man Blonay, or, as they styled him more familiarly, Goggle. An awkward touch of the hat acknowledged this last courtesy, and one eye of Goggle, as he made the movement, peered up into those of Singleton with a searching and doubtful glance. The major did not appear to notice him or them any farther, but, giving directions for the disposal of the wounded sergeant, Clough, so as to spare him as much pain as possible, he led the way once more to the cover of the secluded place, in the centre of the swamp, which had been chosen as their camping-ground. Here they arrived at length, and having completed his arrangements, placing Clough in the charge of one of his dragoons, and in as much comfort as possible, Major Singleton gave the word, and the squad moved forward on their way out of the swamp, and in the direction of the village. But this course was only kept while he yet remained in the swamp. As soon as he emerged from it, he drew up his men, and then, for the first time, perceived the absence of the elder Frampton. The two sons had kept with the troop, and seemed to know nothing of their father. The younger had ridden close beside his commander, who had so willed it. Nobody could give him any account of the absent man after his removal from the body of the corporal whom he had slain. He had disappeared suddenly then, it was thought; and there were not wanting those who insisted upon his absence from that time; but Singleton remembered to have seen him after they had reached the camp, and to have noted the singular composedness of his features. But few farther inquiries were made after the absentee, as the major well knew that with a man in such a mood but little could be done. He was, perhaps, perfectly satisfied that nothing could have happened to him, from the composure of the two sons, who, doubtless, were acquainted with the father's movement. Conjecture succeeded to inquiry, only interrupted by the order to move on.

The course of the troop lay now towards the Goose Creek road. Major Singleton dared not carry his squad along the Ashley without exposing himself, unnecessarily, to unequal encounter; and, at Dorchester, with a force far superior to his own. Pursuing a northerly direction for a while, therefore, he placed himself at equal distances between the Wassamasah and Dorchester roads; then striking to the left, he passed over an untravelled surface of country, broken with frequent swamps, and crowded with luxuriant undergrowth. In a few hours, however, he had gone over the ground almost unseen, and certainly unobstructed. Davis was his guide in this quarter, and he could not have had a better. The discarded lover had given sufficient earnest of his truth and valour, in the courage and perfect coolness of his conduct in the preceding struggle; and he now led the party with all the caution of the veteran, and all the confidence of a thorough-bred soldier. The road, like all in that country, was low and miry; and the path taken for greater security, being little travelled, was still more troubled with obstructions. They reached the desired point at length, which was the Goose Creek Bridge; then leaving it to the left, they once more departed from the beaten track, and throwing themselves directly across the country, were, after a few hours, again upon the Dorchester road, and some two or three miles below the garrison. They covered themselves in the close forest by Archdale Hall, and Singleton then proceeded to inspect the road. To his great satisfaction, he saw that the wagons had not yet made their appearance, and must be still below them. Overjoyed at this, he despatched scouts to bring him intelligence, and then proceeded to arrange an ambush for the entrapping of the looked-for detachment.

The road, at the spot chosen for this purpose, was narrow—but a single track, and that raised into a causeway from a ditch on either side, at that time filled with water, and scarcely passable without great difficulty. The woods, growing close and thickly, formed a natural defile, of which Singleton, with the eye of experi-

ence, soon availed himself. He divided his little force into two equal bodies; and giving the command of one of them to Davis, placed him upon the right of the road in the route from Charlestown, while he himself occupied the left. The former division lying in ambush some thirty yards below, was ready, in the event of a struggle between the baggage guard and Singleton's troop, to which it was to be left, to secure the precious charge which the guard had undertaken to defend, and at the same time to cut off their retreat. Thus arranged, and with the plan of conduct properly understood on all hands, the parties lay in cover, impatiently awaiting the approach of the enemy.

They had not long to wait; for scarcely had their arrangements been well completed, before the scouts came at full gallop along the path, crying loudly that the enemy was at hand. A shot or two whistled over the heads of the fugitives at the same moment, giving full confirmation to their intelligence; and a few seconds after, the rush of half a score of British dragoons was heard upon their footsteps. Passing through the ambuscade without pausing for an instant, the scouts kept on their flight, bringing the pursuers fairly between the two parties. Once enclosed, a shrill whistle from Singleton announced the charge which he led in person; and dashing out from his cover, he threw his men quickly between the flying scouts and the assailants. In the same moment the squad of Davis obeying the same signal, as repeated by their leader, followed him as he charged upon the force left in possession of the munition wagons. The guard in this quarter seeing the inequality of the force, and struck with the surprise, offered but a feeble resistance, and were soon put to flight. Davis followed them a little distance, and then returned to the aid of Singleton. His approach and attack upon the rear of the party with which his commander had been contending, put an end to the fight—the dragoons having lost three men killed and two wounded. With the charge of Davis, they threw down their arms and were made prisoners.

"British officers! Col. Proctor himself and another have just gone by, and if I mistake not, on a visit to 'The Oaks.' They say he looks hard upon your cousin, sir, the beautiful Miss Katharine."

"Ha! do they say that?" responded Major Singleton, with something like a start—"and she?" he continued, inquiringly.

"They say nothing of her, whether she likes it or not; but young ladies will be young ladies, major; and a smart officer, with a king's commission in his pocket, and a showy red coat on his back, is no small danger to an easy heart."

"No, indeed!" replied the other, in a tone which seemed to have found nothing consolatory in his companion's reflection, and in which there may have been something of latent bitterness—"no, indeed!—such attractions are at all times sweet with the sex, and seldom utterly unsuccessful. They love the conquest, always, even when they may despise the game. It's with them all after this fashion, and the goodly outside is a fair offset to worth and good manners. But how shall we know, of a certainty, the destination of Proctor?"

"Only by dogging his footsteps, major. We may do that with some safety, however, as I happen to know the back track which hugs the river, and is seldom travelled. This brings us close on the park, yet gives us a good shelter all the way along the copse. We shall take our watch, and yet be all the time hidden; and where I shall carry you shall give us a fair peep at all the grounds as well as the river."

"That is well. And now of Dorchester: what stirs in the village, and what of Huck? Do they know yet of the affair of the swamp, or are they ever like to know?"

"They know not yet, certainly; but Huck musters strong, and talks of a drive to Camden. There is news, too, which moves the garrison much. They talk of the continentals from Virginia."

"Do they? they must be De Kalb's. And what do

they say on the subject? do they speak of him as at hand?"

"Nothing much, but they look a deal, and the whigs talk a little more boldly. This provokes Huck, who threatens a start on the strength of it, and is hurrying his recruits for that purpose. There is also some talk of a force from North Carolina under Sumter, and they have got wind of the last move of our Colonel Marion, thereaway among Gainey's corps of tories, where you cut them up in such fine style; but there's nothing certain, and this I get out of Huck in curses now and then. He's mighty anxious that I should join him, and I'm thinking to do so, if it promises to give me a better hold on him."

"Think not of it, Humphries; it will be twice putting your neck in the halter, and the good that it may do is too doubtful to encourage such a risk."

"He presses me mighty hard, major, and I must keep out of his way or consent. He begins to wonder why I do not join his troop, and with some reason too, believing me to be a loyalist, for certainly, were I to do so, it would be the very making of me."

"Thou wouldst not turn traitor, Humphries?" replied the other, looking sternly upon the speaker.

"Does Major Singleton ask the question now?" was the reply, in a tone which had in it something of reproach.

"I should not, certainly, Humphries, knowing what I do. Forgive me; but in these times there is so much to make us suspect our neighbours, that suspicions become natural to every mind. You I know, however, and I have trusted you too long not to continue in my confidence now. But how come on our recruits?"

"Tolerably: as you say, these are suspicious times, major, and they are slow to trust. But the feeling is good with us, and they only wait to see some of the chances in our favour before they come out boldly in the cause."

"Now, out upon the calculating wretches! Will they dare nothing, but always wait for the lead of others?

Chances, indeed! as if true courage and a bold heart did not always make their own. But what of the villagers? How of that old tavern-keeper of whom you spake—your father's rival?"

"But so no longer. Old Pryor, you mean. He is a prime piece of stuff, and will not scruple to do what's wanted. He was always true with us, though kept down by those about him; yet he only wants to see others in motion to move too. He'll do any thing now—the more readily, as the Royal George, being entirely loyal, does all the business; and poor Pryor, being all along suspected, has not a customer left. He'd burn the town, now, if we put it into his head?"

"Well, just now we lack no such spirit. May not his rashness prompt him to too much speech?"

"No, sir; that's the beauty of rebellion with old Pryor. It has hands and a weapon, but it wants tongue. If he felt pain, and was disposed to tell of it, his teeth would resist, and grin down the feeling. No fear of him; he talks too little: and as for blabbing, his wife might lie close, and listen all night, and his dreams would be as speechless as his humour. He locks up his thoughts in close jaws, and at best only damns a bit when angered, and walks off with his hands in his breeches-pocket."

"A goodly comrade for a dark night! But let us move. Dusk closes upon us, and we may travel now with tolerable security. Our course is for the river?"

"Yes; a hundred yards will take us in sight of it, and we keep it the whole way. But we must hug the bush, as much out of sight there as if we were upon the high-road. There are several boats, chiefly armed, upon it now, besides the galley which runs up and down—some that have brought supplies to the garrison. Their shot would be troublesome, did they see us."

They rode down the hill, entered a long copse, and the river wound quietly on its way a little below them. They were now on a line with the fortress of Dorchester; the flag streamed gaudily from the staff, and they could see through the bushes that several

vessels of small burden were passing to and fro. They sank back again into the woods, and kept on their course in comparative silence, until, close upon sunset, they found themselves at a few hundred yards from "The Oaks;" the spacious and lofty dwelling rising dimly out of the woods before them, while from their feet the extensive grounds of the park spread away in distance and final obscurity.

Leaving them to amuse themselves as they may, let us now return to the Cypress Swamp, where we left the wounded Clough under the charge of the dragoon and negro. The injury he had received, though not, perhaps, a fatal one, was yet serious enough to render immediate attention highly important to his safety; but in that precarious time surgeons were not readily to be found, and the Americans, who were without money, were not often indulged with their services. The several corps of the leading partisans, such as Marion, and Sumter, Pickens, Horry, &c., fought daily in the swamps and along the highways, with the painful conviction that, save by some lucky chance, their wounds must depend entirely upon nature to be healed. In this way, simply through want of tendance, hundreds perished in that warfare of privation, whom, with a few simple specifics, medical care would have sent again into the combat, after a few days' nursing, hearty and unimpaired. The present circumstances of Clough's condition were not of a character to lead him to hope for a better fortune, and he gave himself up despondingly to his fate, after having made a brief effort to bribe his keeper to assist in his escape. But attendance was at hand, if we may so call it, and after a few hours' suffering, the approach of Doctor Oakenburg was announced to the patient.

The doctor was a mere culler of simples, a stuffer of birds and reptiles, a digger of roots, a bark and poultice doctor—in other words, a mere pretender. He was wretchedly ignorant of every thing like medical science, but he had learned to physic. He made beverages which, if not always wholesome, were, at

least, sometimes far from disagreeable to the country housewives, who frequently took the nostrum for the sake of the stimulant. Doctor Oakenburg knew perfectly the want, if he cared little for the need, of his neighbours; and duly heedful of those around him who indulged in pipe and tobacco, he provided the bark and the brandy. A few bitter roots and herbs constituted his entire stock of medicines; and with these well armed at all points and never unprovided, he had worked out for himself no small reputation in that section of country. But this good fortune lasted only for a season. Some of his patients took their departure after the established fashion; some, more inveterate with that prejudice which distinguishes the bad subject, turned their eyes on rival remedies; many were scattered abroad and beyond the reach of our doctor by the chances of war; and with a declining reputation and wofully diminished practice, Oakenburg was fain, though a timid creature, to link his own with the equally doubtful fortunes of the partisan militia. This decision, after some earnest argument, and the influence of a more earnest necessity, Humphries at length persuaded him to adopt, after having first assured him of the perfect security and unharming character of the warfare in which he was required to engage.

With a dress studiously disposed in order, a head well plastered with pomatum, and sprinkled with the powder so freely worn at the time, a ragged frill carefully adjusted upon his bosom to conceal the injuries of time, and an ostentatious exhibition of the shrunken shank, garnished at the foot with monstrous buckles that once might have passed for silver, Oakenburg still persisted in exhibiting as many of the evidences of the reduced gentleman as he possibly could preserve. His manner was tidy, like his dress. His snuff-box twinkled for ever between his fingers, one of which seemed swollen by the monstrous paste ring which enriched it; and his gait was dancing and elastic, as if his toes had volunteered to do all the duty of his feet. His mode of speech, too, was excessively

finical and delicate—the words passing through his lips with difficulty; for he dreaded to open them too wide, lest certain deficiences in his jaws should become too conspicuously notorious. These deficiencies had the farther effect of giving him a lisping accent, which not a little added to the pretty delicacies of his other features.

He passed through the swamp with infinite difficulty, and greatly to the detriment of his shoes and stockings. Riding a small tackey (a little, inconsiderate animal, that loves the swamp, and is usually born and bred in it), he was compelled continually to be on the look-out for, and defence against, the overhanging branches and vines clustering about the trees, through which his horse, in its own desire to clamber over the roots, continually and most annoyingly bore him. In this toil he was compelled to pay far less attention to his legs than was due to their well-being; and it was not until they were well drenched in the various bogs through which he had gone, that he was enabled to see how dreadfully he had neglected their even elevation to the saddle skirts —a precaution absolutely necessary at all times in such places, but more particularly when the rider is mounted upon a short, squat animal, such as our worthy doctor bestrode. He was under the guidance of an elderly, drinking sort of person—one of the fat, beefy class, whose worship of the belly-god has given an unhappy distension to that ambitious though most erring member. The man leered with his little eyes as he saw the doctor plunging from pool to pool without lifting his legs, but he was too fond of a joke to say any thing in the way of warning. Indeed, any warning on the subject of his dangling legs would most probably have fallen upon unheeding ears; for Doctor Oakenburg was too little of an equestrian not to feel the necessity, while battling with his brute for their mutual guidance, of keeping his pendulous members carefully balanced on each side, to prevent any undue preponderance of one over the other—a predicament of which he had much seeming apprehension. In the mean time, the lively

See what a sword he carries—and those pistols! I would not risk much, doctor, to say, there are no less than sixteen buckshot in each of those barkers."

"My! you don't say so, squire! Yet did William Humphries say to me that the duty was to be done in perfect security."

The last sentence fell from the doctor's lips in a sort of comment to himself, but his companion replied—

"Ay, security as perfect, doctor, as war will admit of. You talk of perfect security: there is no such thing—no perfect security anywhere—and but little security of any kind until dinner's well over. I feel the uncertainty of life till then. Then, indeed, we may know as much security as life knows. We have, at least, secured what secures life. We may laugh at danger then; and if we must meet it, why, at least we shall not be compelled to meet it in that worst condition of all—an empty stomach. I am a true Englishman in that, though they do call me a rebel. I feel my origin only when eating; and am never so well disposed towards the enemy as when I'm engaged, tooth and nail, in that savoury occupation, and with roast-beef. Would that we had some of it now!"

The glance of Oakenburg, who was wretchedly spare and lank, looked something of disgust as he heard this speech of the gourmand, and listened to the smack of his lips with which he concluded it.

He had no taste for corpulence, and probably this was one of the silent impulses which taught him to admire the gaunt and attenuated form of the snake. Porgy did not heed his expression of countenance, but looking up over head where the sun stood just above them peering down imperfectly through the close umbrage, he exclaimed to the soldier, while pushing his horse through the creek which separated them—

"Hark you, Wilkins, boy, is it not high time to feed? horse and man—man and horse, boy, all hungry and athirst."

"We shall find a bite for you, squire, before long—

but here's a sick man the doctor must see to at once: he's in a mighty bad way, I tell you."

"A sick man, indeed!" and the doctor, thrusting his hands into his pocket, drew forth a bottle, filled with a dark thick liquid, which he shook violently until it gathered into a foam upon the surface. Armed with this, he approached the little bark shanty under which reposed the form of the wounded Clough.

"You are hurt, worthy sir?" said the mediciner, inquiringly; "you have not been in a condition of perfect security—such as life requires. But lie quiet, I pray you; be at ease, while I look into your injuries," said the doctor, condolingly, and proceeded to the outstretched person of the wounded man with great deliberation.

"You need not look very far—here they are," cried Clough, faintly, but peevishly, in reply, as he pointed to the wound in his side.

The doctor looked at the spot, shook his head, clapped on a plaster of pine gum, administered a dose of his nostrum, which the patient gulped at prodigiously, and then telling him he would do well, repeated his order to lie quiet and say nothing. Hurrying away to his saddle-bags after this had been done, with the utmost despatch he drew forth a pair of monstrous leggings, which he bandaged carefully around his shrunken pedestals. In a moment after he was upon his tackey, armed with a stick, and hastening back upon the route he had just passed over. Porgy, who was busy urging the negro cook in the preparation of his dinner, cried out to the dealer of simples, but received no answer. The doctor had no thought but of the snake he had seen, for whose conquest and capture he had now set forth, with all the appetite of a boy after adventures, and all the anxiety of an inveterate naturalist, to get at the properties of the object he pursued. Meanwhile the newcomer, Porgy, had considerably diverted the thought of the trooper from attention to his charge; and laying down his sabre between them, the sentinel threw himself along the ground where Porgy had already

stretched himself, and a little lively chat and good company banished from his mind, for a season, the consideration of his prisoner. His neglect furnished an opportunity long watched and waited for by another. The shanty in which Clough lay stood on the edge of the island, and was one of those simple structures which the Indian makes in his huntings. A stick rested at either end between the crotch of a tree, and small saplings, leaning against it on one side, were covered with broad flakes of the pine bark. A few bushes, piled up partially in front, completed the structure, which formed no bad sample of the mode of hutting it, winter and summer, in the swamps and forests of the South, by the partisan warriors. In the rear of the fabric stood a huge cypress, from the hollow of which, at the moment when the sentinel and Porgy seemed most diverted, a man might have been seen approaching. He cautiously wound along on all-fours, keeping as much out of sight as possible, until he reached the back of the hut; then lifting from the saplings a couple of the largest pieces of bark which covered them, he introduced his body without noise into the tenement of the wounded man. Clough was in a stupor—a half-dozy consciousness was upon him—and he muttered something to the intruder, though without any fixed object. The man replied not, but approaching closely, put his hand upon the bandagings of the wound, drawing them gently aside. The first distinct perception which the prisoner had of his situation was the agonizing sense of a new wound, as of some sharp weapon driven directly into the passage made by the old one. He writhed under the instrument as it slanted deeper and deeper into his vitals, but he had not strength to resist, and but little to cry out. He would have done so, but the sound had scarcely risen to his lips, when the murderer thrust a tuft of grass into his mouth and stifled all complaint. The knife went deeper—the whole frame of the assailant was upon it, and all motion ceased on the part of the sufferer with the single groan and distorted writhing which followed the last agony. In a moment

after, the stranger had departed by the way he came; and it was not till he had reached the thick swamp around, that the fearful laugh of the maniac Frampton, for it was he, announced the success of his new effort at revenge. The laugh reached Porgy and the dragoon —they heard the groan also, but that was natural enough. Nothing short of absolute necessity could have moved either of them at that moment—the former being busied with a rasher of bacon and a hoe-cake hot from the fire, and the latter indulging in an extra swig of brandy from a canteen which Porgy, with characteristic providence, had brought well filled along with him.

CHAPTER X.

"Now, this were sorry wisdom, to persuade
My sword to mine own throat. If I must out,
Why should I out upon mine ancient friend,
And spare mine enemy?"

"THE OAKS," the dwelling-place of Colonel Walton, was one of those old-time residences of the Carolina planters to which, at this day, there attaches a sort of human interest. A thousand local traditions hang around them—a thousand stories of the olden time, and of its associations of peril and adventure. The estate formed one of the frontier-plantations upon the Ashley, and was the site of a colonial barony. It had stood sieges of the Indians in the wars of the Edistoes and Yemassees; and, from a block-house station at first, it had grown to be an elegant mansion, improved in European style, remarkable for the length and deep shade of its avenues of solemn oak, its general grace of arrangement, and the lofty and considerate hospitality of its proprietors. Such, from its first foundation to the period of which we speak, had been its reputation; and in no respect did the present owner depart from

the good tastes and the frank manly character of his ancestors.

Colonel Richard Walton was a gentleman in every sense of the word: simple, unpretending, unobtrusive, and always considerate, he was esteemed and beloved by all around him. Born to the possession of large estates, his mind had been exercised happily by education and travel; and at the beginning of the revolutionary struggle, he had been early found to advocate the claims of his native colony. At the commencement of the war he commanded a party of horse, and had been concerned in some of the operations against Prevost, in the rapid foray which that general made into Carolina. When Charlestown fell before the arms of Sir Henry Clinton, overawed as was the entire country below the Santee by the immediate presence in force of the British army, he had tendered his submission along with the rest of the inhabitants, despairing of any better fortune. The specious offers of amnesty made by Clinton and Arbuthnot, in the character of commissioners for restoring peace to the revolted colonies, and which called for nothing but neutrality from the inhabitants, had the effect of deceiving him, in common with his neighbours. Nor was this submission so partial as we have been taught to think it. To the southward of Charlestown, the militia, without summons, sent in a flag to the British garrison at Beaufort, and made their submission. At Camden the inhabitants negotiated their own terms of repose. In Ninety-Six the submission was the same; and, indeed, with the exception of the mountainous borders, all show of hostility ceased throughout the colony—the people generally seeming to prefer quiet on any terms, to a resistance which, at that moment of despondency, seemed worse than idle.

This considerate pliability secured him, as it was thought, in all the immunities of the citizen, without subjecting him to any of those military duties which, in other respects, his majesty had a perfect right to call for from his loyal subjects. Such, certainly, were

the pledges of the British commanders—pledges made with little reflection, or with designed subterfuge, and violated with as little hesitation. They produced the effect desired, in persuading to easy terms of arrangement the people who might not have been conquered but with great difficulty. Once disarmed and divided, they were more easily overcome; and it was not long after the first object had been obtained before measures were adopted well calculated to effect the other.

Colonel Walton, though striving hard to convince himself of the propriety of the course which he had taken, remained still unsatisfied. He could not be assured of the propriety of submission when he beheld, as he did hourly, the rank oppression and injustice by which the conquerors strove to preserve their ascendency over the doubtful, while exercising it wantonly among the weak. He could not but see how uncertain was the tenure of his own hold upon the invaders, whom nothing seemed to bind in the shape of solemn obligation. The promised protection was that of the wolf, and not the guardian dog; it destroyed its charge, and not its enemy; and strove to ravage where it promised to secure. As yet, it is true, none of these ills, in a direct form, had fallen upon Colonel Walton; he had suffered no abuses in his own person or family: on the contrary, such were his wealth and influence, that it had been thought not unwise, on the part of the conquerors, to conciliate and sooth him. Still, the colonel could not be insensible to the gradual approaches of tyranny. He was not an unreflecting man; and as he saw the wrongs done to others, his eyes became duly open to the doubtful value of his own securities, whenever the successes of the British throughout the state should have become so general as to make them independent of any individual influence. So thinking, his mind gave a new stimulus to his conscience, which now refused its sanction to the decision which, in a moment of emergency and dismay, he had been persuaded to adopt. His sympathies were too greatly with the oppressed, and their sufferings were too im-

mediately under his own eyes, to permit of this; and gloomy with the consciousness of his error—and the more so as he esteemed it now irremediable—vexed with his momentary weakness, and apprehensive of the future—his mind grew sullen with circumstances—his feelings sank; and, gradually withdrawing from all the society around him, he solaced himself in his family mansion with the small circle which widowhood, and other privations of time, had spared him. Nor did his grief pass without some alleviation in the company of his daughter Katharine—she, the high-born, the beautiful, the young—the admiration of her neighbourhood, revelling in power, yet seemingly all unconscious of its sway. The rest of his family in this retirement consisted of a maiden sister, and a niece, Emily Singleton, whom, but a short time before, he had brought from Santee, in the hope that a change of air might be of benefit to that life which she held by a tenure the most fleeting and capricious.

He saw but few persons besides. Studiously estranging himself, he had no visiters, unless we may except the occasional calls of the commanding officer of the British post at Dorchester. This visiter, to Colonel Walton, appeared only as one doing an appointed duty, and exercising upon these visits that kind of surveillance over the people of the country which seemed to be called for by his position. Colonel Proctor had another object in his visits to "The Oaks." He sought to ingratiate himself into the favour of the father, on account of his lovely daughter; and to the charms of one, rather than the political feelings of the other, were the eyes of the British officer properly addressed. Katharine was not ignorant of her conquest, for Proctor made no efforts to conceal the impression which she had made upon his heart. The maiden, however, gave him but small encouragement. She gloried in the name of a rebel lady, and formed one of that beautiful array, so richly shining in the story of Carolina, who, defying danger, and heedless of privation, spoke boldly in encouragement to those who

yet continued to struggle for its liberties. She did not conceal her sentiments; and whatever may have been the personal attractions of Colonel Proctor, they were wanting in force to her mind, as she associated him with her own and the enemies of her country. Her reception of her suitor was coldly courteous; and that which her father gave him, though always studiously considerate and gentle, Colonel Proctor, at the same time, could not avoid perceiving was constrained and frigid —quite unlike the warm and familiar hospitality which otherwise marked and still marks, even to this day, the gentry of that neighbourhood.

It was drawing to a close—that day of events in the history of our little squad of partisans whose dwelling was the Cypress Swamp. Humphries, who had engaged to meet Major Singleton with some necessary intelligence from Dorchester, was already upon his way to the place of meeting, and had just passed out of sight of Ashley River, when he heard the tramp of horses moving over the bridge, and on the same track with himself. He sank into cover as they passed, and beheld Colonel Proctor and a Captain Dickson, both on station at the garrison, on their way to "The Oaks." Humphries allowed them to pass; then renewing his ride, soon effected the meeting with Major Singleton. As we have already seen, their object was "The Oaks" also; but the necessity of avoiding a meeting with the British officers was obvious, and they kept close in the wood, leaving the ground entirely to their opponents.

Though, as we have said, rather a frequent visiter at "The Oaks," the present ride of Colonel Proctor in that quarter had its usual stimulus dashed somewhat by the sense of the business which occasioned it. Its discharge was a matter of no little annoyance to the Englishman, who was not less sensitive and generous than brave. It was for the purpose of imparting to Colonel Walton, in person, the contents of that not yet notorious proclamation of Sir Henry Clinton, with which he demanded the performance of military duty

to which I have alluded, is of such a nature as opens fresh ground for the renewal of that offer; and in this packet I have instructions to that end, with a formal enclosure of seal and signature, from his excellency himself, which covers the commission to you, sir, in your full rank, as engaged in the rebel army."

"You will keep it, sir; again it is rejected. I cannot lift arms against my countrymen; and though I readily understand the necessity which requires you to make the tender, you will permit me to say, that I hold it only an equivocal form of insult."

"Which, I again repeat, Colonel Walton, is foreign to all intention on the part of the commander-in-chief. For myself, I surely need make no such attestation. He, sir, is persuaded to the offer simply as he knows your worth and influence—he would secure your co-operation in the good cause of loyalty, and at the same time would soften what may seem the harsh features of this proclamation."

"And what is this proclamation, sir? Let me hear that: the matter has been somewhat precipitately discussed in advance of the text."

"Surely, sir," said Proctor, eagerly, as the language of Colonel Walton's last remarks left a hope in his mind that he might think differently on the perusal of the document, which he now took from the hands of his companion, Dickson—"surely, sir, and I hope you will reconsider the resolve which I cannot help thinking precipitately made."

The listener simply bowed his head, and motioned the other to proceed. Proctor obeyed; and, unfolding the instrument, proceeded to convey its contents to the ears of the astonished Carolinian. As he read, the cheek of Colonel Walton glowed like fire—his eye kindled—his pulsation increased—and when the insidious decree, calling upon him to resume the arms which he had cast aside when his country needed them, and lift them in behalf of her enemies, was fairly comprehended by his sense, his feelings had reached that climax which despaired of all utterance. He started

abruptly from his seat, and paced the room in strong emotion; then suddenly approaching Proctor, he took the paper from his hand, and read it with unwavering attention. For a few moments after he had been fully possessed of its contents, he made no remark; then, with a strong effort, suppressing as much as possible his aroused feelings, he addressed the Briton in tones of inquiry which left it doubtful what, in reality, those feelings were.

"And you desire that I should embrace this commission, Colonel Proctor, which, if I understand it, gives me command in a service which this proclamation is to insist upon—am I right?"

"It is so, sir; you are right. Here is a colonel's commission under his majesty, with power to appoint your own officers. Most gladly would I place it in your hands."

"Sir—Colonel Proctor, this is the rankest villany—villany and falsehood. By what right, sir, does Sir Henry Clinton call upon us for military service, when his terms of protection, granted by himself and Admiral Arbuthnot, secured all those taking them in a condition of neutrality?"

"It is not for me, Colonel Walton," was Proctor's reply—"it is not for me to discuss the commands of my superiors. But does not the proclamation declare these paroles to be null and void after the twentieth?"

"True. But by what right does your superior violate his compact? Think you, sir, that the Carolinians would have taken terms with invasion, the conditions and maintenance of which have no better security than the caprice of one of the parties? Think you, sir, that I, at least, would have been so weak and foolish?"

"Perhaps, Colonel Walton—and I would not offend by the suggestion," replied the other, with much moderation—"perhaps, sir, it was a singular stretch of indulgence to grant terms at all to rebellion."

"Ay, sir, you may call it by what name you please; but the terms, having been once offered and accepted, were to the full as binding between the law and the rebel as between the prince and dutiful subjects."

"I may not argue, sir, the commands of my superior," rejoined the other, firmly, but calmly.

"I am not so bound, Colonel Proctor; it is matter for close argument and solemn deliberation with me, and it will be long, sir, before I shall bring myself to lift arms against my countrymen."

"There is a way of evading that necessity, Colonel Walton," said Proctor, eagerly.

The other looked at him inquiringly, though he evidently did not hope for much from the suggested alternative.

"That difficulty, sir, may be overcome: his majesty has need of troops in the West Indies; Lord Cornwallis, with a due regard to the feelings of his dutiful subjects of the colonies, has made arrangements for an exchange of service. The Irish regiments will be withdrawn from the West Indies, and those of loyal Carolinians substituted. This frees you from all risk of encountering with your friends and countrymen, while at the same time it answers equally the purposes of my commander."

The soldier by profession saw nothing degrading, nothing servile in the proposed compromise. The matter had a different aspect in the eyes of the southern gentleman. The proposition which would send him from his family and friends, to engage in conflict with and to keep down those to whom he had no antipathy, was scarcely less painful in its exactions than to take up arms against his immediate neighbours. The suggestion, too, which contemplated the substitution of troops of foreign mercenaries, in the place of native citizens, who were to be sent to other lands in the same capacity, was inexpressibly offensive, as it directly made him an agent for the increase of that power which aimed at the destruction of his people and his principles. The sense of ignominy grew stronger in his breast as he heard it, and he paced the apartment in unmitigated disorder.

"I am no hireling, Colonel Proctor; and the war, hand to hand with my own sister's child, would be less

shameful to me, however full of pain and misery, than this alternative."

"There is no other, sir, that I know of."

"Ay, sir, but there is—there is another alternative, Colonel Proctor; more than that, sir—there is a remedy."

The eyes of the speaker flashed, and Proctor saw that they rested upon the broadsword which hung upon the wall before them.

"What is that, sir?" inquired the Briton.

"In the sword, sir—in the strife—to take up arms—to prepare for battle!" was the stern reply.

Either the other understood him not, with an obtuseness not common with him, or he chose not to understand him, as he replied—

"Why, that, sir, is what he seeks—it is what Lord Cornwallis desires, and what, sir, would, permit me to say, be to me, individually, the greatest pleasure. Your co-operation here, sir, would do more towards quieting discontent than any other influence."

The manner of Walton was unusually grave and deliberate.

"You have mistaken me, Colonel Proctor. When I spoke of taking up the sword, sir, I spoke of an alternative. I meant not to take up the sword to fight your battles, but my own. If this necessity is to be fixed upon me, sir, I shall have no loss to know my duty."

"Sir—Colonel Walton—beware! As a British officer, in his majesty's commission, I must not listen to this language. You will remember, sir, that I am in command of this garrison, and of the neighbouring country—bound to repress every show of disaffection, and with the power to determine, in the last resort, without restraint, should my judgment hold it necessary. I would not willingly be harsh; and you will spare me, sir, from hearing those sentiments uttered which become not the ears of a loyal subject."

"I am a free man, Colonel Proctor—I would be one, at least. Things I must call by their right names; and, as such, I do not hesitate to pronounce this decree

a most dishonest and criminal proceeding, which should call up every honest hand in retribution. Sir Henry Clinton has done this day what he will long be sorry for."

"And what, permit me to add, Colonel Walton—what I myself am sorry for. But it is not for me to question the propriety of that which my duty calls upon me to enforce."

"And pray, sir, what are the penalties of disobedience to this mandate?"

"Sequestration of property and imprisonment, at the discretion of the several commandants of stations."

"Poor Kate!—But it is well it is no worse." The words fell unconsciously from the lips of the speaker: he half-strode over the floor; then, turning upon Proctor, demanded once more to look upon the proclamation. He again read it carefully.

"Twenty days, Colonel Proctor, I see, have been allowed by Sir Henry Clinton for deliberation in a matter which leaves so little choice. So much is scarcely necessary; you shall have my answer before that time is over. Meanwhile, sir, let us not again speak of the subject until that period."

"A painful subject, sir, which I shall gladly forbear," said Proctor, rising; "and I will hope, at the same time, that Colonel Walton thinks not unkindly of the bearer of troublesome intelligence."

"God forbid, sir! I am no malignant. You have done your duty with all tenderness, and I thank you for it. Our enemies are not always so considerate."

"No enemies, I trust, sir. I am in hopes that, upon reflection, you will not find it so difficult to reconcile yourself to what, at the first blush, may seem so unpleasant."

"No more, sir—no more on the subject," was the quick, but calm reply. "Will you do me grace, gentlemen, in a glass of Madeira—some I can recommend?"

They drank; and seeing through the window the forms of the young ladies, Colonel Proctor proposed

to join them in their walk—a suggestion which his entertainer answered by leading the way. In the mean while, go we back to our old acquaintance, Major Singleton, and his trusty coadjutor, Humphries.

CHAPTER XI.

"We meet again—we meet again, once more,
We that were parted—happy that we meet,
More happy were we not to part again."

KEEPING close in cover, Major Singleton and his guide paused at length in the shelter of a gigantic oak, that grew, with a hundred others, along the extreme borders of the park-grounds. The position had been judiciously taken, as it gave them an unobstructed view of the Mansion House, the lawn in front, and a portion of the adjacent garden. They were themselves partial occupants of the finest ornament of the estate—the extensive grove of solemn oaks, with arms branching out on every side, sufficient each of them for the shelter of a troop. They rose, thickly placed all around the dwelling, concentrating in a beautiful defile upon the front, and thus continuing for the distance of a full mile until they gathered in mass upon the main road of the country. In the rear they stretched away singly or in groups, artfully disposed, but without regularity, down to the very verge of the river, over which many of them sloped with all their weight of limbs and luxuriance upon them; their long-drooping beard of white moss hanging down mournfully, and dipping into the river at every pressure of the wind upon the boughs from which it depended. Under one of these trees, the largest among them, the very patriarch of the collection, the two adventurers paused; Singleton throwing himself upon a cluster of the thick roots which had risen above and now ran along the

surface, while his companion, like a true scout, wandered off in other parts of the grove with the hope to obtain intelligence, or at least to watch the movements of the British officers, whose presence had prevented their own approach to the dwelling.

As Singleton gazed around upon the prospect, the whole scene grew fresh under his eye; and though many years had elapsed since, in the buoyancy and thoughtlessness of boyhood, he had rambled over it, yet gradually old acquaintances grew again familiar to his glance. The tree he knew again under which he had formerly played. The lawn spread freely onward, as of old, over which, in sweet company, he had once gambolled—the little clump of shrubs, here and there, still grew, as he had once known them; and his heart grew softened amid its many cares, as his memory brought to him those treasures of the past, which were all his own when nothing of strife was in his fortunes. What a god is memory, to keep in life—to endow with an unslumbering vitality beyond that of our own nature—its unconscious company—the things that seem only born for its enjoyment—that have no tongues to make themselves felt—and no claim upon it, only as they have ministered, ignorant of their own value, to the tastes and necessities of a superior! How more than dear—how valuable are our recollections! How like so many volumes, in which time has written on his passage the history of the affections and the hopes. Their names may be trampled upon in our passion, blotted with our tears, thrown aside in our thoughtlessness, but nothing of their sacred traces may be obliterated. They are with us, for good or for evil, for ever! They last us when the father and the mother of our boyhood are gone. They bring them back as in infancy. We are again at their knee—we prattle at their feet—we see them smile upon, and we know that they love us. How dear is such an assurance! How sweetly, when the world has gone wrong with us, when the lover is a heedless indifferent, when the friend has been tried and found wanting, do they cluster

before our eyes as if they knew our desire, and strove to minister to our necessities. True, they call forth our tears, but they take the weight from our hearts. They are never false to us,—better, far better, were we more frequently true to them!

Such were the musings of Singleton, as, reclined along the roots of the old tree, and sheltered by its branches, his eye took in, and his memory revived, the thousand scenes which he had once known of boyish frolic, when life wore, if not a better aspect of hope to his infant mind, at least a far less unpleasant show of its many privations. Not a tree grew before him which he did not remember for some little prank, or incident; and a thousand circumstances were linked with the various objects that, once familiar, were still unforgotten. Nothing seemed to have undergone a change—nothing seemed to have been impaired; the touches of time upon the old oak had rather mellowed into a fitting solemnity the aspect of that to which we should scarcely ever look for a different expression. While he yet mused, mingling in his mind the waters of those sweet and bitter thoughts which make up the life-tide of the wide ocean of memory, the dusk of evening came on, soft in its solemnity, and unoppressive even in its gloom, under the sweet sky and unmolested zephyr, casting its pleasant shadows along the edges of the grove. The moon, at the same time rising stealthily among the tree-tops in the east, was seeking to pale her ineffectual fires while yet some traces of the sun were still bright in waving lines and fragments upon the opposite horizon. Along the river, which had a beating murmur upon the low banks, the breeze skimmed playfully and fresh; and what with its pleasant chidings, the hum of the tree-tops bending beneath its embrace, and the still more certain appreciation by his memory of the genius of the place, the feeling of Singleton's bosom grew heightened in its tone of melancholy, and a more passionate emphasis of thought broke forth in his half-muttered soliloquy:—

"How I remember as I look; it is not only the

woods and the grounds—the river and the spot—but the very skies are there; and that very wind, and the murmuring voices of the trees, are all the same. Nothing—nothing changed. All as of old, but the one—all but she—she, the laughing child, the confiding playmate; and not as now, the capricious woman—the imperious heart, scorning where she once soothed, denying where she was once so happy to bestow. Such is her change—a change which the speechless nature itself rebukes. She recks not now, as of old, whether her word carries with it the sting or the sweet—it is not now in her thought to ask whether pain or pleasure follows the thoughtless slight or the scornful pleasantry. The victim suffers, but she recks not of his grief. Yet is she not an insensible—not proud, not scornful. Let me do her justice in this. Let me not wrong her but to think it. What but love, kindness, and all affection is her tendance upon poor Emily. To her, is she not all meekness, all love, all forbearance? To my uncle, too, no daughter could be more dutiful, more affectionate, more solicitously watchful. To all, to all but me! To me, only, the proud, the capricious, the indifferent. And yet, none love her like me; I must love on in spite of pride, and scorn, and indifference—I cannot choose but love her."

The musings of Major Singleton had for their object his fair cousin, the beautiful Kate—according to his account, a most capricious damsel in some respects, though well enough, it would appear, in others. We shall see for ourselves, as we proceed. Meanwhile, the return of Humphries from his scouting expedition arrests our farther speculation upon this topic, along with the soliloquy of our companion, whose thoughts were now turned into another channel, as he demanded from his lieutenant an account of his discoveries.

"And what of the Britons, Humphries? are they yet in saddle, and when may we hope to approach the dwelling? I have not been used to skulk like a beaten hound around the house of my mother's brother, not

daring to come forward, and, I am free to confess, the necessity makes me melancholy."

"Very apt to do so, major, but you have to bear it a little longer. The horses of the officers have been brought up into the court, and the boy is in waiting, but the riders have not made their appearance. I suppose they stop for a last swig at the squire's Madeira. He keeps a prime stock on hand, they say, though I've never had the good fortune to taste any of it."

"You shall do so to-night, Humphries, and grow wiser, unless your British Colonel's potations exceed a southern gentleman's capacity to meet him. But you knew my uncle long before coming down from Santee with him."

"To be sure I did, sir. I used to see him frequently in the village; but since the fall of Charlestown he has kept close to the plantation. They say he goes nowhere now, except it be down towards Caneacre and Horse Savannah, and along the Stonoe, where he has acquaintance. I 'spose he has reason enough to lie close, for he has too much wealth not to be an object, and the tories keep a sharp look out on him. Let him be suspected, and they'd have a pretty drive at the old plate, and the negroes would soon be in the Charlestown market, and then off to the West Indies. Colonel Proctor is watchful too, and visits the squire quite too frequently not to have some object."

"Said you not that Kate, his daughter, Miss Walton, was the object. Object enough, I should think, for a hungry adventurer, sent out to make his fortune in alliance with the very blood he seeks to shed. Kate would be a pleasant acquisition for a younger son."

There was something of bitterness in the tone of the speaker on this subject, which told somewhat of the strength of those suspicions in his mind, to which, without intending so much, Humphries, in a previous remark, had actually given the direction. The latter saw this, and with a deliberate tact, not so much the work of his education as of a natural delicacy, careful not to startle the nice jealousies of Singleton, he hastened

to remove the impression which unwittingly he had made. Without laying any stress upon what he said, and with an expression of countenance the most indifferent, he proceeded to reply as follows to the remark of his companion:—

"Why, major, it would be a pleasant windfall to Proctor could he get Miss Walton; but there's a mighty small chance of that, if folks say true. He goes there often enough, that's certain, but he doesn't see her half the time. She keeps her chamber or takes herself off in the carriage when she hears of his coming; and his chance is slim even to meet with her, let 'lone to get her."

There was a tremulous lightness in Singleton's tone as he spoke to this in oblique language—

"And yet Proctor has attractions, has he not? I have somewhere heard so—a fine person, good features, even handsome. He is young, too."

"Few better looking men, sir, and making due allowance for an enemy, a clever sort of fellow enough. A good officer, too, that knows what he's about, and quite a polite, fair-spoken gentleman."

"Indeed! attractions quite enough, it would seem, to persuade any young lady into civility. And yet, you say—"

"Hist, major! 'Talk of the ——' Ask pardon, sir; but drop behind this bush. Here comes the lady herself with your sister, I believe, though I can't say at this distance. They've been walking through the oaks, and, as you see, Proctor keeps the house."

The two sank into cover as the young ladies came through the grove, bending their way towards the very spot where Singleton had been reclining. The place was a favourite with all, and the ramble in this quarter was quite a regular custom of the afternoon with the fair heiress of Colonel Walton in particular. As she approached, they saw the lofty carriage, the graceful height, and the symmetrical person of our heroine—her movement bespeaking for her that degree of consideration which few ever looked upon her and withheld.

Her dress was white, and simple, rather more in the fashion of the present than of that time, when a lady's body was hooped in like a ship's, by successive layers of cordage and timber; and when her headgear rose into a pyramid, tower upon tower, a massy and Babel-like structure, well stuccoed, to keep its place, by the pastes and pomatums of the day. With her dress, the nicest stickler for the proper simplicities of good taste would have found no cause of complaint. Setting off her figure to advantage, it did not unpleasantly confine it; and, as for her soft brown hair, it was free to wanton in the winds, save where a strip of velvet restrained it around her brows. Yet this simplicity indicated no improper indifference on the part of the lady to her personal appearance. On the contrary, it was the art which concealed itself—the felicitous taste, and the just estimate of a mind capable of conceiving proper standards of fitness—that achieved so much in the inexpressive yet attractive simplicity of her costume. She knew that the elevated and intellectual forehead needed no mountainous height of hair for its proper effect. She compelled hers accordingly—simply parting it in front—to play capriciously behind; and, "heedful of beauty, the same woman still," the tresses that streamed so luxuriantly about her neck, terminated in a hundred sylph-like locks, exceedingly natural to behold, but which cost her some half-hour's industrious application daily at the toilet. Her eye was dark, richly brilliant in its expression, though we look into its depths vainly for that evidence of caprice and a wanton love of its exercise which Singleton had rather insisted upon as her characteristic. Her face was finely formed, delicately clear and white, slightly pale, but marked still with an appearance of perfect health, which preserved that just medium the eye of taste loves to rest upon, in which the rose rises not into the gaudy richness of mere vulgar health, and is yet sufficiently present to keep the cheek from falling into the opposite extreme,

the autumnal sickness of aspect, which, wanting in the other, it is so very apt to assume.

Not so the companion beside her. Pale and shadowy, the young girl, younger than herself, who hung upon her arm, was one of the doomed victims of consumption—that insidious death that sleeps with us, and smiles with us—insidiously winds about us to lay waste, and looks most lovely when most determined to destroy. She was small and naturally slight of person, but the artful disease under which she suffered had made her more so; and her wasted form, the evident fatigue of her movement, not to speak of the pain and difficulty of her breathing, were all so many proofs that the tenure of her life was insecure, and her term brief. Yet few were ever more ready for this final trial than the young lady before us. The heart of Emily Singleton was as pure as her eyes were gentle. Her affections were true, and her thoughts had been long since turned only to heaven. Her own condition had never been concealed from her, nor was she disposed to shrink from its consideration. Doomed to a brief existence, she wasted not the hours in painful repinings at a fate so stern; but still regarding it as inevitable, she prepared as calmly as possible to encounter it. Fortunately, she had no strong passions aroused and concentrated, binding her to the earth. Love—that quick, angry, and eating fever of the mind—had never touched the heart that, gentle from the first, had been restrained from the indulgence of such a feeling by the due consciousness of that destiny which could not admit of its realization. Her mood had grown loftier, sublimer, in due proportion with the check which this consciousness had maintained upon her sensibilities. She had become spiritualized in mind, even as she had grown attenuated in person; and with no murmurings, and but few regrets, her thoughts were now only busied with those heavenward contemplations which take the pang from death, and disarm parting of many of its privations. Singleton looked

forth from his cover upon the form of his sister, while the tears gathered in big drops into his eyes.

"So pure, so early doomed! Oh, my sweet sister! —and when that comes, then am I indeed alone. Poor Emily!"

Thus muttering to himself, as they came near, he was about to emerge into sight and address them, when, at the instant, Humphries caught his wrist, and whispered—

"Stir not—move not. Proctor approaches, with Colonel Walton and another. Our hope is in lying close."

The ladies turned to meet the new-comers. The two British officers seemed already acquainted with them, since they now advanced without any introduction. Proctor, with the ease of a well-bred gentleman, placed himself beside the fair heiress of the place, to whom he tendered his arm; while his companion, Captain Dickson of the guards, made a similar tender to Emily. The latter quietly took the arm of Dickson, releasing that of her cousin at the same moment. But Kate seemed not disposed to avail herself of her example. Civilly declining Proctor's offer, with great composure she placed her arm within that of her father, and the walk was continued. None of this had escaped the notice of Major Singleton, whose place of concealment was close beside the path; and, without taking too many liberties with his confidence, we may say that his feelings were those of pleasure as he witnessed this proceeding of his cousin.

"I take no aid from mine enemy, Colonel Proctor—certainly never when I can do without it. You will excuse me, therefore; but I should regard your uniform as having received its unnaturally deep red from the veins of my countrymen."

"So much a rebel as that, Miss Walton! It is well for us that the same spirit does not prevail among your warriors. What would have been our chances of success had such been the case?"

"You think your conquest then complete, Colonel

Proctor—you think that our people will always sleep under oppression, and return you thanks for blows, and homage for chastisement. Believe so—it is quite as well."

"Do the ladies of Carolina all entertain this spirit, Miss Walton? Will none of them take the aid of the gallant knight that claims service at their hands? or is it, as I believe, that she stands alone in this rebel attitude, an exception to her countrywomen?"

"Nay; I cannot now answer you this question. We see few of my countrywomen or countrymen now, thanks to our enemies; and I have learned to forbear asking what they need or desire. It is enough for me that when I desire the arm of a good knight, I can have him at need without resorting to that of an enemy!"

"Indeed!" replied the other, with some show of curiosity—"indeed, you are fortunate; but your reference is now to your father?"

"My father?—Oh, no! although, as now, I not unfrequently claim his aid in preference to that of my foe."

"Why your foe, Miss Walton? Have we not brought you peace? There is no strife now in Carolina."

"Peace, indeed! the peace of fear, that is kept from action by chains and the dread of punishment! Call you that peace? It is a peace that is false and cannot last. You will see."

"Be it as you say. Still we are no enemies—we who serve your monarch as our own, and simply enforce those laws which we are all bound in common to obey."

"No monarch of mine, if you please. I care not a straw for him, and don't understand, and never could, the pretensions of your kings and princes, your divine rights, and your established and immutable systems of human government, humanity itself being mutable, hourly undergoing change, and hourly in advance of government."

"Why, this is to be a rebel; but we shall not dispute, Miss Walton. It is well for us, as I have said

before, that such are not the sentiments of your warriors; else, stimulated, as they must have been, by the pleadings of lips like yours, they must have been invincible. It will not indicate too much simplicity, if I marvel that their utterance hitherto has availed so little in bringing your men into the field. We have not easily found our foes in a country in which, indeed, it is our chief desire to find friends only."

"It follows from this, Colonel Proctor, that there is only so much more safety for his majesty's more loyal subjects."

"You are incorrigible, Miss Walton."

"No, sir; only too indulgent—too like my countrymen—dreading the combat which I yet see is a necessity."

"If so, why has there been so little opposition?"

"Perhaps, sir, you will not always ask the question."

"You still have hopes, then, of the rebel cause."

"My country's cause, Colonel Proctor, if you please. I still have hopes; and I trust that his majesty's arms may not long have the regret of continuing a warfare so little stimulating to their enterprise, and so little calculated to yield them honour."

The British colonel bowed at the equivocal sentiment, and after a pause of a few moments the lady proceeded—

"And yet, Colonel Proctor, not to speak too freely of matters of which my sex can know so little, I must say, knowing as I do the spirit of some among my countrymen—I must say, it has greatly surprised me that your conquests should have been usually so easy."

"That need not surprise you, Miss Walton; you remember that ours are British soldiers"—smiling, and with a bow, was the response of the colonel.

"By which I am to understand, on the authority of one of the parties, its own invincibility. It is with your corps, I believe, that the sentiment runs, though they do not—'we never retreat, we die.' Unquestionable authority, surely; and it may be that such is the case. Few persons think more highly of British val-

lour than the Carolinians. Father, you, I know, think extravagantly of it; and cousin Robert, too: I have heard you both speak in terms which fully sustain you, Colonel Proctor, in what might be called the self-complaisance which just now assigned the cause of your success."

Colouring somewhat, and with a grave tone of voice, that was not his wont, Colonel Proctor replied—

"There is truth in what I have told you, Miss Walton; the British soldier fights with a perfect faith in his invincibility, and this faith enables him to realize it. The first lesson of the good officer is to prepare the minds of his men with this confidence, not only in their own valour, but in their own good fortune."

"And yet, Colonel Proctor, I am not so sure that the brave young men I have known, such as cousin Robert—the major, for he is a major, father—so Emily says—I am not so sure that they will fight the less against you on that account. Robert I know too well to believe that he has any fears, though he thinks as highly of British valour as anybody else."

"Who is this Robert, Miss Walton, of whom you appear to think so highly?"

There was something of pique in the manner and language of Proctor as he made the inquiry, and with a singular change in her own manner, in which she took her loftiest attitude and looked her sternest expression, Katharine Walton replied—

"A relative, sir, a near relative; Robert Singleton—Major Robert Singleton, I should say—a gentleman in the commission of Governor Rutledge."

"Ha! a major, too, and in the rebel army!" said the other. "Well, Miss Walton, I may have the honour, and hope some day to have the pleasure, to meet with your cousin."

The manner of the speaker was respectful, but there was a something of sarcasm—so Katharine thought—in his tones, and her reply was immediate.

"We need say nothing of the pleasure to either party from the meeting, Colonel Proctor; but if you do

meet with him, knowing Robert as I do, you will most probably, if you have time, remember this conversation."

Proctor bit his lip. He could not misunderstand the sinister meaning of her reply, but he said nothing; and Colonel Walton, who had striven to check the conversation at moments when he became conscious of its tenor, now gladly engaged his guest on other and more legitimate topics. He had been abstracted during much of the time occupied by his daughter and Proctor in their rather brusque dialogue; but even in the more spirited portions of it, nothing was said by the maiden that was not a familiar sentiment in the mouths of those Carolinian ladies, who were proud to share with their countrymen in the opprobrious epithet of rebel, conferred on them in no stinted terms by their invaders. Meanwhile Major Singleton, in his cover, to whose ears portions of the dialogue had come, was no little gladdened by what he had heard, and could not forbear muttering to himself—"Now, bless the girl! she is a jewel of a thousand." But the dark was now rapidly settling down upon the spot, and the dews, beginning to fall, warned Kate of her duty to her invalid cousin. Withdrawing her arm from her father, she approached Emily, and reminded her of the propriety of returning to the dwelling. Her feeble lips parted in a murmured reply, all gentleness and dependence—

"Yes, Kate, you are right. I have been wishing it, for I am rather tired. Do fix this handkerchief, cousin, higher and close to my neck—there, that will do."

She still retained Dickson's arm, while she passed one of her hands through that of her cousin. In this manner, followed by Colonels Walton and Proctor at a little distance, the party moved away and returned to the dwelling. Glad of his release from the close imprisonment of his bush, the major now came forward with Humphries, who, after a brief interval, stole along by the inner fence, in the close shadow of the trees, and with cautious movement reached a position which enabled him to see when the British officers took their

departure. His delay to return, though not long protracted, for the guests only waited to see the ladies safely seated and to make their adieus, was, however, an age to his companion. Singleton was impatient to present himself to his fair cousin, whose dialogue with Proctor had given him all the gratification which a lover must always feel, who hears from the lips of her he loves, not only those sentiments which his own sense approves, but the general language of regard for himself, even so slight and passing as that which had fallen from his cousin in reference to him. She had spoken in a tone and manner which was common, indeed, to the better informed, the more elevated and refined of the Carolina ladies at that period; when, as full of patriotic daring as its sons, they warmed and stimulated their adventurous courage, and undertook missions of peril and privation, which are now on record in honourable evidence of their fearlessness, sensibility, and love of country. It was not long after this, when his trusty lieutenant returned to him, giving him the pleasing intelligence of the departure of Proctor and his companion. Waiting for no messenger, Singleton at once hurried to the dwelling of his uncle, and leaving Humphries in the hall, in the passage-way leading to the upper apartments the first person he met was Kate.

"Why Robert, cousin Robert, is it you!"

The heart of the youth had been so much warmed towards her by what he had heard in the previous dialogue, that his manner and language had in them much more of passionate warmth than was altogether customary even with him.

"Dear, dear Kate, how I rejoice to see you!"

"Bless me, cousin, how affectionate you have become all at once! There's no end to you—there—have done with your squeezing. Hold my hand quietly, as if you had no wish to carry off the fingers, and I will conduct you to your sister."

"And Emily?"

He urged the question in an under-tone, and the eyes

of his cousin were filled with tears as she replied hastily—

"Is nigher heaven every day—but come."

As they walked to an inner apartment, he told her of his previous concealment, and the partial use he had made of his ears while her chat with Proctor had been going on.

"And you heard—what?"

"Not much, Kate; only that you have not deserted your country yet, when so many are traitors to her."

The light was not sufficient to enable him to see it, but there was a rich flush upon the cheek of his companion as he repeated some portions of the conversation he had heard, which would have made him better satisfied that her capriciousness was not so very permanent in its nature. In a few moments they were in the apartment where, extended upon a sofa, lay the slight and shadowy person of Emily Singleton. Her brother was beside her in an instant, and she was wrapped in his arms.

"Emily—dear, dear sister—my only—my all!" he exclaimed, as he pressed his lips warmly upon her cheek.

"Dear Robert, you are come! I am glad, but release me now—there."

She breathed more freely, released from his embrace, and he then gazed upon her with a painful sort of pleasure, her look was so clear, so dazzling, so spiritual, so unnaturally life-like.

"Sit by me," she said. He drew a low bench, and while he took his seat upon it, Katharine left the room. Emily put her hand into that of her brother, and looked into his face without speaking for several minutes. His voice, too, was husky when he spoke, so that, when his cousin had returned to the apartment, though all feelings between them had been perfectly understood, but few words had been said.

"Sit closer, brother—sit," she said to him, fondly, and motioned him to draw the bench beside her. He did so, and in her feeble tones many were the

questions which the dying girl addressed to her companion. All the domestic associations of her home on the Santee—the home of her childhood and its pleasures, when she had hopes and dreams of the future, and disease had not yet shown upon her system. To these questions his answers were made with difficulty; many things had occurred, since her departure, which would have been too trying for her to hear. She found his replies unsatisfactory, therefore, and she pressed them almost reproachfully—

"And you have told me nothing of old *mommer*,* Robert: is she not well? does she not miss me? did she not wish to come? And Frill, the pointer—the poor dog—I wonder who feeds him now. I wish you could have brought mommer with you, Robert—I should like to have her attend on me, she knows my ways and wishes so much better than anybody else. I should not want her long." And though she concluded her desire with a reference to her approaching fate, the sigh which followed was inaudible to her brother.

"But you are well attended here, Emily, my dear. Cousin Kate—"

"Is a sister, and all that I could desire, and I am as well attended as I could be anywhere; but it is thus that we repine. I only wished for mommer, as we wish for an old-time prospect which has grown so familiar to our eyes that it seems to form a part of the sight: so, indeed, though every thing is beautiful and delight-

* In all native Carolina families there are two or more favourite domestic slaves, between whom and their owners there exists a degree of regard which does not fall short in its character and effects of the most endearing relationship. One of these persons is usually the negro woman who has charge of the children from their infancy. The word "*momner*," probably a corruption of mamma, is that by which they commonly distinguish her; and it is not unusual to hear the word thus employed in reference to the ancient nurse, by those who have long since become parents themselves. The male negro who teaches young master to ride, and whose common duty it is to attend upon him, is, in the same spirit, styled "daddy" by his unsophisticated pupil. Nor is this a partial fact. Perhaps it would be perfectly safe to assert, that there are at least two or three negroes in every Carolina family, between whom and their owners this agreeable relationship exists.

ful about 'The Oaks,' I still long to ramble over our old walks among the 'Hills.'"

The brow of Singleton blackened as she thus passingly alluded to the beautiful estate of his fathers, but he said nothing, and she proceeded in her inquiries—

"And the garden, Robert—my garden, you know. Do, when you go back, see that Luke keeps the box trimmed, and the hedge; the morning I left it, it looked very luxuriant. I was too hurried to give him orders, but do you attend to it when you return. He is quite too apt to leave it to itself."

There was much in these simple matters to distress her brother, of which she was fortunately ignorant. How could he say to the dying girl, that her mommer, severely beaten by the tories, had fled into the swamps for shelter?—that her favourite dog, Frill, had been shot down, as he ran, by the same brutal wretches?—that the mansion-house of her parents, her favourite garden, had been devastated by fire, applied by the same cruel hands?—that Luke the gardener, and all the slaves who remained unstolen, had fled for safety into the thick recesses of the Santee?—how could he tell her this? The ruin which had harrowed his own soul almost to madness, would have been instant death to her; and though the tears were with difficulty kept back from his eyes, he replied calmly, and with sufficient evasion successfully to deceive the sufferer. At this moment Katharine re-entered the apartment, and relieved him by her presence. He rose from the bench, and prepared to attend upon his uncle, who as yet remained in his chamber unapprized of his arrival. He bent down, and his lips pressed once more upon the brow of his sister. She put her hand into his, and looked into his face for several minutes without speaking; and that look—so pure, so bright, so fond—so becoming of heaven, yet so hopeless of earth—he could bear the gaze no longer; the emotion rose shiveringly in his soul—the tears could be no longer kept from gushing forth, and he hurried from her sight to conceal them.

"Oh, why—why," he said, in a burst of passionate emotion, as he hurried below—"wherefore, great Father of Mercies, wherefore is this doom? Why should the good and the beautiful so early perish—why should they perish at all? Sad, sad, that the creature so made to love and be beloved, should have lived in affliction, and died without having the feelings once exercised, which in it have been so sweet and innocent. Even death is beautiful and soft, seen in her eyes, and gathering in words that come from her lips like the dropping of so much music from heaven. Poor Emily!"

CHAPTER XII.

"The time is come; thy chances of escape
Grow narrow, and thou hast, to save thyself,
But one resolve. Take oath with us and live."

Colonel Walton, upon the departure of his guests, retired to an inner apartment. His spirits, depressed enough before, were now considerably more so. Mingled feelings were at strife in his bosom—doubts and fears, hopes and misgivings—a sense of degradation—a more unpleasant consciousness of shame. The difficulties of his situation grew and gathered before his eyes the more he surveyed them; they called for deliberate thought, yet they also demanded early and seasonable determination. The time allowed him for decision by the ruling powers was brief, and the matter to be decided involved, in addition to the personal risks of life and liberty, the probable forfeiture of an immense estate, and the beggary, in consequence, of an only and beloved daughter. To save these, in part, from what he conceived otherwise to be inevitable ruin, he had originally laid aside his arms. He was now taught, in the strongest lights, the error of which he had been guilty in yielding so readily to circum-

stances—placing himself so completely, not only in the power of his enemy, but in the wrong; in having foregone that fine sense of national honour, without which the citizen merits not the name, and has no real claim upon the protection of his country. This sacrifice he had made without realizing, in its place, that very security of person and property, its pledged equivalent, which had been the price of its surrender. Bitterly, in that moment of self-examination, did he reproach himself with the unmanly error. Truly did he feel, by his present situation, that he who submits to tyranny arms it; and by not opposing it, weakens that power,—better principled, or with better courage than himself,—which battles with it to the last.

The exigency grew more and more involved the more he thought upon it. He could see but one alternative left him,—that which he had already hinted to Colonel Proctor, of again lifting his sword; and, if compelled to use it, of doing so for the only cause which he could consider legitimate—that of his country. Yet, how hopeless, how rash and ill-advised, at that moment, seemed the adoption of such an alternative! The people of the colony had all submitted; so it seemed, at least, in the absence of all opposition to the advancing armies of the British. They scoured the country on every side. They planted posts, the better to overawe the disaffected and confirm their conquests, in every conspicuous or populous region; and though tyrannizing everywhere with reckless rule and a rod of iron, the people seemed to prefer a lot so burdensome and wretched, rather than exchange it for a strife having not one solitary hope to recommend it. Such was the condition of things in Carolina at the time of which we write, just after the parting proclamation of Sir Henry Clinton, when, upon transferring the southern command to Lord Cornwallis, he adopted this mode of strengthening his successor by the employment of the native militia. Colonel Walton was not a coward, but he deliberated carefully upon all adventure involving peril in its progress. The circumstances in which

the colony stood at that period were too obvious not to be considered; and desperate and degrading as were the requirements of the proclamation, he saw no mode of escape from them. What if he drew the sword? would he not draw it alone? Where should he find support? To what spot should he turn—where strike —where make head against the enemy?—where, except in the remoter colonies, where a doubtful struggle was still maintained—doubtful in its results, and only exposing its defenders there to the same fate he was now about to encounter in his native soil? The prospect grew brighter a short time after, when Sumter came plunging down from North Carolina with the fierce rapidity of flame; when Marion emerged from his swamps on the Peedee and Black River, with the subtle certainty which belongs to skill and caution mingled with determined and fearless valour; and when, like our hero Major Singleton, a hundred brave young partisan leaders, starting suddenly up, with their little squads, on every side throughout the country, prepared to take terrible vengeance for the thousand wantonly inflicted sufferings which their friends and families had been made to bear at the hands of their enemies.

Leaving his companion, Humphries, comfortably cared for in the hall, along with Miss Barbara Walton, the maiden sister of the colonel, Major Singleton proceeded at once to the apartment where his uncle continued to chafe in his many bewilderments of situation. He found him pacing hurriedly along the room, his strides duly increasing in length with the increasing confusion of his thoughts. These occasionally found their way to his lips in soliloquizing musings, and now and then took on them a shape of passionate denunciation. Too much absorbed for the time to notice the approach of his nephew, he continued to mutter over his discontents, and in this way conveyed to the major a knowledge of his precise feelings. Familiar as he was with his uncle's character, Major Singleton had properly estimated the effect upon him of Clinton's

proclamation, and he now came forward seasonably to his assistance. The colonel turned as he drew nigh, and for a moment the pleasurable emotion with which he met the child of his sister, and one who had long been a very great favourite with himself, drove away many of the troublesome thoughts which had been busy with his mind.

"Ah, Robert!—my dear boy! when did you arrive, and how?"

"On horseback, sir. I reached Dorchester yesterday."

"Indeed! so long—and only now a visiter of 'The Oaks?' You surely mean to lodge with us, Robert?"

"Thank you, uncle; but that I dare not do. I should not feel myself altogether safe here."

"Not safe in my house! What mean you, nephew? Whence the danger—what have you to fear?"

"Nothing to fear, if I avoid the danger. You forget, sir, that I have not the security of British favour—I have not the talisman of Clinton's protection—and if suspected to be Major Singleton, I should risk the rope as a rebel."

"True, true—but how left you things at Santee? What are the prospects of a crop?"

"Such as the storm leaves us, good uncle. The tories have been sowing fire in my fields, and left it to ripen in lieu of corn and provender."

"God bless me, my son!—how was that?"

"They suspected me, hearing that I was from home—made free with my plate, burnt the mansion, barn, and a few other of the buildings, drove the negroes into the swamp, and sent their horses first, and then the fire, into the cornfields. They have done some business there after their usual fashion."

The colonel strode over the floor, his hands upon his brows, speechless for a time, but looking his deep interest in the narrative he had heard, probably with more earnestness, as he darkly saw the destiny of his own fine dwelling and plantation in it. His nephew

surveyed him with exemplary composure before he continued the dialogue.

"Yes; it was fortunate that poor Emily came away in season. A week later, and Heaven only knows what might have been her sufferings at the hands of the wretches."

"And where is this to end, Robert? What is to be done? Are we to have no relief from Congress?—will Washington do nothing for us?"

"Can you do nothing for Washington? Methinks, uncle, Hercules might give you some advice quite as fitting as that he gave to the wagoner. There is no helping one's neighbour to freedom. Men must make themselves free—they must have the will for it. The laws and the strong arm, unless they grow out of their own will, never yet gave, and never will give, any people their liberty. Have you not thought of this, sir, before?"

"Why, what would you have us do?—what can we do, hemmed in as we are, wanting arms and ammunition, and with a superior force watching us?"

"Do!—ay, you may well ask what can you do. What has anybody ever yet done, that set forth by asking such a question? But come, we will to supper first; there stands our summoner. We will try aunt Barbara's coffee, of which I have an old memory, and after that we will talk of what we can do in this matter. Coffee is a good stimulant, that wonderfully helps one's courage."

Following the black, who had thrice summoned them without receiving any attention, they descended to the supper-table, spread out after the southern fashion, with the hundred dainties of the region,—rice waffles and johnny-cake, hominy, and those delicacies of the pantry in the shape of sweetmeats and preserves, which speak of a wholesome household economy, the fashion of which is not yet gone from the same neighbourhood. There, presiding in all the dignity of starched coif, ruff, and wimple, sat stiffly the antique person of Miss Barbara Walton, the maiden

sister of the colonel; there, also, in his homespun coat turned up at the sleeves, and with hands that were not idle, our old acquaintance, Humphries, listening patiently, all the while, to a bitter complaint of Miss Barbara about the diminished and daily diminishing number of her brother's best cows, the loss of which could only be ascribed to the tories. Beside him sat the fair Kate Walton, amused with the efforts which Humphries made, while equally desirous to do the supper justice, and to appear attentive to the ancient lady. And there, reclining on a sofa at some little distance from the table, lay the attenuated figure of Emily Singleton—pale as a white rose, and, as if her thoughts were fast claiming kindred with heaven, almost as silent as one. Major Singleton had a seat assigned him fronting his cousin; and the little chit-chat which followed his and his uncle's entrance was duly suspended with the progress of the repast. To travellers who had toiled so much during the day as Singleton and his lieutenant, the supper was an item of importance, and we need not say that it received full justice at their hands. It was only when roused into consciousness by the very absence of all speech around them, that the soldiers looked up, in a brief pause in their progress, and found that they only had been busy. This fact offered no stop, however, to their continued industry—to that of Humphries, at least.

"Them are mighty nice waffles, now, major; they'd please you, I reckon."

Cuffee, one of the black waiters, with the proper instinct of a good house-servant, at once placed the dish before the speaker himself, and his plate received a new supply. Singleton kept him company, and the host trifled with his coffee, in order to do the same. Tea was anti-republican then, and only the tories drank it. Finding that a cessation had really taken place, Miss Barbara commenced her interrogatories, which, with sundry others put by his cousin Kate, Major Singleton soon answered. These matters, however, chiefly concerned old friends and acquaintances,

little domestic anecdotes, and such other subjects as the ladies usually delight to engage in. More serious thoughts were in Colonel Walton's mind, and his questions had reference to the public and to the country—the war and its prospects.

"And now, Robert, your news, your news. You look as if you had much more in your budget of far more importance. Pray, out with it, and refresh us. We are only half alive here, good nephew."

"Do you live at all here, uncle, and how? How much breath is permitted you by your masters for your daily allowance? and, by-the-way, the next question naturally is—how go on the confiscations? You still keep 'The Oaks,' I see; but how long—how long?"

The nephew had touched the key to a harsh note; and bitter, indeed, was the tone and manner of Colonel Walton, as he replied—

"Ay, how long—how long, indeed, am I to keep in the home of my fathers—the old barony, one of the very first in the colony? God only knows how soon the court of sequestration will find it better suited to a stranger rule; and I must prepare myself, I suppose, for some such change. I cannot hope to escape very long, when so many suffer confiscation around me."

"Fear not for 'The Oaks,' uncle, so long as you keep cool, submit, swear freely, and subscribe humbly. Send now and then a trim present of venison and turkey to the captain's quarters, and occasionally volunteer to hang a poor countryman, who loves war to the knife better than degradation to the chain. There can be no difficulty in keeping 'The Oaks,' uncle, if you only continue to keep your temper."

"Nay, Robert, sarcasm is unnecessary now, and with me: I need no reproaches of yours to make me feel in this matter."

"What, uncle, are you in that vein? Have your eyes been opened to the light at last?"

"Somewhat, Robert—but a truce to this for the present. Let us have your intelligence from Santee. They talk here of some risings in that quarter, but we

have no particulars, and know nothing of the success of either party. There is also some story of approaching continentals. Has Congress really given us an army? and who is to command it? Speak, boy; out with your budget."

"Thank you, good mine uncle; but how know I that I unfold my budget to a friend, and not to an enemy? What security do you give me that I talk not with a devout and loyal subject of his majesty—so very much a lover of the divine right of kings, that he would freely lend a hand to run up his own nephew to a swinging bough, the better to compel the same faith in others?"

"Pshaw! Robert, you speak idly: you mean not to suppose me a tory?" The brow of Colonel Walton darkened awfully as he spoke.

"I have little faith in neutrals," was the calm reply; "I hold to the goodly whig proverb, 'He who is not for me, is against me.' Pardon me, therefore, uncle, if I prefer—I who am a whig—to speak to you, who are neither whig nor Englishman, after such a fashion as shall not make you the keeper of unnecessary secrets, and expose a good cause to overthrow, and its friends to injury."

The taunt thus uttered with a most provoking and biting dryness of phrase, operated strongly upon the mind of the colonel, already acted upon, in no small degree, by his own previous rebukings of conscience to the same effect. He exclaimed, bitterly, as, rising from the supper-table, he strode away under the momentary impulse—

"Ay, by heaven! but your words are true. Who should esteem the neutral, when his country is in danger, and when her people are writhing under oppression? True, though bitter—more bitter, as it is true. Robert Singleton, thou hast given me a keen stroke, boy, but I have deserved it. Thou hast spoken nothing but the truth."

"Now, indeed, uncle, I rejoice to see you, and in this humour. You have felt the stroke at last, but it

is not my speech that has done it, uncle of mine. It is the proclamation of Sir Henry Clinton."

The youth fixed his eye keenly, as he spoke, upon the face of Colonel Walton, while his glance indicated a sort of triumphant joy, finely contrasted with the disquietude and vexing indignation strongly legible upon the face of his uncle.

"You are right there, too, Robert. I confess not to have thought so seriously upon this matter—not, certainly, so much to the point—as after hearing the contents of that dishonourable instrument of Sir Henry Clinton—God curse him for it!"

"God bless him for it, I say, if for nothing else that he has done," immediately rejoined the nephew. "My prayers have been heard in that; and this proclamation of the tyrant is the very best thing that he could have done for our cause and country, and the very thing that I have most prayed for."

"Indeed! Major Singleton, you surprise me. What should there be so very grateful to you—so worthy of your prayers and acknowledgment—in this proceeding of Sir Henry Clinton?" inquired the other, with something more of stiffness and hauteur in his manner.

"Much, Colonel Walton, very much. As a true patriot, and a lover of his country at every hazard, I prayed that the time might soon come, when the oppressor should put his foot—ay, and the foot of his menials, too—on the necks of those selfish or spiritless, those too little wise, or too little honourable, who have been so very ready to hug his knee, and yield up to a base love for security their manly character and honest independence. Verily, they meet with their reward. Let them feel the scourge and the chain, until, beaten and degraded, the stern necessity shall stimulate them to the duties they have so neglected. I rejoice in their desperation—I rejoice when I hear them groan beneath the oppression—not only because they merit such reward but because it makes them stronger in our cause."

"How know you that?" quickly said the other.

"How know I that? Let me answer that question

by another more direct. Will Colonel Walton be able any longer to keep the quiet security of his plantation, to hug his grounds, save his crops, and keep his negroes from the West Indies, without military service—active military service, and against his countrymen too—against his avowed principles?"

The colonel strode the room impatiently. The other continued—

"No, no, good uncle, you have no help. Earl Cornwallis compels you to your duty. You must buckle on the sword—you must take up arms for, or against, your people, and in either case at the expense of all that comfortable quiet for which you have already made quite too many sacrifices. I know you too well to suppose that you can fight against our people—your people; and I am glad therefore that you are forced into the field. How many thousands are in your condition! how many that look up to you, influenced by your example! Will these not be be moved in like manner and by like necessities? You will see—we shall have an army of native citizens before many days."

"Perhaps so, Robert, and I am not too timid to wish that such may be its effect. But is it not a dishonourable deception that he has practised in this movement? Did not the protections promise us immunity in this particular?"

"No, sir—I think not. I see nothing that Clinton has done in this so very grievous. Your protection secured you, as a citizen, to conform to the duties of the citizen, and to protect you as such. One of the duties of the citizen is the performance of militia service."

"Granted, Robert—but commutable by fine. I am not unwilling to pay this fine; but Clinton's proclamation insists only on the duty."

"And I am glad of it. Uncle, uncle, do you not see the dishonourable character of such an argument? Your conscience forbids that you should serve against your country, but you avoid this actual service in your own person, by paying the money which buys a mer-

cenary to do the same duty. You will not do murder with your own hand, but you pay another to perform the crime. Shame! shame, I say!"

"Not so, Robert; we know not, and I believe not, that the money is so appropriated. It becomes the spoil of the leaders, and simply helps them to fortune."

"Granted, and the sterner argument against you is yet to come. You are wealthy, and avail yourself of your good fortune to buy yourself out of a danger to which the poor man must submit. By what right would you escape from and evade your duties, when he, as a citizen, having the same, must submit to their performance? His conscience, like your own, teaches him that to fight for his country and against her invaders is his first duty. You evade your duty by the help of your better fortune, and leave him, as in the present instance, either to perish hopelessly in unequal contest—unequal through your defection—or to take up arms in a battle to which his principles are foreign. Such is the effect of this most unpatriotic reservation, which, on the score of your money, you have presumed to make. You sacrifice your country doubly, when you contribute to violate the conscience of its citizens. The duties of the rich man—the leading, influential man—are those chiefly of example. What is our safety, and where would be the safety of any nation—its freedom or its glory—if, when danger came, its rich citizens made terms with the invader which sacrificed the poor? Such is your case—such your proceeding exactly. There is now, thank Heaven, but one alternative that Clinton's proclamation has left you."

"That is the sword—I know it, I feel it, Robert."

"Touch it not, touch it not, uncle, I pray you, if you can help it," cried the feeble girl who lay gasping on the sofa. Her eyes were illuminated with a holy fire; her cheeks, pale, almost transparent, shone, white and glittering, with a spiritual glory, from the pillow on which her head was resting; while one of her long, taper fingers was stretched forward with an adjuring

earnestness. She had been a silent listener with the rest to the warm and deeply important dialogue which had been going on. The novelty of the difficulty, for they had not heard of the proclamation before, had kept them dumb until that moment, when Colonel Walton, as one having come to a settled conclusion, had referred to the sword as a last alternative. The gentle spirit of Emily Singleton, quick, sensitive, though frail and fleeting, then poured forth its feeble notes, in order to arrest the decision.

"Oh, touch not the sword, uncle, I pray you—the keen sword, that cuts away the happy life, and murders the blessed, and the blessing, peace—the peace of the innocent, the peace of the young and good. Oh, Robert, wherefore have you come with these fierce words? Is there to be no end to strife—the bloody and the brutal strife—the slaying of men—the trampling of God's creatures in the dust?"

"Why, sister—dear Emily—but how can we help it? We must fight our enemies, or they will trample on us the more."

"I see not that: better let them rob and plunder; but take not life, risk not life. Life is holy. None should take life but him who gives it, since to take life takes away from man, not only the privilege to breathe, but the privilege to repent of sins, to repair injustice, to make himself fit for immortality. When you slay your enemy, you send him not merely from one world—you send him into another—and which? Oh, brother, dear brother, wherefore would you engage in this horrid war? What blessing so great will it bring you, as to take from you the thought of the butchery you must go through to secure it? Oh, turn not away, Robert, but hear me! I would not vex you, nor would I now speak of things beyond my poor ability; but can you not avoid this fighting, this hewing down of man, this defacing of God's image, this defiling and death of the goodliest work of Heaven? I know, Robert, you have a true heart, and love not such an employ-

ment—say to me, and I will believe you—can you not avoid it?"

She sank back nearly exhausted. Her breath flickered, and the glow which now overspread her cheek, was, if possible, more threatening in its aspect than the death-like paleness which habitually rested there. Her prostration called for the quick attention of her cousin, and as Katharine Walton bent over her, and her brother knelt beside her, a momentary fear came upon them both, that the effort she had made had destroyed her. But a deep sigh indicated the returning consciousness, and the strange, spiritual light ascended once more into and rekindled her eyes. She saw who were immediately beside her; and there was something of a smile of joy, as she beheld the two, so closely associated, whom, of all the world, she desired to see even more immediately linked together. Katharine understood the glance, and rising from her kneeling position, extricated her hand, which lay partly under that of Robert, on the back of the sofa. The movement recalled the thoughts of Emily from the new direction which they had taken, and she now recurred to the unfinished topic.

"I will trust your assurance, brother, as I know your gentleness of feeling. May you not escape this bloody employment? for my poor thought fails to perceive the good or the glory which can come of the distresses of humanity."

"It would be shame, Emily, deep shame and dishonour, to avoid it; and, indeed, it may not be avoided. The persecutor pursues when you fly, and he tramples even more freely when you resist not. It is in the nature of injustice and wrong, to grow insolent with impunity; and the dishonour must rest on him, who, being himself strong, looks unmoved on the sufferings of the weak, and withholds his succour. Believe me, dear Emily, I love not this strife; but defence of our country is war under God's own sanction, since it seeks to maintain free from blood and from injustice the home which he has given to the peaceful."

"It is painful, very painful, to think so; yet so it must be, if you have said it. God prosper you in your cause, Robert, and his eye be upon you!"

He could only reply by earnestly pressing his lips upon her cold forehead, as with painful eyes he watched her progress to her chamber, supported by the arms of his lovely cousin.

CHAPTER XIII.

"I may not listen now. How should we hear
The song of birds, when, in the stormy sky,
Rolls the rude thunder?"

THE ladies had retired, but it was not easy for Singleton and his uncle to resume the topic which had previously engaged them. There was a visible damp upon their spirits—the elastic nephew, the hesitating colonel, the rough, honest, and direct Humphries, all felt the passionate force of Emily's exhortation, though its argument necessarily failed upon them. There had been quite too much that was awing in her speech and manner—as if death were speaking through the lips of life. Their thoughts had been elevated by her language to a theme infinitely beyond the hourly and the earthly. The high-souled emphasis with which she had insisted upon the integrity of human life, as essential to the due preparation for the future immortality, had touched the sensibility of those whose vocation was at hostility with the doctrine which she taught; and though, from the very nature of things, they could not obey her exhortations, they yet could not fail to meditate upon, and to feel them. Thus impressed, silent and unobserving, it was a relief to all, when Major Singleton reminded Humphries of the promise which he had presumed to make him, touching the old Madeira in his uncle's garret. He briefly told the latter of the circumstance alluded to,

and the prompt orders of Colonel Walton soon brought the excellence of his wines to the impartial test to which Humphries proposed to subject them. The lieutenant smacked his lips satisfactorily. It was not often that his fortune had indulged him with such a beverage. Corn whiskey, at best, had been his liquor in the swamps; and, even in his father's tavern, the tastes were not sufficiently high, of those who patronised that establishment, to call for other than the cheapest qualities. A brief dialogue about the favourite wines—a sly reference on the part of Singleton, to the drinking capacities of his British guests, and a hypocritical sort of condolence upon the privations to which his uncle must be subjected, in consequence of the proclamation, soon brought the latter back to the legitimate topic.

"But what news, Robert, do you bring us? What of the continentals—is it true that we are to have an army from Virginia, or is it mere rumour?—a thing to give us hope, only the more completely to depress and mortify? Speak out, man, and none of your inuendoes —you know, well enough, that I am with you, body and soul."

"I believe you will be, uncle, but you certainly are not yet. With the hope, however, to make you so more completely, I will give you news that shall cheer you up, if you have the heart to hope for a favourable change of things. It is no mere rumour, sir, touching the northern army. Congress has remembered us at last, and the continentals are actually under way, and by this time must be on the borders of North Carolina."

"Indeed! that is well," cried the colonel, chuckling, and rubbing his hands—"this is good news, indeed, my nephew, and may help us somewhat out of our difficulties."

"Not so, Colonel Walton, if it please you. It will help you out of no difficulties, if you are not willing to lend a hand for that purpose. Congress

cannot afford an army—it can only give us the nucleus for one; some fifteen hundred men at the utmost, and but half of these continentals. We have the Delaware and Maryland lines—brave troops, indeed—among the very bravest that Washington commands—but few, too few for our purposes, unless we ourselves turn out."

"Who commands them, Robert?"

"De Kalb on the march; but, if we need men, and if our arms are few, the name of our commander is a host for us. The conqueror of Burgoyne at Saratoga has been ordered from Virginia to lead them."

"What, Gates! that is brave news, truly—brave news—and we shall do well to wish them success in another glass of Madeira. Come, Mr. Humphries—come, sir—you see Proctor has left us some of the genuine stuff yet—enough for friends, at least."

"Ay, sir," said Humphries, drinking, "and this news of the continentals promises that we have enough also for our enemies."

"Bravo! I hope so; I think so. Nephew, drink, drink—and say, what has been the effect of this intelligence upon the people? How has it wrought upon the Santee?"

"Everywhere well, uncle, and as it should, unless it be immediately in your neighbourhood, where you breathe by sufferance only. Everywhere well, sir. The people are roused, inspirited, full of hope and animation. The country is alive with a new sentiment. Nor is its influence confined only to the hopes of friends; it has had its effect upon the fears of enemies. Rawdon already feels it, and has drawn in all his outposts. He keeps now those of Ninety Six, Camden, and Augusta only. He is concentrating his force against the coming of Gates, whose first blow must be against his lordship. This concentration has given opportunity to our people, and opportunity gives them courage. The Santee and the Peedee countries are full of whigs, only wanting imbodiment to prove

effective. Colonel Sumter has returned from North Carolina, with a growing troop which threatens Ninety Six itself."

"And Marion?"

"Ay, Marion—from him I bring you better news yet, when I tell you that I left him on Britton's Neck, where we stood upon the bodies of half of Gainey's tories, whom we had just defeated with bloody slaughter. Gainey himself wounded, and his troop for the time dispersed."

"Better and better, Robert; and I rejoice me that you had a hand in the business. But what, in all this time, of that sanguinary rider, Tarleton? What keeps him quiet—what is he doing? Surely, with a taste like his, the very knowledge of these risings should be grateful."

"Doubtless they will be, when he gets wind of them; but he is now with the cavalry of the legion, somewhere in the neighbourhood of Rocky Mount, where Sumter is said to be looking after him. Thus, you see, we are all engaged or preparing—all but you, of the parishes. You either hug the knees of your invaders, or sleep on, to avoid the sense of shame: all but your Washington, who, I am told, still contrives to keep his horse together, though sadly cut up while under White and Baylor."

"True, true,—our people here are but too much disposed to submission. They have given up in despair long since."

"I reckon that's a small mistake, colonel—I beg pardon, sir, but I rather think it's not exactly as you say. I don't think our people any more willing to submit, than the people on Black River and Pedee, but it's all because we han't got leaders; that's the reason, colonel. I know of my own knowledge there's any number will turn out, if you'll only crook a finger, and show 'em the track, but it's not reasonable to expect poor men, who have never ruled before, to take the lead of great people in time of danger."

Humphries spoke up, and spoke justly for the hon-

our of his neighbours. Singleton continued, when his lieutenant concluded—

"He speaks truly, Colonel Walton, as I can testify. What if I tell you that your people—here, under your own eye—are not only ready to take up arms, but that many of them are in arms—more, sir—that they have already done service in your own neighbourhood, and are ready to do more—that a promising squad, under my command, now lies on the Stonoe-savannah and that, in a few days, I hope to join Colonel Marion with a troop of fifty men gathered from among your own parishioners! These are the people who are so willing to submit, according to your account; pray you, uncle, never write their history."

"Robert, you surprise me."

"Pleasantly, I hope, mine uncle—it is the truth. The whole was planned by Colonel Marion, from whom I have this duty in charge. Disguised, he has been through your parish. Disguised, he sat at your board, in the character of a tory commissary, and your scornful treatment persuaded him to hope that you might be brought into action. Are you staggered now?"

The colonel was dumb when he heard this narrative; and Major Singleton then proceeded to give a brief account of the little events of recent occurrence in the neighbourhood, as we have already narrated them, subsequently to his assumption of command in the Cypress Swamp. The story, though it gave him pleasure, was a sad rebuke to Colonel Walton's patriotism. He scarcely heard him to the end.

"Now, Heaven help me, Robert, but I take shame to myself, that you, almost a stranger upon the Ashley, should have thus taken the lead out of my own hand, as I may say, and among my own people."

"It is not too late, uncle, to amend the error. You may yet help greatly to finish what has been tolerably well begun."

"No—it is not too late. I can do much with Dorchester and Goose Creek. I have influence throughout

St. Paul's, and great part of St George's. Cane Acre will come out, to a man."

Rapidly moving to and fro along the apartment, Colonel Walton enumerated to himself, in under tones, the various sections of country in his knowledge which he thought might be moved at his instigation. His nephew did not suffer the mood of his uncle to relax.

"Now is the time, uncle—now is the time, if ever. Your name will do every thing in this quarter; and you may conjecture for yourself, what the shame must be, if others achieve the work which you touched not. You have now a glorious opportunity at this season. Tarleton, whom they so much dread, being absent, Wemyss in another direction, and your garrison so weak at Dorchester that they cannot easily spare a detachment. Besides, the approach of Gates promises sufficient employ to all the force which Rawdon and Cornwallis can bring up."

"The thing looks well," said Walton, musingly.

"Never better, if the heart be firm. Now is the time if ever—beat up recruits—sound, stimulate your neighbours, and dash up with as smart a force as you can possibly muster to join with the army from Virginia. They will receive you joyfully, and your corps must increase with every mile in your progress."

"Would I were on the way; but the beginning is yet to be made, and on what plea shall I seek to persuade others, without authority, and known as one having taken a protection?"

"That latter difficulty is cured by the assumption of a new character. Destroy the one accursed instrument, and, in its place, I am proud to hand you a badge of honour and of confidence. Look on this paper and peruse this letter. The one is from his excellency, Governor Rutledge—the other from Colonel Marion. Read—read!"

Walton unfolded the envelope, and the commission of Governor Rutledge as colonel of state militia met his eye: the letter from Colonel Marion was an invita-

tion to the service—a brief, manly, modest letter; such as could only come from Marion—so calm, so unassuming, yet so conclusive in its exhortations.

"You see, uncle," said the major, when he saw that the other had concluded the perusal of the documents—"you see, I come not unprovided. Both Rutledge and Marion hold your name of sufficient importance to our cause to desire its influence; and they would have you, on any terms, emancipate yourself from the villanous bondage—for it is no less—into which you have fallen. Here, now, you have an opportunity, by an honourable, and, let me add, an atoning transaction, of returning to the service of your country. Do not let it pass you. Let me not think, my dear uncle, that my word, pledged for you to Marion, when I undertook and craved this commission, was pledged in vain, and is now forfeited."

This warm appeal of Singleton, in the utterance of which he had discarded all that asperity which had kept pace with much of his share in the previous dialogue, was soothing to his uncle's spirit. He was moved; and slowly again, though unconsciously, he read over the letter of Marion. So high a compliment from the gallant partisan was flattering in the extreme; and the trust of Governor Rutledge, under his late smitings of conscience, was healing and grateful. For a few moments he spoke not; but at length approaching his nephew, he seized his hand, and at once avowed the pleasure it gave him, to avail himself of the privileges which the commission conferred upon him.

"I will be no longer wanting to my country, Robert. I will do my duty. This paper gives me power to enrol men, to form troops, and to act against the enemy, and find my sanction in the commission of the executive. I will do so. I will pause no longer, and, spite of the sacrifice, will act as it requires."

The countenance of Major Singleton, and that of Humphries, no less, glowed with an honest pleasure, as the former replied—

"Spoken as it should be, Colonel Walton—spoken as it should be. The decision comes late, but not too late. It is redeeming, and God grant that it be as prosperous to all as it is surely proper and praiseworthy."

"So I believe it, or I would not now adopt it: but, Robert, know you not that such a decision makes me a beggar? Sequestration—"

"Now, out upon it, uncle! why will you still ballast your good works with a weight which shall for ever keep them from heaven's sight? You are no niggard—you live profusely—care not for money: wherefore this reference to wealth in comparison with honour and honourable duty?"

"The wealth is nothing, Robert; but I have a strange love for these old groves—this family mansion, descended to me like a sacred trust through so many hands and ancestors. I would not that they should be lost."

The youth looked sternly at the speaker for a few moments in silence, but the fierce emotion at length found its way to his lips in tones of like indignation with that which sparkled from his eyes.

"Now, by heaven, uncle, had I known of this—had I dreamed that thou hadst weighed, for an instant, the fine sense of honour in the scales against thy love of this thy dwelling-place—my own hand should have applied the torch to its shingles. Dearly as I have loved this old mansion, I myself would have freely kindled the flame which should have burned it to the ground. I would have watched the fire as it swept through these old trees, scathing and scattering the branches under which I had a thousand times played—I would have beheld their ruin with a pleasurable emotion; and as they fell successively to the earth which they once sheltered, I would have shouted in triumph, that I saved you from the dishonourable bargain which you have made for their protection so long."

"But Kate—Kate, Robert; my sweet child—my only child!"

It was all the father said, but it was enough, if not to convince, at least to silence, the indignant speaker. Her good was, indeed, a consideration; and when Singleton reflected upon the tender care which had kept her from privation and sorrow all her life hitherto, he could not help feeling how natural was such a consideration to the mind of such a father.

But the emotion had subsided—the more visible portions of it, at least; and Colonel Walton, his nephew and Humphries, engaged in various conversation, chiefly devoted to the labours that lay before them. Having gained his object, however, Major Singleton was in no mood to remain much longer. His duties were various; his little squad required his attention, as he well knew how little subordination could be had from raw militiamen, unless in the continued and controlling presence of their commander. The hour was growing late, and some portion of his time was due to his sister and the ladies, who awaited his coming in the snug back or family parlour, into which none but the select few ever found admission.

Leaving Humphries in the charge of Colonel Walton, our hero approached the quiet sanctuary with peculiar emotions. There was a soft melancholy pervading the little circle. The moral influence of such a condition as that of Emily Singleton was touchingly felt by all around her. The high-spirited, the proud Katharine Walton grew meek and humble, when she gazed upon the sufferer, dying by a protracted and a painful death, in the midst of youth, rich in beauty, and with a superiority of mind which might well awaken admiration in the other, and envy in her own sex. Yet she was dying with the mind alive, but unexercised; a heart warm with a true affection, yet utterly unappropriated; sensibilities touching and charming, which had only lived, that memory might mourn the more over those sweets of character so well known to enjoyment, yet so little enjoying. It was a thought to make the proud heart humble; and Kate looked upon her cousin with tearful eyes. She sat

at her feet, saying no word, while the brother of the dying girl, taking a place beside her, lifted her head upon his bosom, where she seemed pleased that it should lie, while he pressed his lips fondly and frequently to her forehead. In murmured tones, unheard by the rest, she carried on with him a little dialogue, half playful, half tender, in which she pressed him on the subject of his love for her cousin. The mention of Kate's name, a little louder than she usually spoke, called for the latter's attention, who looked up, and a suffusion of her cheek seemed to show a something of consciousness in her mind of what had been the subject between them. The eye of Emily caught the glance, and a smile of archness played over her lips for an instant, but soon made way for that earnest and settled melancholy of look which was now its habitual expression. They continued to converse together, the others only now and then mingling in the dialogue, on those various little matters belonging to her old home and its associates, which a young and gentle nature like hers would be apt to remember. Sometimes, so feeble was her utterance that Robert was compelled to place his ear to her lips the better to take in what she said. It was at one of these moments that a severe clap of thunder recalled the major to a sense of his duties. The sudden concussion startled the nervous maiden, and Kate came to her assistance, so that his hand was brought once more in contact with that of the woman he loved, in the performance of an office almost too sacredly stern to permit of the show of that other emotion which he yet felt—how strangely!—in his bosom. The blood tingled and glowed in his veins, and she, too—she withdrew her fingers the moment her service could well be dispensed with. Another roll of the thunder, and a message from Humphries warned him of the necessity of tearing himself from a scene only too painfully fascinating. He took an affectionate leave of his aunt, and pressing the lips of his sister fondly, her last words to him were comprised in a whisper—

"Spare life—save life, Robert: God bless you! and come back to me soon."

Kate encountered him in the passage-way. Her look was something troubled, and her visible emotion might have been grateful to the vanity of our hero, did he not see how unusually covered with gloom were the features of her face.

"Dear Kate—sweet cousin—I must leave you now."

"I know it, Robert—I know more: you have persuaded my father to break his protection."

"I have done my best towards it, Kate; but if he has resolved, the impulse was as much his own as from me. He could not well have avoided it in the end, situated as he was."

"Perhaps not, Robert; still, your persuasions have been the most immediately urgent; and though I dread the result, I cannot well blame you for what you have done. I now wish to know from you, what are the chances in favour of his successful action. I would at least console myself by their recapitulation when he is absent, and perhaps in danger."

Major Singleton gave a promising account of the prospects before them; such, indeed, as they appeared at that time to the sanguine Americans, and needing but little exaggeration. She seemed satisfied, and he then proceeded to entreat her upon a subject purely selfish.

"Speak not now—not now on such a matter. Have we not enough, Robert, to trouble us? Danger and death, grief and many apprehensions hang over us, and will not suffer such idle thoughts," was the reply.

"These are no idle thoughts, Kate, since they belong so closely to our happiness. Say to me, then, only say that you love me."

"I love you, indeed—to be sure I do, as a cousin and as a friend; but really you ask too much when you crave for more. I have no time, no feeling, for love in these moments."

"Nay, be serious, Kate, and say. We know not

how soon our situation may change. I am hourly exposed in a hazardous service—I may perish; and I would, before such an event, be secure in the hope that I may look to you for that love which would make me happy when living, or—"

She stopped him with a cool, sarcastic speech, concluding the sentence for him in a manner most annoying—

"Drop a tear for me when I am dead."

She saw that he looked displeased, and immediately after, with an art peculiarly her own, she diverted his anger.

"Nay, dear cousin, forgive me; but you looked the conclusion, and so pathetically, I thought it not improbable that its utterance would find you speechless. Be not so tragic, I pray you; I am serious enough as it is—soberly serious, not tragically so. Be reasonable for a while, and reflect that these very vicissitudes of your present mode of life, should discourage you from pressing this matter. I do not know whether I love you or not, except as a relation. It requires time to make up one's mind on the subject, and trust me I shall think of it in season. But, just now, I cannot—and hear me, Robert, firmly and honestly I tell you, while these difficulties last, while my father's life is in danger, and while your sister lies in my arms helpless and dying, I not only cannot, but will not, answer you. Forbear the subject, then, I pray you, for a better season; and remember, when I speak to you thus, I speak to you as a woman, with some pretensions to good sense, who will try to think upon her affections as calmly as upon the most simple and domestic necessity of her life. Be satisfied then that you will have justice."

Another summons from Humphries below, and a sudden rush of wind along the casement, warned him of the necessity of concluding the interview. He had barely time to press her hand to his lips when she hurried him down to her father. A few brief words at

parting, a solemn renewal of their pledges, and, in a few moments, the two partisans were on horse, speeding down the long avenue on the way to their encampment.

CHAPTER XIV.

"'Tis a wild night, yet there are those abroad,
The storm offends not. 'Tis but oppression hides,
While fear, the scourge of conscience, lifts a whip,
Beyond his best capacity to fly."

THE evening, which had been beautiful before, had undergone a change. The moon was obscured, and gigantic shadows, dense and winged, hurried with deep-toned cries along the heavens, as if in angry pursuit. Occasionally, in sudden gusts, the winds moaned heavily among the pines; a cooling freshness impregnated the atmosphere, and repeated flashes of sharpest lightning imparted to the prospect a splendour which illuminated, while increasing the perils of that path which our adventurers were now pursuing. Large drops, at moments, fell from the driving clouds, and every thing promised the coming on of one of those sudden and severe thunder-storms, so common to the early summer of the South.

Singleton looked up anxiously at the wild confusion of sky and forest around him. The woods seemed to apprehend the danger, and the melancholy sighing of their branches appeared to indicate an instinct consciousness, which had its moral likeness to the feeling in the bosom of the observer. How many of these mighty pines were to be prostrated under that approaching tempest! how many beautiful vines, which had clung to them like affections that only desire an object to fasten upon, would share in their ruin! How could Singleton overlook the analogy between the for-

tune of his family and friends, and that which his imagination depicted as the probable fortune of the forest?

"We shall have it before long, Humphries, for you see the black horns yonder in the break before us. I begin to feel the warm breath of the hurricane already, and we must look out for some smaller woods. I like not these high pines in a storm like this, so use your memory, man, and lead on to some less likely to attract the lightning. Ha!—we must speed—we have lingered too long. Why did you not hurry me? you should have known how difficult it was for me to hurry myself in such a situation."

This was spoken by Singleton at moments when the gusts permitted him to be heard, and when the irregular route suffered his companion to keep beside him. The lieutenant answered promptly—

"That was the very reason why I did not wish to hurry you, major. I knew you hadn't seen your folks for a mighty long spell, and so I couldn't find it in my heart to break in upon you, though I felt dubious that the storm would be soon upon us."

"A bad reason for a soldier. Friends and family are scarcely desirable at such a time as this, since we can seldom see them, or only see their suffering. Ha!—that was sharp!"

"Yes, sir, but at some distance. We are among the stunted oaks now, which are rather squat, and not so likely to give as the pines. There aint so much of 'em, you see. Keep a look out, sir, or the branches will pull you from your horse. The road here is pretty much overgrown, and the vines crowd thick upon it."

"A word in season," exclaimed Singleton, as he drew back before an overhanging branch which had been bent by the wind, and was thrust entirely across his path. A few moments were spent in rounding the obstruction, and the storm grew heavier; the winds no longer laboured among the trees, but rushed along with a force which flattened their elastic tops, so that it

either swept clear through them, or laid them prostrate for ever. A stronger hold, a positive straining in their effort, became necessary now, with both riders, in order to secure themselves firmly in their saddles; while their horses, with uplifted ears, and an occasional snort, in this manner, not less than by a shiver of their whole frames, betrayed their own apprehensions, and, as it were, appealed to their masters for protection.

"The dumb beast knows where to look, after all, major: he knows that man is most able, you see, to take care of him, though man wants his keeper too. But the beast don't know that. He's like the good soldier that minds his own captain, and looks to him only, though the captain himself has a general from whom he gets his orders. Now, say what you will, major, there's reason in the horse—the good horse, I mean, for some horses that I've straddled in my time have shown themselves mighty foolish and unreasonable."

Humphries stroked the neck of his steed fondly, and coaxed him by an affectionate word, as he uttered himself thus generally, though perhaps with little philosophy. He seemed desirous of assuring the steed that he held him of the better class, and favoured him accordingly. Singleton assented to the notion of his companion, who did not, however, see the smile which accompanied his answer.

"Yes, yes, Humphries, the horse knows his master, and is the least able or willing of all animals to do without him. I would we had ours in safety now: I would these five miles were well over."

"It's a tough ride; but that's so much the better, major—the less apt we are to be troubled with the tories."

"I should rather plunge through a crowd of them, now, in a charge against superior cavalry, than take it in such a night as this, when the wind lifts you, at every bound, half out of your saddle, and, but for the lightning, which comes quite too nigh to be at all times pleasant, your face would make momentary acquaint-

ance with boughs and branches, vines and thorns, that give no notice and leave their mark at every brush. A charge were far less difficult."

"Almost as safe, sir, that's certain, and not more unpleasant. But let us hold up, Major, for a while, and push for the thicket. We shall now have the worst of the hurricane. See the edge of it yonder—how black! and now—only hear the roaring!"

"Yes, it comes. I feel it on my cheek. It sends a breath like fire before it, sultry and thick, as if it had been sweeping all day over beds of the hottest sand. Lead the way, Humphries."

"Here, sir,—follow close and quick. There's a clump of forest, with nothing but small trees, lying to the left—now, sir, that flash will show it to you—there we can be snug till the storm passes over. It has a long body and it shakes it mightily, but it goes too fast to stay long in its journey, and a few minutes, sir—a few minutes is all we want. Mind the vine there, sir; and there, to your left, is a gully, where an old tree's roots have come up. Now, major, the sooner we dismount and squat with our horses the better."

They had now reached the spot to which Humphries had pointed—a thick undergrowth of small timber—of pine, the stunted oak, black-jack, and hickory—few of sufficient size to feel the force of the tempest, or prove very conspicuous conductors of the lightning. Obeying the suggestion and following the example of his companion, Singleton dismounted, and the two placed themselves and their horses as much upon the sheltered side of the clump as possible, yet sufficiently far to escape any danger from its overthrow. Here they awaited the coming of the tempest. The experienced woodman alone could have spoken for its approach. A moment's pause had intervened, when the suddenly aroused elements seemed as suddenly to have sunk into grim repose. A slight sighing of the wind only, as it wound sluggishly along the distant wood, had its warning, and the dense blackness of the imbodied storm was only evident at moments

when the occasional rush of the lightning made visible its gloomy terrors.

"It's making ready for a charge, major: it's just like a good captain, sir, that calls in his scouts and sentries, and orders all things to keep quiet, and without beat of drum gets all fixed to spring out from the bush upon them that's coming. It won't be long now, sir, before we get it; but just now it's still as the grave. It's waiting for its outriders—them long streaky white clouds it sent out an hour ago, like so many scouts. They're a-coming up now, and when they all get up together—then look out for the squall. Quiet, now, Mossfoot—quiet now, creature—don't be frightened—it's not a-going to hurt you, nag—not a bit."

Humphries patted his favourite while speaking, and strove to sooth and quiet the impatience which both horses exhibited. This was in that strange pause of the storm which is its most remarkable feature in the South—that singular interregnum of the winds, when, after giving repeated notice of their most terrific action, they seem almost to forget their purpose, and for a few moments appear to slumber in their inactivity. Butthe pause was only momentary, and was now at an end. In another instant, they heard the rush and the roar, as of a thousand wild steeds of the desert ploughing the sands; then followed the mournful howling of the trees—the shrieking of the lashed winds, as if, under the influence of some fierce demon who enjoyed his triumph, they plunged through the forest, wailing at their own destructive progress, yet compelled unswervingly to hurry forward. They twisted the pine from its place, snapping it as a reed, while its heavy fall to the ground which it had so long sheltered, called up, even amid the roar of the tempest, a thousand echoes from the forest. The branches of the wood were prostrated like so much heather, wrested and swept from the tree which yielded them without a struggle to the blast; and the crouching horses and riders below were in an instant covered with a cloud of fragments. These were the precursors

merely: then came the arrowy flight and form of the hurricane itself—its actual bulk—its imbodied power, pressing along through the forest in a gyratory progress, not fifty yards wide, never distending in width, yet capriciously winding from right to left and left to right, in a zigzag direction, as if a playful spirit thus strove to mix with all the terrors of destruction the sportive mood of the most idle fancy. In this progress, the whole wood in its path underwent prostration—the thick, proud pine, the deep-rooted and unbending oak, the small cedar and the pliant shrub, torn, dismembered of their fine proportions; some, only by a timely yielding to the pressure, passed over with little injury, as if too much scorned by the assailant for assault. The larger trees in the neighbourhood of the spot where our partisans had taken shelter, shared the harsher fortune generally, for they were in the very track of the tempest. Too sturdy and massive to yield, they withheld their homage, and were either snapped off relentlessly and short, or were torn and twisted up from their very roots. The poor horses, with eyes staring in the direction of the storm, with ears erect, and manes flying in the wind, stood trembling in every joint, too much terrified, or too conscious of their helplessness, to attempt to fly. All around the crouching party, the woods seemed for several seconds absolutely flattened. Huge trees were prostrated, and their branches were clustering thickly, and almost forming a prison around them; leaving it doubtful, as the huge body rolled over their heads, whether they could ever make their escape from the enclosure. Rush after rush of the trooping winds went over them, keeping them immoveable in their crowded shelter and position—each succeeding troop wilder and weightier than the last, until at length a sullen, bellowing murmur, which before they had not heard, announced the greater weight of the hurricane to be overthrowing the forests in the distance. The chief danger had overblown. Gradually the warm, oppressive breath passed off; the air again grew suddenly cool, and a gush of heavy drops came falling

from the heavens, as if they too had been just released from the intolerable pressure which had burdened earth. Moaning pitifully, the prostrated trees and shrubs, those which had survived the storm, though shorn by its embraces, gradually, and seemingly with painful effort, once more elevated themselves to their old position. Their sighings, as they did so, were almost human to the ears of our crouching warriors, whom their movement in part released. Far and near, the moaning of the forest around them was strangely, but not unpleasantly, heightened in its effect upon their senses, by the distant and decaying roar of the past and far travelling hurricane, as, ploughing the deep woods and laying waste all in its progress, it rushed on to a meeting with the kindred storms that gather about the gloomy god of Cape Hatteras, and stir and foam along his waters of the Atlantic.

"Well, I'm glad it's no worse, major," cried Humphries, rising and shaking himself from the brush with which he was covered.

"The danger is now over, though it was mighty close to our haunches. Look, now, at this pine, split all to shivers, and the top not five feet from Mossfoot's quarters. The poor beast would ha' been in a sad fix a little to the left there."

Extricating themselves, they helped their steeds out of the brush, though with some difficulty—soothing them all the while with words of encouragement. As Humphries had already remarked in his rude fashion, the horse, at such moments, feels and acknowledges his dependence upon man, looks to him for the bridle, and flies to him for protection. They were almost passive in the hands of their masters, and under the unsubsided fear would have followed them, like tame dogs, in any direction.

The storm, though diminished of its terrors, still continued; but this did not discourage the troopers. They were soon mounted, and once more upon their way. The darkness, in part, had been dissipated by the hurricane. It had swept on to other regions,

leaving behind it only detached masses of wind and rain-clouds sluggishly hanging, or fitfully flying along the sky. These, though still sufficient to defeat the light of the moon, could not altogether prevent a straggling ray which peeped out timidly at pauses in the storm; and which, though it could not illumine, still contrived to diminish somewhat the gloomy and forbidding character of the scene. Such gleams in the natural, are like the assurances of hope in the moral world—they speak of to-morrow—they promise us that the clouds must pass away—they cheer, when there is little left to charm.

The path over which the partisans journeyed had been little used, and was greatly overgrown. They could move but slowly, therefore, in the imperfect light; and, but for the frequent flashes of lightning, it might have been doubtful, though Humphries knew the country, whether they could have found their way. But the same agent which gave them light, had nearly destroyed them. While Humphries, descending from his steed, which he led by the bridle, was looking about for a by-path that he expected to find in the neighbourhood, a sudden stroke of the lightning, and the overwhelming blaze which seemed to kindle all around them, and remained for several seconds stationary, drove back the now doubly terrified steeds, and almost blinded their riders. That of Singleton sunk upon his haunches, while Mossfoot, in her terror, dragged Humphries, who still grasped firmly his bridle, to some little distance in the woods. Sudden blackness succeeded, save in one spot, where a tree had been smitten by the fluid, and was now blazing along the oozy gum at its sides. The line of fire was drawn along the tree, up and down—a bright flame, that showed them more of the track they were pursuing than they had seen before. In the first moment following the cessation of the fiercer blaze made by the lightning, and when the tree first began to extend a certain light, Singleton thought he saw through the copse the outline of a human form, on foot, moving quickly

along the road above him. He called quickly to Humphries, but the lieutenant was busy with his steed, and did not seem to hear. Again was the object visible, and Singleton then cried out—

"Who goes there?—ho!"

No answer; and the fugitive only seemed to increase his speed, turning aside to the denser woods, as if he strove to elude observation. The challenge was repeated.

"What, ho! there—who goes? Speak, or I shoot."

He detached one of his pistols from the holster as he spoke, and cocked it to be in readiness. Still no answer, the person addressed moving more quickly than ever. With the sight, with an instinct like lightning, the partisan put spurs to his steed, and drove fearlessly through the bush in pursuit. The fugitive now took fairly to his heels, leaping over a fallen tree, fully in sight of his pursuer. In a moment after, the steed went after him—Humphries, by this time in saddle, closely following on the heels of his commander. For a moment the object was lost to sight, but in the next he appeared again.

"Stand!" was the cry, and with it the shot. The ball rushed into the bush, which seemed to shelter the flying man, and where they had last seen him—they bounded to the spot, but nothing was to be seen.

"He was here—you saw him, Humphries, did you not?"

"A bit of him, major—a small chance of him behind the bush, but too little a mark for them pistols."

"He is there—there!" and catching another glimpse of the fugitive, Singleton led the pursuit, again firing as he flew, and, without pausing to wait the result, leaping down to the spot where he appeared to them. The pursuit was equally fruitless with the aim. The place was bare. They had plunged into a hollow, and found themselves in a sort of ditch, almost knee deep in water. They looked about vainly, Humphries leading the search with unusual earnestness.

"I like not, major, that the fellow should escape.

Why should he stand a shot, rather than refuse to halt, and answer to a civil question? I'm dubious, major, there's something wrong in it; and he came from the direction leading to our camp."

"Ha! are you sure of that, Humphries?—think you so?"

"Ay, sir—the pine that was struck marks the by-path through which I should have carried you in daylight. It is the shortest, though the worst; and he could not have been far from it when you started him. Ah! I have it now. A mile from this is the house of old Mother Blonay, the dam of that fellow Goggle. We will ride there, major, if you say so."

"With what object, Humphries? what has she to do with it?"

"I suspect the fugitive to be Goggle, the chap I warned you not to take into the troop. Better we had hung him up, for he's not one to depend upon. All his blood's bad: his father—him they call so, at least—was a horse-thief; and some say, that he has a cross in his blood. As for that, it's clear to me, that Goggle is a half-breed Indian, or mestizo, or something. Anybody that looks on Goggle will say so; and then the nature of the beast is so like an Indian—why, sir, he's got no more feeling than a pine stump."

"And with what motive would you ride to his mother's?"

"Why, sir, if this skulking chap be Goggle, he's either been there, or is on his way there; and if so, be sure he's after mischief. Proctor or Huck at the garrison will soon have him among them, and he'll get his pay in English guineas for desertion. Now, sir, it's easy to see if he's been there, for I s'pose the old hag don't mind to tell us."

"Lead on! A mile, you say?"

"A short mile; and if he's not been there yet, he must be about somewhere, and we may get something out of the old woman, who passes for a witch about here, and tells fortunes, and can show you where to find stolen cattle; and they do say, major, though I

never believed it—they do say," and the tones of his voice fell as he spoke—"they do say she can put the bad mouth upon people; and there's not a few that lay all their aches and complaints to her door."

"Indeed!" was the reply of Singleton; "indeed! that is a sight worth seeing; and so let us ride, Humphries, and get out of this swamp thicket with all possible speed."

"A long leap, major, will be sure to do it. But better we move slowly. I don't want to lose our chance at this rascal for something; and who knows but we may catch him there. He's a great skunk, now, major, that same Goggle; and though hanging's much too good for him, yet, them pistols would have pleased me better had they lodged the ball more closely."

CHAPTER XV.

"A hag that hell has work for—a born slave
To an o'ercoming evil—venomous, vile,
Snake-like, that hugs the bush and bites the heel."

The troopers had not been well gone, before the fugitive they had so vainly pursued stood upon the very spot which they had left. He rose from the mire of the creek, in which he had not paused to imbed himself when the search was hottest and close upon him. The conjecture of Humphries was correct, and Goggle or Blonay was the person they had chased. He had left his post in the bivouac when the storm came on, and was then upon his way to his mother's cabin. From that spot his farther course was to the British garrison with his intelligence. His determination in this respect, however, underwent a change, as we shall see in the progress of the narrative.

Never had better knowledge of character been

shown than in the estimate made by Humphries of that of the deserter. Goggle was as warped in morals as he was blear in vision; a wretch aptly fitted for the horse-thief, the tory, and murderer. His objects were evil generally, and he had no scruples as to the means by which to secure them. Equally indifferent to him what commandment he violated in these practices; for, with little regard from society, he had no sympathy with it, and only obeyed its laws as he feared and would avoid their penalties He hated society accordingly as he was compelled to fear it. He looked upon it as a victim to be destroyed with the opportunity, as a spoil to be appropriated with the desire for its attainment; and the moods of such a nature were impatient for exercise, even upon occasions when he could hope no addition to his pleasure or his profit from their indulgence.

Squat in the ooze and water of the creek, while the horse of Singleton at one moment almost stood over him, he had drawn breath with difficulty through the leaves of a bush growing upon the edge of the ditch in which his head had found concealment; and in this perilous situation his savage spirit actually prompted him to thrust his knife into the belly of the animal. He had drawn it for this purpose from his belt, while his hands and body were under water. Its point was already turned upward when Singleton moved away from the dangerous proximity. Here he listened to the dialogue which the two carried on concerning him; and, even in that predicament of dirt and danger in which he lay, his mind brooded over a thousand modes by which he should enjoy his malignant appetite, that craved for revenge upon them both. When they were fairly gone, he rose from the mire and ascended cautiously to the bank; shook himself like a water-dog, while he almost shivered in the saturated garments which he wore; then rubbed and grumbled over the rifle which he had taken with him into the mire, and which came out as full of its ooze and water as himself.

"So ho!" said he, as he shook himself free from the mud—"So ho! they are gone to old Moll's to look after me, eh! Now would I like to put this bullet into that Dorchester skunk, Humphries, d—n him. I am of bad blood, am I!—my father a horse-thief and a mulatto, and I only fit for hanging! The words must be paid for; and Moll must answer for some of them. She is my mother, that's clear—she shall tell me this night who my father is; for, Blonay, or Goggle, or the devil, I will know. She shall put me off no longer. No! though she tells me the worst—though she tells me that I am the spawn of Jack Drayton's driver, as once before I've heard it."

Thus muttering, he looked to his flint and inspected the priming of his rifle. With much chagrin he found the powder saturated with water, and the charge useless. He searched his pockets, but his flask was gone. He had purposed the murder of Humphries or Singleton had this not been the case. He now without hesitation took the track after them, and it was not long before he came in sight of the miserable clay and log hovel in which his mother, odious and dreaded as she was, passed fitly her existence. This spot was dreary in the extreme: a few cheerless pines rose around it, and the thick fennel waved its equally bald, though more crowded forms in uncurbed vegetation among them. The hovel stood in a hollow, considerably below the surrounding level, and the little glimmer of light piercing from between the logs only made its location seem more cheerless to the observer.

Blonay—or, as we shall hereafter call him, according to the fashion of the country, Goggle—cautiously approached a jungle, in which he hid himself, about a stone's throw from the hovel. There he watched, as well as he might, in the imperfect light of the evening, for the appearance of the troopers. Though mounted, they had not yet succeeded in reaching the spot, which, familiar to him from childhood, he well knew to find in the darkest night, and by a route the most direct. He was there before them, snug in his cover, and coolly

looking out for their coming. More than once he threw up the pan of his rifle, carefully keeping it from its usual click by the intervention of his finger, and cursed within himself his ill fortune, as he found the powder, saturated with water, a soft paste beneath his touch. He thrust his hand into his pocket, seeking there for some straggling grains, of which in the emergency he might avail himself; but he looked fruitlessly, and was compelled to forego the hope of a shot, so much desired, at one or other of the persons now emerging from the wood before him.

The barking of a cur warned the indweller of visiters, but without offering any obstacle to their advance. Humphries proceeded first, and motioning his companion to keep his saddle, fastened his horse to a bough, and treading lightly, looked through the crevices of the logs, upon the old crone within. Though in June, a warm season at all times in Carolina, the old woman partook too much of the habits of the very low in that region to be without a fire; and with the taste of the negro, she was now bending over a huge light wood blaze, with a pipe of rude structure and no small dimensions in her mouth, from which the occasional puff went forth, filling the apartment with the unpleasant effluvia of the vilest leaf-tobacco; while her body and head swung ever to and fro, with a regular seesaw motion, that seemed an habitual exercise. Her thin, shrivelled, and darkly yellow features, were hag-like and discouraging. The skin was tightly drawn across the face, and the high cheek-bones, and the nose, seemed disposed to break through the slender restraints of their covering. Her eyes were small and sunken, of a light gray, and had a lively twinkle, that did not accord with the wretched and decayed aspect of her other features. Her forehead was small, and clustered with grisly hair of mixed white and black, disordered and unbound, but still short, and with the appearance of having but lately undergone clipping at the extremities. These features, stern in themselves, were greatly heightened in their general expression

by the severe mouth and sharp chin below them. The upper lip was flat, undeveloped entirely, while the lower was thrust forth in a thick curl, and, closely rising and clinging to the other, somewhat lifted her glance into a sort of insolent authority, which, sometimes accompanying aroused feeling, or an elevated mood of mind, might look like dignified superiority. The dress which she wore was of the poorest sort, the commonest white homespun of the country, probably her own manufacture, and so indifferently made, that it hung about her like a sack, and gave a full view of the bronzed and skinny neck and bosom, which a regard to her appearance might have prompted her to conceal. Beside her a couple of cats of mammoth size kept up a drowsy hum, entirely undisturbed by the yelping of the cur, which, from his little kennel at one end of the hovel, maintained a continuous clamour at the approach of Humphries. The old woman simply turned her head, for a moment, to the entrance, took the pipe from her mouth, and, discharging the volume of smoke which followed it, cried harshly to the dog, as if in encouragement. Her call was answered by Humphries, who, rapping at the door, spoke civilly to the inmate.

"Now, open the door, good mother. We are friends, who would speak with you. We have been caught in the storm, and want you to give us house-room till it's over."

"Friends ye may be, and ye may not. Down by the dry branch, and through the old road to mother Blonay's, is no walk that friends often take; and if ye be travellers, go ye on, for there's no accommodation for ye, and but little here ye would eat. It's a poor country y'are in, strangers, and nothing short of Dorchester, or it may be Rantoule's, will serve your turn for a tavern."

"Now, out upon you, mother! would you keep a shut door upon us, and the rain still pouring?" cried Humphries, sharply.

"Ye have been in it over long to mind it now, I'm

thinking, and ye'd better ride it out. I have nothing for ye, if ye would rob. I'm but a lone woman, and a poor; and have no plate, no silver, no fine watch, nor rings, nor any thing that is worth your taking. Go to "The Oaks," or Middleton Place, or the old hall at Archdale, or any of the fine houses; they have plenty of good picking there."

"Now, how pleasantly the old hag tells us to go and steal, and she looking down, as a body may say, into the very throat of the grave that's gaping after her." The old woman, meanwhile, as if satisfied with what she had done, resumed her pipe, and recommenced her motion, to and fro, over the blaze. Humphries was for a smart application of the foot to the frail door that kept him out, but to this his companion refused assent.

"Confound the old hag, major; she will play with us after this fashion all the night. I know her of old, and that's the only way to serve her. Nothing but kicks for that breed; civility is thrown away upon them."

"No, no—you are rash; let me speak.—I say, my good woman, we are desirous of entrance; we have business, and would speak with you."

"Business with me! and it's a gentleman's voice too! Maybe he would have a love-charm, since there are such fools; or he has an enemy, and would have a bad mouth put upon him, shall make him shrivel up and die by inches, without any disease. I have worked in this business, and may do more. Well, there's good wages for it, and no danger. Who shall see, when I beg in the rich man's kitchen, that I put the poison leaf in the soup, or stir the crumbs with the parching coffee, or sprinkle the powder with the corn flour, or knead it up with the dough? It's a safe business enough, and the pay is good, though it goes over soon for the way it comes."

"Come, come, my good woman," cried Singleton impatiently, as the old beldam thus muttered to herself the various secrets of her capacity, and strove to conjec-

ture the nature of the business which her visiters had with her. "Come, come, my good woman, let us in; we are hurried, and have no little to do before daylight."

"Good woman, indeed! Well, many's the one been called good with as little reason. Yes, sir, coming: my old limbs are feeble; I do not move as I used to when I was young."

Thus apologizing, with her pipe in one hand, while the other undid the entrance, Mother Blonay admitted her visiters.

"So, you have been young once, mother?" said Humphries, while entering.

The old woman darted a glance upon him—a steadfast glance from her little gray eyes, and the stout and fearless trooper felt a chill go through his veins on the instant. He knew the estimate put upon her throughout the neighbourhood, as one possessed of the evil eye, or rather the evil mouth; one whose word brought blight among the cattle, and whom the negroes feared with a superstitious dread, as able to bring sickness and pestilence—a gnawing disease that ate away silently, until, without any visible complaint, the victim perished hopelessly. Their fears had been adopted in part by the whites of the lower class in the same region, and Humphries, though a bold and sensible fellow, had heard of too many dreadful influences ascribed to her, not to be unpleasantly startled with the peculiar intensity of the stare which she put upon him.

"Young!" she said, in reply; "yes, I have been young, and I felt my youth. I knew it, and I enjoyed it. But I have outlived it, and you see me now. You are young, too, Bill Humphries; may you live to have the same question asked you which you put to me."

"A cold wish, Mother Blonay; a bitter cold wish, since you should know, by your own feelings, how hard it will be to outlive activity and love, and the young people that come about us. It's a sad season that, mother, and may I die before it comes. But,

talking of young people, mother, reminds me that you are not so lonesome as you say. You have your son, now, Goggle."

"If his eye is blear, Bill Humphries, it's not the part of good manners to speak of it to his mother. The curse of a blear eye, and a blind eye, may fall upon you yet, and upon yours—ay, down to your children's children, for any thing we know."

"That's true, mother—none of us can say. I meant no harm, but as everybody calls him Goggle—"

"The redbug be upon everybody that so calls him! The boy has a name by law."

"Well, well, mother, do not be angry, and wish no sores upon your neighbour's shins that you can't wish off. The redbugs and the June-flies are bad enough already, without orders; and people do say you are quite too free in sending such plagues upon them, for little cause, or for no cause at all."

"It's a blessing that I can do it, Bill Humphries, or idle rowdies, such as yourself, would harry the old woman to death for their sport. It's a blessing and a protection that I can make the yellowjacket and the redbug leave their poison stings in the tender flesh, so that the jester that laughs at the old and suffering shall learn some suffering too."

"Quite a hard punishment for such an offence. But, mother, they say you do more; that you have the spell of the bad mouth, that brings long sickness and sudden death, and many awful troubles; and some that don't wish you well, say you love to use it."

"Do they say so?—then they say not amiss. Think you, Bill Humphries, that I should not fight with him who hates me, and would destroy me if he could? I do; and the bad mouth of Mother Blonay upon you, shall make the bones in your skin ache for long months after, I tell you."

"I beg, for God's sake, that you'll not put your bad mouth upon me, good mother," exclaimed Humphries, with ludicrous rapidity, as if he half feared the immediate exercise of the faculty upon him. The old

woman seemed pleased with this tacit acknowledgment of her power, and she now twisted her chair about so as to place herself directly in front of Singleton. He, meanwhile, had been closely scrutinizing the apartment, which was in no respects better than those of the commonest negro-houses of the low country. The floor was the native soil. The wind was excluded by clay, loosely thrust between the crevices of the logs; and an old scaffolding of poles, supporting a few rails crossing each other, sustained the mattress of moss, upon which the woman slept, unassisted seemingly, and entirely alone. A few gourds, or calabashes, hung from the roof, which was scantily shingled: these contained seeds of various kinds, bunches of dried thyme, sage, and other herbs and plants; and some which, by a close analysis of their properties, would be found to contain a sufficient solution of the source from whence came her spells of power over her neighbours, whether for good or evil.

Singleton had employed himself in noticing all these several objects, and the probability is that the quick eye of the old woman had discovered his occupation. She turned her chair so as to place herself directly before him, and the glance of her eye confronting his, compelled him to a similar change of position. The docile cats, with a sluggish effort, changed their ground also; and after circling thrice their new places of repose, before laying themselves down upon it, they soon resumed their even and self-satisfied slumberous hum, which the movement of their mistress had interrupted. A moment of silence intervened, during which Dame Blonay employed herself in examining Singleton's person and countenance. He was unknown to her, and a curious desire to make the acquaintance of new faces, is, perhaps, as much the characteristic of age as garrulity. Memory, in this way, becomes stirred up actively, and the decaying mind delights in such a survey, that it may liken the stranger to some well known individual of former days. It is thus that

the present time continually supplies with aliment the past from which it receives so much of its own. The close survey did not please Singleton, who at length interrupted it by resuming the subject where Humphries had discontinued it. With becoming gravity, he asked her the question which follows, on the extent of her powers—

"And so, dame, you really believe that you possess the power of doing what you say you can do?"

"Ay, sir, and a great deal more. I can dry up the blood in the veins of youth; I can put the staggering weakness into the bones and sinews of the strong man; I can make the heart shrink that is brave—I can put pain there instead of pleasure."

"Indeed! if you can do this, dame, you can certainly do much more than most of your neighbours. But is it not strange, mother, that these powers are all for evil? Have you no faculty for conferring good—for cheering the heart instead of distressing it, and giving pleasure instead of pain?"

"Ay! I can avenge you upon your enemy!" As she spoke, her form suspended its waving motion, was bent forward in eagerness, and her eye glistened, while her look seemed to say, "Is not that the capacity you would have me serve you in?"

"That, also, is a power of evil, dame, and not of good. I spoke of good, not evil."

"Not that!" she muttered, with an air of disappointment, while drawing herself back and resuming her croning movement. "Not that! is not revenge sweet, young master—very sweet, when you have been robbed and wronged for years; trampled in the dust; laughed and sneered at; hunted and hated: is not the moment of revenge sweet? When you see your enemy writhing in pain, you put your ear down and listen to his suffering, and your heart, that used to beat only with its own sorrow, you feel is throbbing with a strange, sweet joy at his—is it not sweet, my master?"

"Ay, sweet, dame, but, I fear me, still evil; still not

good; still harmful to man. Have you no better powers in your collection? none to give strength and youth, and bring back health?"

She pointed to a bunch of the smaller snake-roots which lay in the corner, but with much seeming indifference, as if the cure of disease formed but an humble portion of her mystery and labours.

"And your art gives you power over affections, and brings pleasure sometimes, mother?"

"Is it love?—the love of the young woman—hard to please, difficult to see, cold to sweet words—that you would win, my young master?"

She again bent her head towards him, and suspended her motion, as if now hopeful that, in this reference, she had found out the true quest of the seeker. A warm glow overspread the cheek of Singleton, as in answering the inquiry correctly he must necessarily have confessed that such a desire was in his bosom, though certainly without any resort to such practices as might be looked for in her suggestion.

"Ay, indeed, such an art would be something to me now, could it avail for any purpose—could it soften the stern, and warm the cold, and make the hard to please easy—but I look not for your aid, mother, to do all this."

"I can do it—fear me not," said the old woman, assuringly.

"It may be, but I choose not that thou shouldst. I must toil for myself in this matter, and the only art I may use must be that which I shall not be ashamed of. But we have another quest, dame; and upon this we would have you speak honestly. You have a son?"

The old woman looked earnestly at the speaker; and, as at that moment the sabre swung off from his knee, clattering its end upon the floor, she started apprehensively, and it could be seen that she trembled. She spoke after the pause of an instant.

"Sure, captain—Ned, Ned Blonay is my son.

What would you tell me? He has met with no harm?"

"None, mother—none that I can speak of," said Humphries quickly; "not that he may not have it if he does not mind his tracks But tell us—when was he here last, mother? Was he not here to-night? and when do you look for him again?"

The apprehensions of the woman had passed off; she resumed her seesaw motion, and answered indifferently.

"The boy is his own master, Bill Humphries; it is not for an old woman like me to say for Ned Blonay."

"What! are you not witch enough to manage your own son? Tell that to them that don't know you both better. I say to you, Mother Blonay, that story wont pass muster. You have seen Goggle to-night."

"And I say, Bill Humphries, that the tongue lies that says it, though it never lied before. Go—you're a foul-spoken fellow, and your bones will ache yet for that same speech. Goggle—Goggle—Goggle! as if it wasn't curse enough to be blear-eyed without having every dirty field-tackey whickering about it."

"Our object is not to offend, my good woman, but to ask a civil question. My companion only employs a name by which your son is generally distinguished among the people. You must not allow him to anger you, therefore, but answer a question or two civilly, and we shall leave you."

"You have smooth words, captain, and I know what good-breeding is. I have lived among decent people, and I know very well how to behave like one if they would let me; but when such ill-spoken creatures as Bill Humphries ask me questions, it's ten to one I don't think it worth while to answer them; and answer I will not, except with curses, when they speak nicknames for my child. I know the boy is ugly and blear-eyed. I know that his skin is yellow and shrivelled like my own, but he has suckled at these withered paps, and he is my child; and the more others hate

and abuse him, the more I love him—the more I will take up for him."

"Now, Mother Blonay, you needn't make such a fuss about the matter. You know I meant no harm. Confound the fellow, I don't care whether he has eyes or not; sure I am, I know the name which people give him without minding the blear. I only want you to say what you've done with him."

"You are too quick—too violent, Humphries, with the old woman," said Singleton in a whisper.

"Major, don't I know her. The old hag—I see through her now, jist as easy as I ever saw through any thing in my life. I'll lay now she knows all about the skunk."

"Perhaps so, but if she does, this is not the way to get at her information."

"But little hope of that now, since she's got her back up. Confound Goggle! if I had him under a stout hickory I reckon I'd make her talk to another tune."

This was loud enough for the old woman, who replied—

"Yes—you'd beat with blows and whips a far better man than yourself. But go your ways, and see what will come of this night's work. I have curses, have I?—if I have, you shall hear them. I have a bad mouth, have I?—you shall feel it. Hearken, Bill Humphries! I am old and weak, but I am strong enough to come to you where you are, and whisper in your ears. As what I say will do you no pleasure, you shall hear it."

And, tottering forward from her seat, she bent down to the chair upon which he sat, and though he moved away in an instant, he was not quick enough to avoid the momentary contact of her protruded and hag-like lip with his ear, that shrunk from the touch as with an instinct of its own. She whispered but two words, and they were loudly enough uttered for Singleton to hear as well as Humphries. "Your sister—Bella Humphries!"

The trooper started up as if he had been shot;

staggered he certainly was, and his eyes glared confusedly upon those which she piercingly fixed upon him with a hellish leer. She shook her long bony finger at him, and her body, though now erect, maintained its waving motion just as when she had been seated. Recovering in a moment, he advanced, exclaiming—

"You old hag of hell! what do you mean by that? What of Bella? what of my sister?"

"Goggle—Goggle—Goggle—that of her! that of her!" was all the reply; and this was followed by a low chuckling laugh, which had in it something exceedingly annoying even to Singleton himself. The trooper was ferocious, and with clenched fist seemed about to strike. This, when she saw, seemed to produce in her even a greater degree of resolution. Instead of shrinking, she advanced, folded her arms upon her breast, and there was a deep organ-like solemnity in her tone as she exclaimed—

"Now may the veins dry up, and the flesh wither, and the sinews shrink, and the marrow leave the bones! Strike the old woman, now, Bill Humphries, —strike, if you dare!"

Singleton had already passed between the parties, not, however, before he had been able to see the prodigious effect which her adjuration had produced upon the trooper. His form was fixed in the advancing position in which he stood when she addressed him. His lips were colourless, and his eyes were fastened upon her own with a steadiness which was that of paralysis, and not of decision. She, on the other hand, seemed instinct with life—a subtle, concentrated life. The appearance of decrepitude had gone, the eye had stronger fire, the limbs seemed firm on the instant, and there was something exceedingly high and commanding in her position. A moment after, she sank back in her chair almost exhausted—the two cats purring around, having stood at her side, as if bent to cooperate in her defence, on the first approach of Humphries. He now recovered from the superstitious awe

which had momentarily possessed him; and heartily ashamed of the show of violence to which her mysterious speech had provoked him, began to apologize for it to Singleton.

"I know it's wrong, major, and I wasn't exactly in my sober senses, or I wouldn't have done it. But there's no telling how she provoked me; and the fact is, what she said worries me no little now; and I must know what she meant.—I say, mother—Mother Blonay!"

Her eyes were fixed upon his with a dull, inexpressive glare, that seemed to indicate the smallest possible degree of consciousness.

"She is now exhausted, and cannot understand you; certainly not to satisfy your inquiries," said Singleton.

The trooper made one or two efforts more, but she refused all answer, and showed her determination to be silent by turning her face from them to the wall. Finding nothing was to be got out of her, Singleton placed beside her upon the chair a note of the continental currency, of large amount but for its depreciated value; then, without more words, they left the hovel to its wretched tenant, both much relieved upon emerging into the open air. The severity of the storm had now greatly subsided; the rain still continued falling, however, and, hopeless of any farther discoveries of the fugitive they had pursued, and as ignorant of his character as at first, they moved onward, rapidly pushing for their bivouac at the head of the Stonoe.

CHAPTER XVI.

"Commune with him, and fear not. Foul though he be,
Thy destiny is kindred with his own,
And that secures thee."

They had scarcely gone from sight, when Goggle entered the dwelling. The old hag started from her seeming stupor, and all her features underwent a change. She fondled upon her son with all the feeble drivelling of age; called him by various affectionate diminutives, and busied herself, in spite of her infirmities, waddling about from corner to corner of the hut, to administer to his desires, which were by no means few. He, on the other hand, manifested the most brutal indifference to all her regards, shook her off rudely as she hung upon his shoulders, and, with a boisterous manner, and a speech coupled with an oath, demanded his supper, at the same time throwing himself, with an air of extreme indolence, along the bed.

"And, Neddy dear, what has kept you so late? Where have you been, and whence come you last?" were the repeated questions of the old woman.

"A'drat it! mother—will you never be done asking questions? It's not so late, I'm sure."

"Later than you said; much later, by two hours, boy."

"Well, if it is, what then? It's well you have me at all, for I've had a narrow chance of it. Swow! but the bullets rung over my ears too close for comfort."

"You don't say so, Ned! What! that stark, bullhead, Humphries, has he shot at you, Ned, my son?"

"Him or Singleton, d—n 'em! But I have a hitch on him now that shall swing him. He plays 'possum no longer with Huck, if you have a tongue in your head, mother."

"Who—I? What am I to do, Ned, boy? Is it to put Bill Humphries in trouble? If it's that, I have the heart to do it, if it's only for his talk to-night."

"Yes, I heard it."

"You! Why, where were you, Ned?"

"There." He pointed to the end of the hovel, where, snugly concealed on the outside, his eye, piercing through a hole between the logs, had witnessed all that had taken place in the apartment while the partisans held it.

"And you heard and saw all?" said the old woman. "You heard his foul speech, and you saw him lift his hand to strike me because I spoke to him as he deserved! But he dared not—no, he dared not! But who was the other, Ned?"

"His name's Singleton, and he's a major of the continentals—that's all I know about him. He took me prisoner with some others of Travis's, and I joined his troop, rather than fare worse. This gives me picking on both sides; for since I've joined we've had smart work in skirmishing; and down at Archdale Hall we made a splash at Huck's baggage-wagons, and got good spoil. See, here's a watch—true gold!—was this morning in a red-coat's fob, 's now in mine."

"It's good gold, and heavy, my son;—will give you yellow-boys enough."

"Ay, could we sell—but that's the devil. It comes from a British pocket, and we can't venture to offer it to any of their colour. As for the continentals, they haven't got any but their ragged currency, and that nobody wants. We must keep the watch for a good chance, for that and other reasons. I took it from a prisoner by sleight of hand, and it must not be known that I have it, on either side. Proctor would punish, and the young fellow Singleton, who has an eye like a hawk, he would not stop to give me a swinging bough if he thought I took it from one of his prisoners."

"Give it to me, boy; I'll save you that risk."

"You shall do more, mother; but first get the supper. I'm hellish hungry, and tired out with the chase

I've had. A'drat it! my bones are chilled with the mud and water."

"There's a change in the chest, boy, beside you. Put the wet clothes off."

"It's too troublesome, and they'd only get wet too; for I must start back to the camp directly."

"What camp?"

"Singleton's—down at Slick Ford on the Stonoe head. I must be there, and let him see me, or he'll suspicion me, and move off. You will have to carry the message to Proctor."

"What, boy! will you go back and put your neck in danger? Suppose he finds you missing?"

"Well, I'll tell him the truth, so far as the truth will answer the purpose of a lie. I'll say I came to see you, and, having done so, have come back to my duty. They cannot find fault, for the troopers every now and then start off without leave or license. I'm only a volunteer, you see."

"Take care, boy; you will try the long lane once too often. They suspect you, now, I know from the askings of that fellow Humphries; and him too, the other—what's his name?—he, too, asked closely after you."

"Singleton. I heard him."

"What Singleton is that, boy? Any kin to the Singletons hereaway in St. Paul's?"

"No, I believe not. He's from the 'High Hills,' they say, though he has friends at 'The Oaks.' It was there he went to-night. But the supper, mother—is it all ready?"

"Sit and eat, boy. There's hoecake and bacon, and some cold collards."

"Any rum?" he inquired, rising sluggishly from the bed, and approaching the little table which, while the preceding dialogue had been going on, his mother had supplied with the condiments enumerated. She handed him the jug, from which, undiluted, he drank freely, following the stronger liquid with a moderate draught from the gourd of water which she handed him at the

same moment. While he ate, he muttered occasionally to his mother, who hung around him all the while in close attendance, regarding the besmeared, sallow, and disfigured wretch with as much affection as if he had been the very choicest of all God's creatures. Such is the heart, erring continually in its appropriation of sympathies, which, though intrinsically they may be valueless, are yet singularly in proof of that care of nature, which permits no being to go utterly unblest by its regard, and denies the homestead, however lowly, none of its soothing and its sunshine.

Goggle had eaten, and now, like a gorged snake, he threw himself once more at length upon the couch that stood in the corner, grumbling, as he did so—

"A'drat it! I hate to go out again! But I must—I must go back to camp, to blind Singleton; and as for that fellow Humphries, hear you, mother—I was in the ditch by Coburn's corner when he came upon me, and just about to cross it. They called out, and crack, crack went their pistols, and the balls both times whizzed close above my head. It was then they gave chase, and I lay close, and hugged the hollow. Singleton's horse stood right across me, and I expected his hoofs every moment upon my back."

"You don't say so, Neddy!"

"Ay, but I do—but that's not it. The danger was something, to be sure, but even then I could listen—I could listen—I could hear all they said; and I had reason to listen, too, for it was of me Humphries spoke. The keen chap suspected me to be the man they chased, though they could not make me out; and so he spoke of me. Can you count up what he said, mother?"

"No, Neddy; how should I?"

"What! and you tell fortunes, too, and bewitch, so that all of them call you cattle-charmer, yet you can't tell what Bill Humphries spoke about then!"

"No, sure not: some foul speech, I reckon, considering he spoke it."

"Ay, foul speech enough, if you knew. But the

long and short of it, mother, is this, and I put the question to you plainly, and expect you to answer plainly—"

"What do you mean, my son?"

"Ay, that's it—I'm your son, I believe that; but tell me, and tell me truly—who was my father? It was of that that Humphries spoke. He spoke for all the country round, and something, too, I've heard of before. He said I was no better than my father; that he was a horse-thief, and, what was worse, that I had a cross in my blood. Speak, now, mother—speak out truly, for you see I'm in no passion; for, whether it's true or not, I will have it out of him that spoke it, before long, some way or other. If it's true, so much the worse for him, for I can't cut your throat, mother—I can't drink your blood; but what I can do, I will, and that is, have the blood of the man that knows and speaks of your misdoings."

That affectionate tenderness of manner which she had heretofore shown throughout the interview, passed away entirely with this inquiry of Goggle. She was no longer the mother of her son. A haggard scorn was in every feature—a hellish revival of angry passions, of demoniac hate, and a phrensied appetite. As she looked upon the inquirer, who, putting such a question, yet lay, and seemingly without emotion, sluggishly at length upon the couch, her ire seemed scarcely restrainable—her figure seemed to dilate in every part—and, striding across the floor with a rapid movement, hostile seemingly to the generally enfeebled appearance of her frame, she stood directly before, and looking down upon him—

"And are you bent to hearken to such foul words of your own mother, bringing them home to my ears, when your bullet should have gone through the head of the speaker?"

"All in good time, mother. The bullet should have gone through his head but for an accident. But it's well it did not. He would have died then in a moment. When I kill him, now, he shall feel himself dying, I warrant."

"It is well, boy. Such a foul speaker should have a death of terror—he deserves it."

"Ay, but that's neither here nor there, mother,—you have not answered my question. Speak out; was I born lawfully?"

"Lawfully!—and what care you, Ned Blonay, about the lawfulness or the unlawfulness of your birth—you who hourly fight against the laws—who rob, who burn, who murder, whenever a chance offers, and care not? Is it not your pleasure to break the laws—to live on the profits and the property of others? Whence came the purse you brought here last week, but from the red-coat who travelled with you as a friend, and you, all the time, receiving pay from his people? Whence came this watch you just now put into my hands, but from your prisoner? and the hog of which you ate for supper, your own rifle shot it in the swamp, although you saw the double fork in the ear, and the brand on its quarter, which told you it belonged to Squire Walton, at 'The Oaks?'—what do you care about the laws, then, that you would have me answer your question?"

"Nothing; I don't care *that* for all the laws in the country—not that! But still I wish to know the truth of this matter. It's for my pleasure. I like to know the truth; whether I mind it or not is another thing."

"Your pleasure, boy—your pleasure! and what if I tell you that Humphries spoke true—that you are—"

"A bastard! speak it out—I want to hear it; and it will give me pleasure—I love that which provokes me. I can smile when one does me an injury—smile all the time I bear it quietly, for I think of the time when I'm to take pay for it. You don't understand this, perhaps, and I can't give you any reason to make it more plain. But so I do—and when Humphries had done speaking, I would have given something handsome to have had him talk it over again. When I have him in my power, he shall do so."

"The Indian blood!" was the involuntary exclamation of the old woman.

"Ha! what's that, mother?"

"Ask me not."

"Ay, but I will—I must; and hear me once for all—you tell me the truth, on the instant, or you never see my face again. I'll go to the Indies with Sir Charles Montague, that's making up a regiment in Charlestown for that country."

"Beware, boy—ask me not—any thing else. You will hate me if I tell you. You will leave me for ever."

"No—don't be afraid. Come, speak out, and say—was my father's name Blonay?"

"Blonay was my lawful husband, boy, when you were born," said the woman, evasively.

"Ay, that may be well enough," he exclaimed, "yet I be no son of his. Speak the truth, mother, and no two bites of a cherry. Out with it all—you can't vex me by telling it. Look here—see this wound on my arm—when it begins to heal, I rub it until it unscars and grows red and angry again. I like the pain of it. It's strange, I know, but it's my pleasure; and so I look to be pleased with the story you shall tell me. Was Blonay my father?"

"He was not."

"Good!—who was?"

"Ask no more."

"Ay, but I will—I must have it all—so speak on."

"I will not speak it aloud—I will not. I have sworn it."

"You must unswear it. I cannot be trifled with. You must tell me the secret of my birth, and all. I care not how dark, how foul, how unlawful—you must suppress nothing. This night must give me the knowledge which I have wanted before—this night you speak it freely, or lose me for ever."

The woman paced the apartment convulsively, undergoing, at every moment, some new transition, from anger and impatience to entreaty and humbleness. Now she denounced the curiosity of her son, and now she implored his forgiveness. But she cursed or implored in vain. He lay coolly and sluggishly, utterly unmoved, at length, upon the bed; heedless of all her

words, and now and then simply assuring her that nothing would suffice but the true narrative of all that he wished to know. Finding evasion hopeless, the old woman seemed to recover her own coolness and strength with the resolve which she had taken, and after a little pause for preparation, she began.

"Ned Blonay, it is now twenty-nine years since you were born—"

"Not quite, mother, not quite,—twenty-eight and some seven months. Let's see, November, you remember, was my birthday, and then I was but twenty-eight; but go on, it's not important—"

"Twenty-eight or twenty-nine, it matters not which—you were born lawfully the son of John Blonay, and as such he knew and believed you. Your true father was an Indian of the Catawba nation, who passed through the Cypress the year before on his way to the city."

"Go on—the particulars."

"Ask not that—not that, boy; I pray ye—"

"All—all."

"I will not—I cannot—it was my badness. I will not speak it aloud for worlds."

"Speak it you must, but you may whisper it in my ears. Stoop—"

She did so, passively as it were, and in a low tone, broken only by her own pauses and his occasional exclamations, she poured into his ear a dark, foul narrative of criminal intercourse, provoked on her part by a diseased appetite, resulting, as it would seem in punishment, in the birth of a monster like himself. Yet he listened to it, if not passively, at least without any show of emotion or indignation; and as she finished, and hurrying away from him threw herself into her old seat, and covered her face with her hands, he simply thrust his fingers into the long straight black hair depending over his eyes, which seemed to carry confirmatory evidence enough for the support of the story to which he had listened. He made no other movement, but seemed, for a while, busy in reflec-

tion. She every now and then looked towards him doubtfully, and with an aspect which had in it something of apprehension. At length, rising, though with an air of effort, from his couch, he took a paper from his pocket which he studied a little while by the blaze in the chimney, then approaching her, he spoke in language utterly unaffected by what he had heard—

"Hark ye, mother: I shall now go back to the camp. It's something of a risk, but nothing risk, nothing gain; and if I run a risk, it's for something. I go back to blind Singleton, for I shall tell him all the truth about my coming here. He won't do any thing more than scold a little, for the thing's common; but if he should—"

"What, my son?—speak!"

"No," he muttered to himself, "no danger of that—he dare not. But you come, mother,—come to Slick Ford by sunrise, and see what you can. You'll be able to prove I was with you after the storm, and that'll clear me; then you can go to Dorchester, make all haste, and with this paper, see Proctor, and put it in his own hands yourself. There's some news in it he will be glad to pay for. It tells him something about the camp; and that about Col. Walton, shall make him fly from 'The Oaks,' as an old owl from the burning cypress. You can also tell him what you see at Singleton's, and so use your eyes when you come there. Mind, too, if you see Huck or any of his men, keep dark. He would chouse you out of all the pay, and get the guineas for himself; and you might whistle for your share."

He gave her a dirty paper as he spoke, in which he had carefully noted down every particular relating to his new service, the force, the deeds, and the camp of Singleton—all that he thought would be of value to the enemy. She heard him, but did not approve of his return to the camp. The conference with Singleton and Humphries, together with the undisguised hostility of the latter, had filled her mind with troublesome apprehensions; and she warned her son accordingly; but he took little heed of her counsel.

"I'm bent upon it, mother, for it's a good business.

You come—that's all, and say when and where you've seen me to-night. Come soon—by sunrise, and I'll get off clear, and stand a better chance of being trusted by the commander."

"And Bill Humphries?"

"Ah! he must have his swing. Let him. The dog swallows his legs at last, and so will he. I only wait the time, and shall then shut up his mouth in a way shall be a lesson to him for ever—in a way he shan't forget, and shan't remember. He shall feel me before long."

"And he shall feel me too, the reprobate; he shall know that I have a power, though he laughs at it."

"A'drat it, but its dark, mother; a thick cloud's yet over the moon, and but a sloppy path for a shy foot, but it must be done. There's some old hound yelping yonder in the woods; he don't like being out any more than myself."

"You will go, Ned!" and the old woman's hand was on his shoulder. He shoved it off with something of hurry, while he answered—

"Yes, yes; and be sure you come, and when you have helped me out of the scrape, go, off-hand, to Proctor. See him—don't let them put you off. He will pay well and not chouse you, for he's a true gentleman. Good-night—good-night."

She watched him from the doorway until he was completely lost from sight in the adjacent forest.

CHAPTER XVII.

"Oh cruel! and the shame of such a wound,
Makes in the heart a deeper gash than all
It made upon the form."

Singleton and Humphries were hailed as they approached the patrols, by the voice of Lance Frampton, the younger son of the maniac. He had volunteered

to fill the post which had been deserted by Goggle. He told them of his absence, and was gratified by receiving from his commander a brief compliment upon his precision and readiness. Such approval was grateful to the boy, coming from Singleton; for the gentle manner of the latter had already won greatly on his affections. The boy, though but fifteen, was manly and fearless, full of ambition, and very promising. He rode well, and could use his rifle already with the best shots of the country. The unsettled life of the partisan warrior did not seem to disagree with his tender years, so far as he had already tried it; and his cheerless fortunes, indeed, almost denied him the choice of any other. Still, though manly in most respects, something of sadness rested upon his pale countenance, which was soft like that of a girl, and quite unlike the bronzed visages common to the sunny region in which he had been born and lived. In addition to the leading difference between himself and the people of his own condition around him, his tastes were naturally fine, his feelings delicate and susceptible, his impressions acute and lasting. He inclined to Major Singleton intuitively, as the manly freedom, and ease of deportment, for which his commander was distinguished, were mingled with a grace, gentleness, and pleasant propriety, to which his own nature insensibly beguiled him. He saluted them, as we have already said, with becoming modesty, unfolded his intelligence, and then quietly sank back to his position.

Humphries did not seem much surprised at the intelligence.

"As I expected," he said; "it's the nature of the beast. The fellow was a born skunk, and he will die one. There's no mending that sort of animal, major, and there's little use, and some danger, to waste time on it."

"How long is it, Lance, since his departure became known to Lieutenant Davis?" was the inquiry of Singleton.

"Not a half-hour, sir. When Lieutenant Davis

went the rounds, sir, to relieve him, the place was empty, and he said Goggle must have gone before the storm came up."

"Had you the storm here, Lance?" inquired Humphries.

"Not much of it, sir. It swept more to the left, and must have been heavy where it went, for the roaring of the wind was louder here than it felt. The trees doubled a little, but didn't give—only some that had the hearts eaten out. They went down, sir, at the first push of the hurricane."

Singleton conferred briefly with Humphries, and then despatched the boy to Davis, with instructions to place the party in moving order by sunrise—the two officers, riding more slowly in the same direction, conferred upon future arrangements.

"That fellow's absence, Humphries, will compel us to change our quarters, for his only object must be to carry the news to Dorchester."

"That's it, for certain, major; and the sooner we move the better. By midday to-morrow, Proctor and Huck, and the whole of 'em would be on our haunches, and we only a mouthful. A start by the time the sun squints on the pine tops, sir, would do no harm; and then, if you move up to Moultrie's old camp at Bacon's bridge, it will be far enough to misguide them for the present. From the bridge, you see, you can make the swamp almost at any moment, and yet it's not so far but you can get to 'The Oaks' soon as ever Proctor turns back upon Dorchester."

"What force has he there, think you?"

"Not enough to go far, sir, or stay out long. The garrison's but slim, and Huck is for the up country, I heard him say. He may give you a drive before he goes, for he is mighty ready to please Proctor; but then he goes by Monk's corner, and so on up to Nelson's ferry; and it will be out of his way to set upon you at Moultrie's."

"Why does he take that route, when his course is for the Catawba?"

"Ha! sir, you don't know Huck. He's an old scout, and knows where the best picking lies. He goes along that route, sir, skimming it like so much cream as he goes; and wo to the housekeeper, loyalist or whig, that gives him supper, and shows him too much plate. Huck loves fine things; and for that matter, plunder of any kind never goes amiss with a tory."

"True; and the course he takes through Sumter, gives him spoil enough, if he dares touch it; but Marion will soon be at Nelson's, where we hope to meet him. Let us ride on now, and see to our movement."

"With your leave, now, major, I'll go back to Dorchester."

"With what object?"

"Why, sir, only, as one may say, to curse and quit. That rascal Goggle will be in Proctor's quarters by daylight, and will soon have a pretty story for the colonel. I must try and get there before him, so as to stop a little the blow. Since it must come, it needn't come on anybody's head but mine; and if I can keep my old father from trap, why, you see, sir, it's my born duty to do so."

"How will you do that?"

"I'll tell you, sir. Dad shall go to Proctor before Goggle, and shall denounce me himself. He shall make something out of the Englishman by his loyalty, and chouse Goggle at the same time. Besides, sir, he will be able to tell a truer story, for he shall say that we've gone from the Stonoe, which, you know, will be the case by that time. So, if he looks for us there, as Goggle will advise him, the old man will stand better than ever in the good graces of the enemy; and will be better able to give us intelligence, and help our cause."

"But will your father like such a mission?"

"Like it, major! why, aint I his son—his only son—and won't he do, think you, what I ask him? To be sure he will. You will see."

"The plan is good, and reminds me of Pryor. You will see him, and hurry his recruiting. Say to him, from me, how much Col. Marion expects from him, as, indeed, the letter I gave him has already persuaded him. Remind him of that letter, and let him read it to you. This will please him, and prompt to new efforts, should he prove dull. But let him be quiet—nothing impatient, till Colonel Walton is prepared to start. Only keep in readiness, and wait the signal. For yourself, when you have done this, delay nothing, and risk nothing in Dorchester. You have no plea if found out; and they will hang you off-hand as soon as taken. Follow to Bacon's bridge as soon as possible, and if you find me not there, I am either in the swamp, or in the south towards the Edisto; possibly on the road to Parker's ferry. I wish to keep moving to baffle any pursuit."

Protracted but little longer, and only the better to perfect their several plans, the conference was at length concluded, and the two separated; the one proceeding to his bivouac, and the other on his journey of peril, along the old track leading to the bridge of Dorchester.

Singleton had scarcely resumed command of his squad before the fugitive Goggle stood before him, with a countenance cold and impassive as ever, and with an air of assurance the most easy and self-satisfied. The eye of the partisan was concentrated upon him with a searching glance, sternly and calmly, but he shrunk not beneath it.

"You have left your duty, sir—your post; what have you to say?"

The offender frankly avowed his error, but spoke in extenuation.

"The storm was coming up, sir; nobody was going to trouble us, and I thought a little stretch to the old woman—my mother, sir, that is—would do no harm."

"You were wrong, sir, and must be punished. Your duty was to obey, not to think. Lieutenant Davis, a corporal's guard!"

Goggle looked somewhat astounded at this prompt movement, and urged the measure as precipitate and unusual.

"But, major, the troopers go off continually from Col. Washington's troop, when they want to see their families—"

"The greater the necessity of arresting it in ours; but you will make your plea at morning, for with the sunrise you shall be examined."

The guard appeared, and as the torch flamed above the head of the fugitive, Singleton ordered him to be searched narrowly. With the order, the ready soldiers seized upon and bound him. His rifle was withdrawn from his grasp—a measure inexpressibly annoying to the offender, as it was a favourite weapon, and he an excellent shot with it. In the close search which he underwent, his knife, and, indeed, everything in his possession, was carefully withdrawn, and he had reason to congratulate himself upon the timely delivery of the stolen watch to his mother; for the prisoner from whom it had been taken had already announced its loss; and had it been found upon the thief, it would have been matter, under the stern policy pursued by Singleton, for instantly hurrying him to some one of the thousand swinging boughs overhead. With the clear daylight, a court martial at the drum-head sat in judgment on the prisoner. He told his story with a composure that would have done credit to innocence. There was no contradiction in his narrative. Singleton proposed sundry questions.

"Why did you not stand when called to?"

"I was but one, major, and you were two; and when the British and tories are thick about us, it stands to reason that it was them calling. I didn't make out your voice."

"And why did you not proceed directly to your mother's? why let so much time elapse between the pursuit and your appearance at her cabin?"

"I lay close after they had gone, major, for I didn't know that they had done looking after me."

Prompt and ready were his several responses, and, apart from the initial offence of leaving his post, nothing could be ascertained calculated to convict him of any other error. In the mean time he exhibited no more interest in the scene than in the most ordinary matter. One side of his body, as was its wont, rested upon the other; one leg hung at ease, and his head, sluggish like the rest of his person, was bent over, so as to lie on his left shoulder. At this stage of the proceedings, his mother, whose anxieties had been greater on the subject than those of her son, now made her appearance, tottering towards the group with a step in which energy and feebleness were strangely united. Her first words were those of reproach to Singleton:—

"Now, wherefore, gentleman, do you bind the boy? Is it because he loves the old woman, his own mother? Oh, for shame! it's a cruel shame to do so! Will you not loose the cord?"

She hobbled over to the place where her son stood alone, and her bony fingers were for a moment busied with the thongs, as if she strove to release him. The prisoner himself twisted from her, and his repulse was not confined to his action.

"A'drat it, mother! have done. Say it out what you know, and done with it."

"What can you say, dame, in this matter?" inquired Singleton.

"It's my son you tie with ropes—it's a good son to me—will you not loose him?"

"He has done wrong, dame; he has left his post, and has neglected his duty."

"He came to see his mother—his old mother; to bring her comfort, for he had been long away, and she looked for him—she thought he had had wrong. Was there harm in this?"

"None, only as he had other duties, not less important, which he sacrificed for it. But say what you know."

She did so, and confirmed his story; was heard

patiently through a somewhat tedious narrative, in which her own feelings, and a strange show of love for the indifferent savage, were oddly blended with the circumstances which she told. Though unavailing to save him from punishment, the evidence of his mother, and her obvious regard, had the effect of modifying its severity. The court found him guilty, and sentenced him to the lash. Twenty lashes, and an imprisonment in the discretion of the commander, were decreed as his punishment.

A long howl—a shriek of demoniac energy—from the old woman, as she heard the doom, rung in the ears of the party. Her long skinny finger was uplifted in vain threatenings, and her lips moved in vague adjurations and curses. Singleton regretted the necessity which made him sanction the decree, but example was necessary in the lax state of discipline at that time prevailing throughout the country. Marion, who was himself just and inflexible, had made him a disciplinarian.

"You will not say 'Yes' to this," cried the old woman to Singleton. "You are a gentleman, and your words are kind. You will forgive the boy."

"I dare not, dame. The punishment is already slight in comparison with that usually given for an offence so likely to be fatal as this of which your son has been guilty. He must submit."

The old woman raved furiously, but her son rebuked her. His eyes were thrown up obliquely to the commander, and the expression of his face was that of a sneaking defiance, as he rudely enough checked her in her denunciations.

"Hold tongue, mother—a'drat it! Can't you thank the gentlemen for their favour?"

A couple of soldiers strapped him up; when, having first taken off his outer jacket, one of them, with a common wagon-whip, prepared to execute the sentence, while the old woman, almost in danger from the lash, pressed closely to the criminal, now denouncing and now imploring the court; at one moment abusing her

son for his folly in returning to the camp, and the next, with salt tears running down her withered cheeks, seeking to sooth and condole with him in his sufferings. They would have removed her from the spot before the punishment began, but she threw herself upon the earth when they attempted it, and would only rise when they forbore the effort. He, the criminal, was as impassive as ever. Nothing seemed to touch him, either in the punishment he was to receive, or the agonizing sensations which he witnessed in his mother, and which were all felt in his behalf. He helped the soldiers to remove his vest, and readily turned his back towards them, while, obliquely over his shoulder, his huge staring eyes were turned to the spot where Singleton stood, with glance averted from the scene of ignominy.

The first stroke was followed by a piercing shriek from the old woman—a bitter shriek and a curse; but with tha stroke she began counting the blows.

"One"—"two"—her enumeration perpetually broken by exclamations of one sort or another—now of pity, now of horror, denunciation, and the most impotent expressions of paralytic rage—in some such phrases as the following:—"The poor boy!—his mother never whipped him!—they will murder him!—two—for he came to see her—three—was ever the like to whip a son for this!—four—God curse them! God curse them!—five—I can curse, too, that I can—they shall feel me, they shall hear me!—six, seven—that is eight—nine. Oh, the wretches! but bear up, Ned, bear up—it is half over—that is ten—my poor boy! Oh, do not strike so hard! Look! the red on the shirt—it is blood! Oh, wretches! have you no mercy?—it is most done—there, there—stop! Hell blast you for ever!—that was twenty. Why did you strike another? I curse you with a black curse for that other stroke! You ragged imp!—you vile polecat!—I curse you for that stroke!"

The execution was over. Unflinching to the last, though the strokes were severely dealt, the criminal

had borne them. He looked the very imbodiment of callosity. His muscles were neither composed nor rigid during the operation; and though the flesh evidently felt, the mood of the wretch seemed to have undergone no change. Before he could yet be freed from the cords, his mother's arms were thrown around him; and though he strove to shake her off, and shrunk from her embraces, yet she persisted, and, with a childish fondness, she strove, with kind words, while helping him on with his jacket, to console him for his sufferings.

"And you will go with me now, Neddy—you will go from these cruel men?"

"I cannot, mother; don't you know I'm to be under guard so long as the major chooses?"

"He will not—you will not tie him again; you will let him go now with his mother."

She turned to Singleton as she spoke; but his eye refused her ere his tongue replied—

"He will be in custody for twelve hours; and let me say to you, dame, that for such an offence his punishment is a very slight one. Marion's men would suffer two hundred lashes, and something more restraint, for the same crime."

"God curse him!" she said, bitterly, as she again approached her son, with whom she conversed apart. He whispered but a word in her ear, and then turned away from her; she looked after him a moment, as the guard marched him into the rear, but her finger was uplifted towards Singleton, and the fierce fire shooting out from her gray eye, and moving in the direction of the pointed finger, was long after remembered by him. In a few moments more, she was gone from the camp, and, with a degree of elasticity scarcely comporting with her years, was trudging fast on her way to Dorchester.

Waiting until she had fairly departed, Singleton at length left his lodge on the Stonoe, and leaving no trace of his sojourn but the dying embers of his fires, he led the way towards the designated encampment at Bacon's

Bridge. This was a few miles above Dorchester, on the same river, and immediately contiguous to the Cypress Swamp. An old battery and barracks, built by General Moultrie, and formerly his station, prior to the siege of Charlestown, furnished a much more comfortable place of abode than that which he had just vacated. Here he took that repose which the toils of the last twenty-four hours rendered absolutely necessary.

CHAPTER XVIII.

"Let her pulse beat a stroke the more or less
And she were blasted. I will stand by this;
My judgment is her fear."

Leaving Singleton as we have seen, as soon as the absence of Goggle from camp was certainly known, Humphries hurried on his returning route to the village of Dorchester. Cool and calculating, but courageous, the risk which he ran was far from inconsiderable. How could he be sure he was not already suspected; how know that some escaping enemies had not seen and given intelligence of his presence among the rebels; and why should not the fugitive be already in the garrison with Proctor preparing the schemes which were to wind about and secure him? These questions ever rose in his mind as he surveyed his situation and turned over his own intentions; but though strong enough as doubts, they were not enough to turn him from a purpose which he deemed good and useful, if not absolutely necessary. He dismissed them from his thoughts, therefore, as fast as they came up. He was a man quite too bold, too enterprising to be discouraged and driven from his plans by mere suggestions of risk; and whistling, as he went, a merry tune, he dashed forward through the woods, and was soon out of the bush and on the main road of the route—not

far from the spot where, in the pause of the storm, they had stumbled upon the half-blood, Blonay.

The tree which the lightning had stricken just beside the path, was still in flame. The rain could not quench it, as the rich lightwood, traced through every cavity of the bark by the greedy fire, furnished a fuel not easily extinguishable. The flame licked along the sides, at intervals, splotchlike, up and down, from top to trunk; at one moment, lost from one place—the next, furiously darting upon another. Its blaze showed him the track through the hollow to old Mother Blonay's, and, as he beheld it, a sudden desire prompted him once more to look into the dwelling of the old woman. He was strangely fascinated in this direction, particularly as he remembered the equivocal nature of the threat which she had screamed in his ear in regard to his sister. "Goggle, Goggle, Goggle!" A shiver ran through his frame as he thought upon it.

Alighting from his horse, he approached the hovel, hitched the animal to a hanging bough, and, with as light a footstep as possible, quietly approached the entrance. Peeping through an aperture between the loose logs he gazed upon the inmate. There, still in her seat beside the fireplace, she kept up the same croning movement, to and fro, maintaining her balance perfectly, yet fast asleep all the while. Sometimes her rocking would be broken with a start, but sleep had too far possessed her; and though her dog barked once or twice at the approach of the stranger, the interruption in her seesaw was but for a moment, and an incoherent murmur indistinctly uttered, only preceded her relapse into silence and slumber as before. Beside her lay her twin cats—twin in size though not in colour—a monstrous pair whose sleep emulated that of their mistress. On a bench before her, clearly distinguishable in the firelight, Humphries noted her travelling bundle with a staff run through it. This indicated her itinerant habits, and his conclusion was, that the old hag, who wandered usually from plantation to plantation, from hovel to hovel, pretending to cure or

charm away disease, and taking large collections in return from the charitable, the ignorant and superstitious alike—had made her preparations for an early journey in the morning. While he looked, his own superstitious fancies grew active; and, a cold shiver which he could not escape, but of which he was heartily ashamed, came over him, and, with a hurried step, he darted away from the contemplation of a picture he could not regard in any other light than as one horrible and unholy. Humphries was not the slave of a feeble and childish superstition, but the natural influences which affect the uneducated mind, commonly, had their due force on his. The secret cause is always mysterious, and commonly produces enervating and vague fears in the bosoms of all that class of people who engage in no thoughts beyond those called for by their everyday sphere and business. So with him—he had doubts, and in proportion with his ignorance were his apprehensions. Ignorance is of all things the most apprehensive in nature. He knew not whether she could have or not the power that she professed, and his active imagination gave her all the benefit of his doubt. Still he did not fear. No one who knew his usually bold character, his recklessness of speech and action, would deem him liable to any fear from such influences as were supposed to belong to the withered tenant of that isolated hovel—and yet, when he thought upon the cheerless life which she led and seemed to love—when he asked himself what might be its pleasures or its solace, he could not avoid feeling that in its anti-social evidences lurked the best proof of its evil nature. Wherefore should age, poverty, and feebleness, fly so far, and look so harshly upon, the whole world around it? Why refuse its contiguity?—why deny, why shrink away from the prospect of its comforts and its blessings? Why? unless the mood within was hostile—unless its practices were unfriendly to the common good, as they were foreign to the common habit, of humanity? He knew, indeed, that poverty may at all times sufficiently account for isolation—that an acute

sensibility may shrink from that contact with the crowd which may, and does, so frequently betray or wound it: and he also well knew that there is no sympathy between good and bad fortune, except as the one is apt to desire that survey of the other which will best enable it to comprehend the superior benefits of its own position. But that old woman had no such sensibilities, and her poverty was not greater—not so great, indeed, as that of many whom he knew beside, who yet clung to, and sought to share some of the ties and regards of society, though unblessed by the world's goods, and entirely out of the hope of a redeeming fortune. Did he not also know that she exulted in the thought that she was feared by those around her, and studiously inculcated the belief among the vulgar, that she possessed attributes which were dangerous and unholy? Her very pride was an abomination to humanity, as her chief source of satisfaction seemed to lie in the exercise of powers unwholesome and annoying to man. No wonder the blood grew cold and curdled in the veins of the blunt countryman as he thought upon these matters. No wonder that he moved away to his horse, with a rapidity he would not his enemy should see, from a spot over which, as his mind dwelt upon the subject, such an infernal atmosphere seemed to brood and gather. The bark of the dog as the hoofs of his charger beat upon the ground while he hurried along his path, startled more completely the old hag, who half rose from her seat, threw up her head to listen, then, pushing the dismembered brands of her fire together, composed herself once more in her chair to sleep.

The evening of the day upon the history of which we have been engaged, had been rather remarkable in the annals of the "Royal George." There had been much to disturb the waters, and, we may add, the spirits in that important domain. There had been a partial sundering of ancient ties—a violation of sometime sacred pledges, an awkward collision of various interests. On the ensuing Monday, Serjeant Hastings, of

whom we have already seen either too much or too little, was to take his departure with the notorious Captain Huck to join Tarleton on the Catawba. The interval of time between the present and that fixed for this, so important, remove, was exceedingly brief; but a day, and that a holyday, intervened—and then farewell to the rum punch, the fair coquette, and the pleasant company of the "Royal George." The subject was a melancholy one to all parties. The serjeant preferred the easy life, the good company, the cheering liquor of the tavern, and there were other and less honourable objects yet in his mind, unsatisfied, and as far from realization as ever. Bella Humphries had too little regard for him really to become his victim, though he had spared no effort to that end. On the contrary, the girl had latterly grown peevish in some respects, and he could clearly perceive, though the cause remained unknown, that his influence over her was declining. His assumption of authority, his violence, and perhaps, his too great familiarity, had wonderfully lessened her regard; and, if the truth must be known, John Davis was in reality more potent in her esteem than she had been willing to acknowledge either to that personage or to herself. While Davis kept about the tavern, a cringing and peevish lover, contributing to her conceit while acknowledging her power, she was not unwilling, with all the thoughtlessness of a weak girl, to trifle with his affections; but now that he had absented himself, as it seemed for ever, she began to comprehend her own loss and to lament it. Such a consciousness led her to a more close examination of Hastings' pretensions, and the result of her analysis was quite unfavourable to that worthy. His many defects of disposition and character, his vulgarity, his impudence, all grew remarkably prominent in her eyes, and he could now see that, when he would say, in a manner meant to be alluring—"Hark'ee, Bell, my beauty—get us a swig, pretty particular, and not too strong o' the lemon, and not

too weak o' the Jamaica, and not too scant considering the quantity,"—there was no sweet elasticity in the utterance of "Yes, sergeant, certain—coming," coupled with a gracious smile and a quickness of movement that left the time between the order and its instant execution a space not perceptible even to that most impatient person, himself. He could feel the change now, and as the time allowed him was brief, and opportunities few, he hurried himself in devising plans for the better success of a design upon her, long entertained, of a character the most vile and nefarious.

But his bill remained unpaid; and this was the worst feature in the sight of our landlord. That evening (Saturday) the worthy publican had ventured to suggest the fact to the disregarding memory of the sergeant, who had, with the utmost promptness, evaded the demand. Some words had passed between them—old Humphries had been rather more spirited, and Hastings rather more insolent than usual; and the latter, in search of consolation, made his way into the inner room where Bella officiated. To crown his discontent, his approach was utterly unnoticed by that capricious damsel. He dashed away in dudgeon from the house at an early hour, certainly less regretted by the maid than by the master of the inn.

Such had been the transactions of the evening of that night, when, at a late hour, Humphries approached the dwelling of his father. The house lay in perfect shadow as he drew nigh the outer buildings, in the rear of one of which he carefully secured his horse. The moon, obscured during the early part of the evening, and dim throughout the night, had now sunk westering so far, that it failed to touch entirely the close and sheltered court in front of the house. As he drew nigh, moving along in the deeper shadow of the fence to the rear of the dwelling, for which he had a key, he started. Was it a footstep that reached his ear? He squatted to the ground and listened. He was not deceived. The indistinct outline of a man

close under the piazza, was apparent. He seemed busied in some labour which he pursued cautiously, and in perfect silence. Humphries could see that he stooped to the ground, and that in the next moment, his arms were extended. A few seconds after and the person of the man seemed to rise in air. The watcher could no longer be mistaken. Already had the nightstalker taken two steps upon the ladder which he had placed against the house, when Humphries bounded forward from his place of watch. His soul was on fire, for he saw that the object of the stranger was the chamber of his sister, the windows of which looked out upon the piazza, and were all open, as was usual in the summer nights. The look of the old hag, her strange words uttered as a threat, grew strong in his mind, and he now seemed to understand them. Drawing his dirk from his bosom, the only weapon he had ventured to bring with him from the stable, in the fodder of which he had hidden his sabre and pistols, he rushed furiously towards the burglar. But his movement had been too precipitate for success; and with the first sound of his feet, the marauder had dropped from the ladder, and taken to his heels. The start in his favour being considerable, gave him a vast advantage over his pursuer, for, though swift of foot, active, and spurred on by the fiercest feelings, Humphries failed to come up with him. A moment after the fugitive had leaped the fence, the dirk of the former was driven into that part of it over which his body had passed. The villain had escaped.

Gloomy and disappointed, the brother returned to the spot, and calmly inspected the premises. Painfully and deeply apprehensive were his thoughts, as he surveyed the ladder, and the open windows above. But for his timely arrival there would have been little or no difficulty in effecting an entrance. Did the wretch seek to rob? That was the hope of Humphries. Could it be possible that his sister had fallen? was she a victim, privy to the design of the felon? or did he only now, for the first time, seek her dishonour?

He knew that she was weak and childish, but he also believed her innocent. Could she have looked for the coming of a paramour? The unobstructed windows, the unbroken silence, the confident proceeding of the man himself—all would seem to strengthen the damning idea which now possessed his mind; and when his perpetually recurring thought brought to him the picture of the old hag, her hellish glare upon him, and her mysterious threat—a threat which now seemed no longer mysterious—the dreadful apprehensions almost grew into certainty. There was but one, and that a partial mode, of ascertaining how far the girl was guilty of participation in the design of the stranger; and, with the thought, Humphries at once ascended the ladder which he threw down after him. From the piazza he made his way to the girl's chamber.

A light was burning in the fireplace, dimly, and with no power to serve him where it stood. He seized it, almost convulsively, in one hand, while the uplifted dagger was bare in the other, and thus he approached the couch where she lay. He held the light above, so that its glare touched not her eyes, and he looked down into her face. She lay sleeping, soundly, sweetly, with a gentle respiration like a sigh swelling equably her bosom. There was no tremor, no start. Her round, fair face wore a soft, smiling expression, showing that the consciousness within was not one of guilt. One of her arms hung over the pillow, her cheek resting upon it; the other pressed slightly her bosom, as naturally as if there had been a throbbing and deeply feeling heart under it. The brother looked, and as he looked, he grew satisfied. He could not doubt that sleep; it was the sleep of innocence. A weight of nameless, of measureless terror, had been taken from his soul in that survey; and nature claimed relief in a flood of tears. The drops fell on the cheek of the sleeper, and she started. With the movement, he put aside the dagger, not, however, before her eyes had beheld it.

"Oh, William! brother, dear brother! is it you? and—the knife?"

She had caught his hand in her terror, and amaze and bewilderment overspread her features.

"Sleep on, Bell, sleep on; you are a good girl, and needn't fear."

He kissed her as he spoke, and, with the fondness of a sister, and the thoughtlessness of a girl, she began to prattle to him; but he bade her be quiet, and, taking the light with him, descended to the lower apartment, adjoining the bar-room, where his father usually slept. To his surprise he was not there, but a gleam through the door led the son to the place where the old man usually served his customers. The picture that met his eye was an amusing one. There, at length upon the floor, the landlord lay. A candle placed beside him, with a wick doubled over and blazing into the tallow, lacked the friendly aid of the snuffers. The old man was too deeply engaged in his vocation to notice this. His head, resting upon one hand, was lifted upon his elbow, and before him were sundry large boards, covered with tallies in red chalk and in white, against his sundry customers. The landlord was busily engaged in drawing from these chronicles, the particular items in the account of Sergeant Hastings, which he transcribed upon a sheet of paper which lay before him. A tumbler of Jamaica, of especial body, stood conveniently close, from which he occasionally drew strong refreshment for his memory. He was too earnest in his labour, to notice the entrance of his son at first; but the other had too little time to spare, to scruple much at disturbing his father at his unusual labour.

"Ah, bless me, Bill—that you? Why, what's the to-do now? What brings you so late?"

"Business, business, father, and plenty of it. But get up, rouse and rustle about, and get away from these scores, or you won't understand a word I tell you."

The landlord rose immediately, put his board aside, picked up the sheet containing the amount in gross

charged against Sergeant Hastings, which he sighed twice as he surveyed, and, in a few moments, was prepared to listen to what his son could say. He heard the narrative with horror and astonishment.

"God bless us and preserve us, Bill! but this is awful hard; and what are we to do—where shall we run—how—"

"Run nowhere, but listen to what I tell you. You can't help it now, but you may make something out of it. If Proctor must hear the truth, he may as well hear it from you."

"From me!—bless me, Bill, my boy—from me?"

"Yes, from you. Set off by daypeep to the fort, and see Proctor yourself. Tell him of your loyalty, and how you love the king; and you can cry a little all the time, if it comes easy to you. I don't want you to strain much about it. Tell him that you have an unworthy son, that's not of your way of thinking. Say he's been misguided by the rebels, and how they've inveigled him, till he's turned rebel himself; and how he's now out with Marion's men, in Major Singleton's squad. When you've done this, you can cry again, and do any thing to throw dust in his eyes. Say it's all owing to your loyalty that you expose your own flesh and blood, and mind you don't take any money for telling."

"Bless me, dear boy, but this is awful to think on."

"It must be thought on, though, and the sooner the better. Coming from you, it will help you; coming from that skunk, Goggle, and you silent, and they pack you off to the Charlestown provost, or maybe draw you over the swinging bough. Tell Proctor our force is thirty; that we lay at Slick ford last night, and that we push for Black river by daypeep, to join with the Swamp Fox. This, you see, will be a truer story than Goggle can tell, for if he sends Proctor after us to Slick ford, he'll have a journey to take back."

"Bless me, what's to become of us all, Bill, I don't see. I am all over in a fever now, ever since you tell'd me your story."

"Shake it off, and be comfortable, as you can be. Thinking about it never cured the shaking ague yet, and never will. You must try."

"And I will try—I will, boy; but bless me, Bill, wouldn't it be better for us all to take the swamp—eh?"

"No—stay where you are; there's no need for you to go out, and you can do good where you are. Besides, there's Bell, you know"

"True, true."

"Lead out trumps, that's the way, and mind how you play 'em; that's all you've got to do now, and if so be you try, you can do it. Don't burn daylight, but be with Proctor as soon as sunrise lets you. Don't stop to talk about Edisto catfish, or what's for dinner, and whether it's like to rain or shine, but push through the crowd, and don't mind your skirts. All depends on you, now."

"Bless us, bless us! what times, what times! Oh, Bill, my boy, what's coming to us! Here was Huck, to-day, and says Continental Congress is to make peace with Great Britain, and to give up Carolina and Georgia."

"Oh that's all a fool notion, for it's no such thing. That's all a trick of the tories, and you needn't mind it. But what of Huck?"

"He goes a-Monday to join Tarleton."

"Good!—and now I must leave you. I've got a mighty deal to see to afore daylight, and I won't see you for a smart spell, I reckon, as I shall have to hug the swamp close after this. Don't be slow now, father, 'cause every thing hangs on your shoulders, and you must tell your story straight."

In their dialogue the son had taken care to omit nothing which a shrewd, thinking mind might suggest, as essential to the successful prosecution of the plan advised. This done, he took his way to the dwelling of old Pryor, and tapping with his knife-handle thrice upon one of the small, but ostentatious, pine pillars of the portico, the door was unclosed, and he was at once

admitted, as one who had been waited for. There we shall leave him, conferring closely with a select few, busy, like himself, in preparations for a general uprising of the people.

CHAPTER XIX.

She is lost!—
She is saved!—GOETHE.

HUMPHRIES, poor old man, placed himself at an eastern window, the moment his son had departed, to watch for the first openings of the daylight. What a task had he to perform! what a disclosure to make! and how should he evade the doubt, though complying with the suggestion of reason and his son alike, that he should, by the development he was about to make, compromise the safety of the latter. Should he be taken, the evidence of the father would be adequate to his conviction, and that evidence he was now about to offer to the enemy. He was to denounce him as a rebel, an outlaw, whom the leader of a single troop might hang without a trial, the moment he was arrested. The old man grew miserable with his reflections, and there was but one source of consolation. Fortunately, the supply of old Jamaica in the "Royal George" was still good; and a tumbler of the precious beverage, fitly seasoned with warm spices and sugar, was not ineffectually employed to serve the desired purpose.

And with this only companion, whose presence momently grew less, the worthy landlord watched for the daylight from his window; and soon the gray mist rose up like a thin veil over the tops of the tall trees, and the pale stars came retreating away from the more powerful array which was at hand. The hum of the night insects was over—the hoarse chant of the frog family was silent, as their unerring senses

taught them the coming of that glorious and beautiful presence which they did not love. Fold upon fold, like so many variously shaded wreaths, the dim curtain of the night was drawn gradually up into heaven, and once more the vast panorama of forest, river, and green valley came out upon the sight, rising, by little and little, into life, in the slowly illumined distance.

The moment old Humphries saw the approach of daylight, he finished his tumbler of punch, and, with a sad heart, he set out for Proctor's quarters. Some little delay preceded his introduction to the commandant of the garrison, who received him graciously, and civilly desired to know his business. This was soon unfolded, and with many pauses, broken exclamations of grief and loyalty, the landlord gave a brief account, as furnished him by his son, of all the events which had occurred to Singleton and his squad since his assumption of its command. The affair of the tories and his troop in the swamp—the capture of the baggage and arms—the delay of which, a matter of surprise to Huck, was now accounted for—and the subsequent bivouac upon the Stonoe head, were quickly unfolded to the wondering Briton. He immediately despatched a messenger for Huck, while proceeding to the cross-examination of his informant—a scrutiny which he conducted with respect and a proper consideration. All was coherent in his story, and Proctor was inly troubled. A piece of daring, such as the formation of Singleton's squad, so near the garrison, so immediately in the neighborhood and limits of the most esteemed loyalty, was well calculated to annoy him. The name of Major Singleton too, grated harshly on his ears. He could not but remember the sinister reference of Katharine Walton to her cousin of the same name; and he at once identified him with his rival in that young lady's regard. Huck came while yet he deliberated; and to him the narrative which Humphries delivered, who stood by all the while, was also told. The tory was not less astounded than Proctor; and the two conferred freely on their news before Hum-

phries, whose loyalty was properly confirmed in their opinion, by his unscrupulous denunciation of his own son. To Huck, the commandant of the garrison was compelled to apply, and the troop of the former was required to disperse the force of Singleton. The garrison guard was too small, under the doubtful condition of loyalty in the neighborhood, to spare a detachment; and it was arranged, therefore, that Huck should depart from his original plan and route, which was to start on the ensuing day for Camden, and immediately to make a circuit through the country by the Stonoe, and having done so, go forward by Parker's Ferry, and gain, by a circuitous sweep, the course which had been formerly projected, and which, indeed, the orders received by him from Cornwallis compelled him to pursue. It was hoped that he would overhaul the little force of Singleton, in which event it must have been annihilated. In the mean time, Proctor prepared his despatches for Charlestown, calling for a supply of troops—a call not likely to be responded to from that quarter, as the garrison there had been already drawn upon by the interior, to such an extent as to leave barely a sufficient force within the walls of the city for its own maintenance. This Proctor knew, but no other hope presented itself, and glad to use the troop of Huck, he contented himself with the consciousness of having done all that could be done by him, under existing circumstances. Civilly dismissing Humphries, he would have rewarded him, but the old man urged his simple and sincere loyalty, and shrunk back at the idea of receiving gold as the reward of his son's betrayal. He did his part ably, and leaving the two conferring upon the particulars of the tory's route, hurried away to the tavern in no enviable state of feeling.

His son, whom we have seen entering the dwelling of old Pryor, was glad to meet with several sturdy whigs in close conference. They had been stimulated by the whispers of an approaching army of continentals, and the vague intelligence had been exaggerated in

due proportion to the thick obscurity which at that time hung about the subject. The host, himself—who was a sturdy patriot, and more than usually bold, as, of late days, he was more than usually unfortunate—presided upon this occasion. The party was small, consisting of some half dozen persons, all impatient of the hourly wrongs, which, in their reckless indifference to the feelings of the conquered, the invaders continually committed. The reduction of the British forces in the lower county, in the large draughts made upon it for the upper posts, had emboldened disaffection; and the people, like snakes long huddled up in holes during the severe weather, now came out with the first glimpses of the sunshine. The arrival of Humphries with the intelligence which he brought, gave them new spirits. The successes of Marion at Britton's neck, and Singleton in the swamp, of which they had not heard before, though small, were yet held an earnest of what might be anticipated, and what was hoped for. The additional news that the approaching continentals were to be commanded by Gates, whose renown was in the ascendant—so far in the ascendant, indeed, that the star of Washington almost sank before it—went far to give hope a positive body and a form. Doubt succeeded to bold prediction, and the conspirators were now prepared—those reluctant before—to begin properly the organization of their section, as had been the advice of Marion. Still they were not altogether ready for the field. Property was to be secured, families carried beyond reach of that retribution which the enemy usually inflicted upon the feeble in return for the audacity and defiance of the strong; arms were to be procured, and, until the time of Sir Henry Clinton's indulgence—the twenty days—had expired, they determined to forbear all open demonstration. To these, Humphries had already designated their leader, in the person of Col. Walton, whom they all knew and esteemed. His coming out they were satisfied would alone bring an active and goodly troop into the field. Popular as he was, both in St. Paul's and St. George's,

it was confidently believed that he would bring both the parishes out handsomely, and his skill as a leader had been already tried and was highly estimated. The spirits of the little knot of conspirators grew with every enumeration of their prospects and resources, and they looked up, as daylight approached, full of hope and mutual assurances. Two of the party agreed to come out to Humphries, in the contiguous wood, by the first ringing of the bell for sabbath service—for the day was Sunday—and there, at a given spot, the lieutenant was to await them.

Before the daylight he took his departure, and leading his horse into the close swamp thicket on the river, where his first conference with Singleton had taken place, he fastened him carefully, took his seat at the foot of a tree which overhung the river, and there mused, half dozing, for the brief hour that came between the time and the dawning. But soon the light came winding brightly and more brightly around him; the mists curled up from the river, and the breeze rising up from the ocean, with the dawn, refreshed and animated him. He sat watching the mysterious separation of those twin agents of life, night and day, as the one rolled away in fog along the river, and the other burst forth, in gleams from the sky and bloom upon the earth. But these sights were not such as greatly to amuse our lieutenant, and the time passed heavily enough, until about eight o'clock, when, from the river's edge, he distinguished, crossing the bridge at Dorchester, the time-worn, bent figure, of the old Dame Blonay. She was on her way to the garrison for the revelation of that intelligence, which his father had by this time already unfolded. The lieutenant now understood a part of the design, and readily conceived that such was the purport of her visit to the village. Yet why had not her son undertaken the task himself? Why depute to an infirm old woman the performance of an object so important? The question puzzled him; and it was only a dim conjecture of the truth, which led him to believe that Goggle had made his way

back to camp with the view to some farther treachery. As the hag grew more distinct to his eye, in the increasing light, her sharp features—the subtle cast of her eye—the infirm crazy motion—bent shoulders, and witch-like staff which she carried, brought many unpleasant images to the mind of the observer; and the singular, and, to him, the superstitious fear which he had felt while gazing upon her, through the crevices of her hut the night before, came back to him with increased influence. He thought of the thousand strange stories of the neighborhood, about the witchcraft practised by her and others. Indian doctors were then, all over the country, renowned for their cures, all of which were effected by trick and mummery, mixed up with a due proportion of forest medicines—wild roots and plants, the properties of which, known through long ages to the aborigines, were foreign to the knowledge, and therefore marvellous in the estimation of the whites. To their arts the Gullah and the Ebo negroes, of which the colony had its thousands furnished by the then unscrupulous morality of its neighbours, added their spells and magic, in no stinted quantities, and of the foulest and filthiest attributes. The conjuration of these two classes became united in the practice of the cunning white, of an order little above them, and Mother Blonay formed the representative of a sect in the lower country of South Carolina, by no means small in number or trifling in influence, and which, to this day, not utterly extinguished, remains here and there in the more ignorant sections, still having power over the subject minds of the weak and superstitious.

As we have said, Humphries was not one, if the question were to be asked him, to say that he believed in the powers thus claimed for the old woman before us. But the bias of years, of early education and associates, was insurmountable; and he felt the influence which his deliberate reflection would be, nevertheless, at all times disposed to deny. He felt it now as she came towards him, and when, passing along, he saw her move towards the dwelling of his father, he

remembered her mysterious speech associated with the name of his sister, and his blood grew cold in his veins, though, an instant after, it again boiled with a fury naturally enough arising from the equivocal regard in which that speech had seemed to place her. As she passed along the copse to the edge of which his feet had almost followed her, he placed himself in a position to observe the direction which she would pursue in entering the village, and was satisfied of her object when he saw her bending her way to the fortress. We need scarce add that she told her story to Proctor, and was listened to coldly. She had brought him no intelligence, and, indeed, he knew rather more than herself. But one point of difference existed between the account given by old Humphries and the woman. The one stated that Singleton's band had withdrawn from the Stonoe, and had pushed for Black river—the other affirmed it to be there still. The difference was at once made known to Huck, a portion of whose troopers were even then getting into saddle. The residue were soon to follow, and the whole were expected to rendezvous that night at Parker's ferry. Mother Blonay was mortified that she brought no news to the garrison; but, as her story confirmed that of Humphries, Proctor gave her a reward, small, however, in comparison with what had been expected. She left the garrison in bad humour, and was soon joined on her way by Sergeant Hastings, whose orders required him to march with the detachment which was to follow Huck that afternoon. His chagrin, on this account, was not less than hers. A bitter oath accompanied the information which he gave her of the orders he had just received. The two then spoke of another matter.

"Far off as ever, mother, and without your help there's nothing to be done now. Last night I was in a fair way enough, but up comes that chap her brother —it could be nobody else—and I had to cut for it. I went over the fence then, a thought quicker than I should be able to do it now."

"It was not Bill Humphries you saw, for he was at

my cabin long time after hours last night; and then he'd not venture in this quarter now. No—no. 'Twas the old man, I reckon."

"Maybe, though he seemed to run too fast for the old fellow. But no matter who 'twas. The thing failed, and you must chalk out another track."

"I will: don't fear, for I've said it; and come fire, come storm, it must be done. Goggle—Goggle—Goggle! He must pay for that, and he shall; she shall—they shall all pay for that, and old scores besides. It's a long-standing account, sergeant, and you can help me to make it up and pay it off; and that's the reason I help you to this. I shall go about it now, and—" After a pause, in which she seemed to meditate a while—"Yes; meet me in the swamp thicket above the bridge, just after you pass the Oak Grove."

"When?"

"This morning—soon as the bells strike up for church, and before the people begin to come in freely. Don't be backward, now, but come certain, and don't wait for the last chimes."

The worthy pair separated, and the glimpses of a previous connection which their dialogue gives us, serves a little to explain some portions of our own narrative.

While this matter had been in progress, two sturdy troopers joined Humphries in the swamp. Their horses were carefully hidden, and they determined to await the time when the roads should be free from the crowd on their way to church, before they ventured abroad. They amused themselves as well as they might, keeping close in cover themselves, by watching the people as they crossed the bridges, hurried along the highway leading to the village, or lounged on the open ground in front of the church; for all of these points might easily be commanded from different places along the thicket. There came the farmer on his tacky, in his coarse striped breeches, blue homespun coatee, and broad-brimmed hat; there, the whirling carriage, borne along by four showy bays, of the wealthy

planter; there, the trudging country-girl in her huge sunbonnet and short-waisted cotton frock; and there, in little groups of two or three, the negroes, male and female, with their own small stock of eggs, chickens, blackberries, and sassafras, ploughing their way through the heavy sands to occupy their places in the village market.

While Humphries looked, he saw, to his great vexation, the figure of Dame Blonay approaching, accompanied by his sister. All his suspicions were reawakened by the sight. The girl was dressed as for church. Her dress was simple, suited to her condition, and well adapted to her shape, which was a good one. Her bonnet was rather fine and flaunting, and there was something of gaudiness in the pink and yellow distributed over her person in the guise of knots and ribands. But still the eye was not offended, for the habit did not show unfavourably along with the pretty face, and light, laughing, good-natured eye that animated it. What a contrast to the old hag beside her. The one, capricious enough, was yet artless and simple —the other was even then devising plans for her ruin.

"Come, my daughter, come farther—I would not others should hear what I say to you; and I know it will please you to know. The wood is cool and shady, and we can talk there at our ease."

"But, mother, wasn't it a strange dream now—a very strange dream, to think that I should be a great lady, and ride in my coach like the ladies at 'Middleton Place,' and 'The Oaks,' and 'Singleton's,' and all the rich people about here?—and it all seemed so true, mother—so very true, I didn't know where I was when I woke up this morning."

There was a devilish leer in the old hag's eye, as she looked into that of the vain-hearted but innocent girl beside her, and answered her in a speech well calculated to increase the idle folly already so active in her mind. Humphries heard nothing of the dialogue—he was quite too far off; but he felt so deeply anxious on the subject of the old woman's connection

with his sister, that he had actually given some directions to the two troopers along with him, and was about to emerge from his cover, and separate them at all hazards, when the bells from the village steeple struck up, and warned him of the extreme risk which he must run from such an exposure of his person. The same signal had the effect of bringing the two more closely to the copse, to which the old woman, now, by various suggestions, contrived to persuade her companion. While they approached the thicket, Humphries changed his course and position, so as to find a contiguous spot, for the concealment of his person, the moment they should stop, which would enable him to gather up their dialogue; and it was not long before they paused, at the old woman's bidding, in a well-shaded place, completely unseen from the road, and quite out of hearing from the village. Here the conversation between them was resumed—Mother Blonay leading off in reply to something said by Bella, the purport of which may be guessed from the response made to it.

"A bad dream, do you say, my daughter? I say it is a good dream, and you're a lucky girl, if you don't stand in the way of your own fine fortune. There's good coming to you: that dream's always a sign of good; it never fails. So mind you don't spoil all by some foolish notion."

"Why, how shall I do, mother? what shall I say? Dear me! I wouldn't do any thing to spoil it for the world!"

And the two seated themselves upon the green turf in the thicket, the right hand of the girl upon the knee of the hag, while her eyes looked up apprehensively and inquiringly into the face of the latter. She gave her some counsel, accordingly, in answer to the question, of a vague, indefinite character, very mysteriously delivered, and the only part of which, understood by Bella, was a general recommendation to her, quietly to receive, and not to resist her good fortune.

"But, mother, I thought you said you would show

him to me—him, my true-and-true husband, that is to be. Now I wonder who it can be. It can't be John Davis, for he's gone away from the village, and they say he's out in the swamp, mother—can you tell?"

"No, Bella; and it's no use: he's nothing at all to you."

"You think so, mother? Well, I'm sorry; for I do believe John had a true-and-true love for me in his heart, and he often said so. I wonder where he is."

"John Davis, indeed, my child! how can you speak of such a fellow? Why, what has he to show for you? A poor shoat that hasn't house, nor home, nor any thing to make a wife comfortable, or even feed her when he gets her. No, no, girl, the husband that's for you is a different sort of person—a very different sort of person, indeed."

"Oh, do, mother! can't you tell me something about him, now?—only a little; I do so want to know. Is he tall, now, or short? I hope he's tall—eh?—middle size, and wears—oh, speak, mother! and don't shake your head so—tell me at once!" And the girl pressed forward upon the old woman, and her eye earnestly watched the features of her countenance, heedless of the ogre grin which rested upon her lips, and the generally fiendish expression of her skinny face. The old woman did not immediately answer, for her thoughts seemed to wander, and her eye looked about her, as if in search of some expected object.

"What do you look for, mother?—you don't mind what I say, do you?"

"I was looking and thinking, my daughter, how to answer you best. How would you like, now, instead of hearing about your husband that is to be, to see him?"

"What! can you make him come, mother, like a picture, with a big frame round him? and shall I see him close—see him close? But I mustn't touch him, I suppose; for then he'd vanish, they say."

"Yes,—how would you like to see him, now, Bella?"

"Oh, dear me, I should be frightened! You'd better

tell me who he is, and don't bring him: though, indeed, mother, I can't think there would be danger."

"None—none at all," said the old woman in reply, who seemed disposed to prolong the dialogue.

"Well, if he only looked like John Davis, now!"

"John Davis, indeed, Bella!—what do you say, now, of the sergeant, Sergeant Hastings? suppose it happened to be him, now?"

"Don't talk to me of Sergeant Hastings, mother; for I was a fool to mind him. He don't care that for me, I know: and he talks cross to me; and if I don't run myself out of breath to serve him, he says ugly things. Besides, he's been talking strange to me, and I don't like it. More than once I've been going to tell brother William something that he once said to me: and I know, if I had, there would have been a brush between them; for William won't stand any thing that's impudent. Don't talk of him to me."

"But I must, my daughter, for it cannot be helped. If I see that he's born to be your husband, and you his wife, it must be so, and I must say it."

"No, no—it's not so, mother, I know. It shan't be so," said the girl, firmly enough. "I won't believe it, neither, and you're only plaguing me."

"It's a truth, Bella, and neither you nor I can help it, or keep it off. I tell you, child that you were born for Sergeant Hastings."

"But I won't be born for him, neither. I can't, and I won't, for you don't know what he said to me, and it's not good for me to tell it again, for it was naughty; and I'm sorry I ever talked cross to poor John Davis, and I did so all because of him."

The change in her regards from Hastings to her old lover, was a source of no small astonishment to the old hag, who knew not how to account for it. It gave less satisfaction to her than to Humphries, who, in the neighbouring bush, heard every syllable which had been uttered. The secret of this change is easily given. As simple as a child, the mere deference to her claims of beauty, had left her easily susceptible of

imposition; and without any feeling actually enlisted in favour of Hastings, she had been on the verge of that precipice—the gulf which passion or folly so often prepares for its unheeding votaries. His professions and flatteries had gradually filled her mind, and when his continued attentions had driven all those away, from whom she had, or might also have received them, it followed that she became a dependant entirely upon him, who, in creating this state of subservience, had placed her, to a certain degree at least, at his mercy. She felt this dependence now, and it somewhat mortified her; her vanity grew hurt, when the tone of deference formerly used by her lover, had been changed to one of command and authority; and she sometimes sighed when she thought of the unremitting attentions of her old lover from Goose Creek, the indefatigable Davis. The gaudy dress, and imposing pretensions, had grown common in her eye, while, at the same time, the inferiority of the new lover to the old, in delicacy of feeling, and genuine regard, had become sufficiently obvious. She had, of late, instituted the comparison between them more than once, and the consequence was inevitable. There was no little decision in her manner, therefore, as she refused to submit to the fate which Mother Blonay desired to impose upon her.

"But, Bella, my daughter—"

"No, no, mother—don't tell me of Sergeant Hastings any more—I wont hear of him any longer."

"And why not, Bella, my dear," exclaimed the redoubtable sergeant himself, coming from behind the trees and speaking to her with a mixed expression of pride and dissatisfaction in his countenance—"why not, I pray, my dear?"

The poor girl was dumb at this intrusion. She scarcely dared to look up, as, with the utmost composure, Hastings took a seat beside her. The old hag who had arranged the scheme, at the same moment rose to depart. Quick as thought, Bella seized her hand and would have risen also, but with a gentle

force the sergeant prevented her, and retained his hold upon her wrist while compelling her to resume the seat beside him.

"I must go, sergeant—father is waiting for me I'm sure—and the bells are 'most done ringing. Don't leave me, mother."

But the old woman was gone, and the girl sat trembling beside the strong man who held her, speaking, when she did, in a tremor, and begging to depart. But why dwell on what ensued. The brutal suitor had but one object, and did not long delay to exhibit its atrocious features. Entreaties were succeeded by rudenesses; and the terrified girl, shrieking and screaming to the old hag who had decoyed and left her, was dragged recklessly back by the strong arms of her companion.

"Cry away—Goggle now—Goggle now—Goggle now—scream on, you poor fool—scream, but there's no help for you." And as the old beldam thus answered to the prayers of the girl, she was stricken aside and hurled like a stone into the bush, even while the fiendish soliloqny was upon her lips, by the raging brother, who now darted forward. In another instant, and he had dashed the ravisher to the earth—torn his sister, now almost exhausted, from his grasp—and with his heel upon the breast of Hastings, and his knife bared in his hand, that moment would have been the last of life to the ruffian, but for the intervention of the two troopers, who, hearing the shriek, had also rushed forward from the recesses in the wood where the providence of Humphries had placed them. They prevented the blow, but with their aid the sergeant was gagged, bound, and dragged down into the copse where the horses awaited them.

"Oh, brother—dear brother William!" cried the terrified girl—"believe me, brother William, but it's not my fault—I didn't mean to do wrong! I am innocent—that I am!"

She hung upon him as if she feared his suspicions. He pressed her to his arms while weeping like a very child over her.

"I know it—I know it, Bella! and God knows how glad I am to know it! Had I not heard all between you, I'd ha' put this knife into you, just the same as if you were not my own flesh and blood. But go now—run to church, and pray to have some sense as well as innocence; for innocence without sense is like a creeping baby that has not yet got the use of its arms and legs. Go now—run all the way—and mind that you say nothing to the old man about it."

Throwing her arms about his neck and kissing him, she hurried upon her way with the speed of a bird just escaping, and narrowly, from the net of the fowler.

END OF VOL. I.

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