

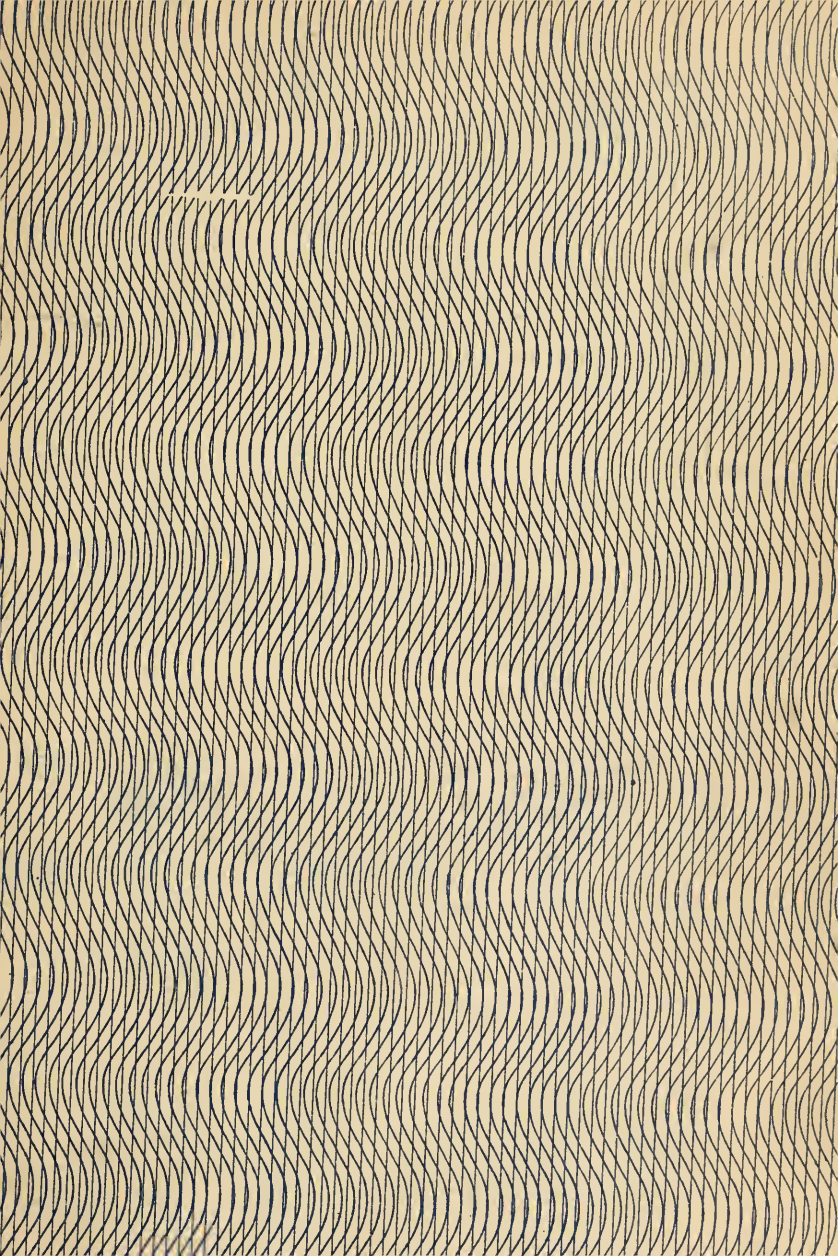
*The Rebel's
Daughter*




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THE
REBEL'S DAUGHTER

A STORY OF LOVE, POLITICS
AND WAR

BY
J. G. WOERNER

Illustrated by E G Witter.

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To Mrs. Rush Campbell Owen, of Springfield, Missouri — who shares the author's recollections of May Meadows — this volume is respectfully dedicated.

St. Louis, November, 1899.

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THE REBEL'S DAUGHTER

A Story of Love, Politics and War.

PART FIRST:

LOVE'S YOUNG DREAM.

I.

A LESSON IN WOODCRAFT.

IN ante-bellum days a heavily-laden freight-wagon rolled along the great State-road approaching Brookfield from the East. The road over the mountains was rough in mountainous parts, not without steep acclivities; and in the valleys, after rains, and during heavy thaws, the mud, both deep and tenacious, at times offered serious impediment to locomotion, requiring power in the draft animals and skill in their handling to avoid tedious delays.

On that bright summer day, however, the stately six horses drew the wagon, heavily freighted as it was, with perfect ease along the level stretch of road across Kickapoo Prairie. Guided by a cunning hand, the well-conditioned animals stepped nimbly forward. Equipped with whip and line, the driver bestrode the saddle-horse, not without a boorish dignity: the consciousness of sovereign sway over that powerful, thoroughly trained team, obeying the slightest touch of the line, imparted

to his otherwise stolid features a gleam of intelligence. Nor would his weather-tanned face and compact, well-knit frame compare unfavorably with the lank, gawky youth who sat behind him on the wagon-board, having sought shelter there, under the wagon cover, from the fervid rays of the sun.

The paleness of the latter's boyish face betrayed that little of sunshine had hitherto fallen to his lot. His forehead rivalled in whiteness the drilling with which the wagon was covered and which, bleached by the alternate rain and shine of bygone years, encompassed him like an aureole. But — alas for the romance! — the picture could not in truth be called a charming one; to a superficial observer not even pathetic. What it mutely proclaimed of past privation and unsatisfied longing might be noted to a careful observer of human nature; not at all, for instance, to the unsophisticated teamster on the saddle-horse.

But then he on the wagon-board posed not for a picture. He revelled in bliss, for the moment unalloyed. Care and worry he had left behind in the city from which he had escaped. In contrast with the weariness of mind and body brought on by incessant toil, the sense of rest and peace to which he now abandoned himself became doubly delightful. Sweet to him was the fragrance of grass and the perfume of flowers wafted on the soft breeze that caressed his face. The profound solitude was enhanced rather than disturbed by the drowsy creaking of the wagon-tongue; the buzzing of insects, and the rustling of grass; the scampering of a timid hare across the road, or the circling of a hawk in dizzy height overhead intensified rather than disturbed the restful, silent solitude.

It was a lovely day. One of those perfect days of Spring or early Summer, of which the climate of the Southwest, delighting to rush from raw wintry blasts into enervating Summer sultriness, is usually so sparing. Densely blue the sky above, relieved here and there by fleecy clouds, soft and white, like cotton bursting from its boll; bright the Kickapoo Prairie in festive garb below. The juicy green of grass and herbs but

brightened the glow and color of the wild flowers with which the prairie was studded. A playful zephyr teases now the laughing blossoms, now the waving grass, until, thrilled with his wanton caresses, the verdant blades and blushing blossoms dance in merry glee. Swelling anon into mischievous mood, he lashes them in turn, and they bow their heads and toss about complainingly, changing the smiling prairie into a surging ocean of verdure. And through it all winds the dusty yellow road, not unlike a gigantic serpent lazily basking in the sun, hiding here behind some tall bush or shrub, or slinking away there out of sight in following a depression in the ground; but always emerging again into the sunshine until it finally disappears in the distant forest that closes in the prairie.

But Yahkop, the autoerat of whip and line, is serenely indifferent to the genial mood of the weather. The charms that delight his young friend on the wagon-board have a soporific effect upon him only. The landscape, so charming in its loveliness to his young companion, is to him of wearisome monotony. The humming of insects and the rustling of leaves and grassblades become a lullaby, to which the measured pace of the horses marks time. Unconsciously he nods in response to the step of his saddle-horse, as if the two held mysterious converse, betokening wonderful unanimity by continual nodding of their heads.

Now Victor, the young man in the wagon, thought highly of the capabilities of his friend. To doubt this friend's infallibility as an hostler would have seemed to him rank treason. But the remarkable uniformity of the motion of the respective heads of Yahkop and the horse he was riding brought a smile to his lips: for, as the former bowed lower and lower, and was then suddenly jerked up, only to repeat the hobbling, bowing and jerking, again and again, he could not ignore the conviction that the redoubtable teamster was dozing on his lofty saddle-throne. But presently his smile of amusement gave way to an expectant mien. Was not here the opportunity to gratify his long-cherished ambition to drive this glorious team

of six all by himself? He determined to try his luck: Yabkop could but refuse or at the worst lecture him for his audacity. So, summoning the requisite courage, he spoke up:

“Yabkop!” (In faultless English his name ought to have been Jacob or even James; but those who knew him well preferred to call him, in deference to his German nativity and broad brogue, as he had been called in the fatherland.) “Yabkop! Get into the wagon and sleep! Come; let me drive.”

At the first sound of Victor's voice, Yabkop suddenly assumed a bolt upright position and cracked his whip with a vehemence that started his horses into a lively trot. Then he turned, with a briskness quite unusual in him, toward his companion, and laughed. His voice, ordinarily of baritone pitch, on this occasion assumed a shrill treble calculated to demonstrate the absurdity of any suspicion that he might have been caught napping. “What?” he said, “you vill drihfe?”

“Yes,” the young man spoke up eagerly, “You get into the wagon and sleep. I will drive for you.”

A pause. The teamster pondered deeply the singular proposition of his young friend. Then, “But you don't ken drihfe,” he said.

“Oh, yes, I can,” the youth replied, parading a confidence which he did not feel. “I have seen you at it so often, that it would be funny if I could not do it too.”

Another pause and a dubious shake of the head. “I don't b'liev you ken drihfe,” he grumbled, rather to himself, however. Presently a cunning expression spread over his physiognomy, as he turned to his comrade and asked: “Vell, how you mek tshee?”

“Gee?” Victor repeated in blank astonishment. “What is gee?”

Yabkop enjoyed the success of his shrewd expedient immensely. “Ho ho!” he laughed, “you vill drihfe, und don't ken mek tshee!” Then he continued his catechising: “Und how you mek hah?”

But the youth was again driven to confess his ignorance, and again the cunning teamster rejoiced. After a brief pause he inquired: "Vell, how you mek de hosses go right?"

"I know!" was the eager reply. "You give two jerks with the line, and the lead horse will turn to the right."

"Hm — yahs, ish so!" said Yabkop, nodding gravely. "Und how you mek de hosses go left?"

"This way," promptly responded Victor, illustrating the motion with arm and hand. "You pull the line steadily until the leader has turned as far to the left as you want him."

"Hm, yahs," with much nodding. "You pull mit der line, und dat ish tshee: und you tsherk mit der line, und dat ish hah." And the ignorance of Victor as to so simple a matter as gee and hah struck him as so funny, that he gave vent to a renewed fit of laughter, emphasizing his own superior knowledge by adding: "Und you vill drihfe und don't ken mek tshee und hah! Und you been longer in dis kundree oss I!"

"But one does not learn such things in a city, at least not in a bake shop." The answer came in tones of regret, as if Victor wished to apologize for his lamentable ignorance.

"Und you don't ken learn it in der sheool, too," said Yabkop, mollified by Victor's apologetic voice. "Ven you will lern somedings, you must do it. Ven you lerns it in der sheool, you don't ken do it."

"But I have not been to school much, either," Victor enlightened his friend. "Three or four years, hardly; and in a public school, at that."

"Plenty sheool fur der packwoots," was Yabkop's opinion, emphatically expressed. "Und more oss der packwoots beele got, vhat ve vill see." With this he vacated his saddle, and said, beckoning the young man to mount, "now show how you ken drihfe."

Victor complied with alacrity, leaping from his seat to the tongue of the wagon, and climbing thence into the saddle. He took whip and line in either hand, and prepared to show off.

Nothing could be easier; the excellently trained animals obeyed as readily, as if a more experienced hand had hold of the line. He turned to the right, then to the left: he brought the horses to a halt, and started them again — just as the skeptical teamster demanded. The latter seemed well pleased with the result of the investigation, and prepared to retire into the interior of the wagon, to seek what comfort he might upon the boxes and barrels composing the freight.

First, however, he strictly charged the newly installed driver to be very careful in the handling of the horses. “I let you drihfe, now,” he said in a solemn voice. “Und you teks care — undershtand? Und you don’t mek no foolishness mit der hosses — undershtand? You drihfes shteddy: und you looks on der road, und you don’t vip der hosses — undershtand? Und ven, in ’bout a’ hour odder dree quarter, der hill gums, odder ven somedings else gums, und you don’t undershtand, you shtops, und holler me — undershtand? Now, drihfe on!”

Of course, Victor readily promised full compliance with all that was demanded of him, for he burned with anxiety to assume supreme command of the glorious team. All went well. Proud as a king, — happier, perchance — he sat on his leather throne, flourishing his whip for a scepter and ruling his obedient subjects by means of the line with sovereign caprice. Well might the sober leader be puzzled, why he was not permitted to keep either the right or the left, or yet the middle of the road, but must describe a zigzag between the two sides: he obeyed with stolid indifference each contradictory command as conveyed to him by the magic line, and kept his peace, as became a loyal subject. In like manner the other horses followed their leader: and even Uncas, the faithful watchdog, trotted serenely alongside, with lolling tongue, not even a wag of his tail betraying astonishment at the new ruler in the saddle.

When the team had reached the confines of the prairie, the road became narrower, and shorter curves appeared. This

gave Victor new pleasure; for while he had hitherto found no occasion to use either line or whip, the horses now must be guided, to avoid bad places in the road, or here and there a stump projecting into it, rendering necessary the use not only of the line, but also of the bridle of the horse he was riding. Yahkop was still snoring lustily, when Victor perceived what appeared to him to be a steep declivity of the road, and regretfully prepared to abdicate his brief authority. But he soon discovered that the descent was not nearly so steep as he had at first imagined. He hesitated: the road was in good condition: the horses had hitherto promptly responded to every indication given with the line — what need was there to disturb his comrade's sweet slumber?

While he was still hesitating, the horses had reached the brow of the declivity, and stood suddenly still, of their own accord. What did this mean? Victor was puzzled. He remembered that Yahkop had sometimes permitted the horses to rest at particularly rough places of the road: but that had always been when traveling up hill, and the horses, just now seemed hardly tired. Again he was about to call on Yahkop, and again he hesitated and timidly signalled the animals to start. But he was more than ever surprised by the promptness with which they obeyed and the vigor with which they pulled. The impetus they imparted to the wagon was so forcible, that the rear horses were pushed into a brisk trot, and the whole team accelerated their pace. The descent was gained in a brief moment, and Victor, really frightened now, called frantically on the teamster for help.

When Yahkop, roused by the cries, scrambled to the front of the wagon, the whole team was rushing down hill with alarming speed. "Lick der off-hoss — an hart lick!" he cried in a voice of thunder; for his experienced eye detected danger in a direction not visible to Victor.

So impressive and urgent were Yahkop's tone and manner, that Victor was spurred into immediate action. Unfortunately, he had not the remotest idea which was the off-horse; but it was

evident to him that he was expected to strike a blow, and so he struck at random, and it fell on the saddle-horse.

The effect was disastrous. Victor had used the whip with vigor, if not with judgment, and caused the horse which he was riding to make a sudden leap forward, which Yahkop had intended the other horse to make, and thus precipitated the catastrophe which the teamster had meant to avert. There was a crash. The wagon-tongue was hurled to the right with such violence as to dash both the rear horses to the ground, and Victor was flung headlong out on the road.

Yahkop had leaped from the wagon with astonishing celerity and assisted the fallen horses to regain their feet. They snorted and trembled with fear: but his quick eye soon assured him that they had sustained no serious injury. A few caresses and soothing expressions sufficed to quiet them. The other horses had stood still of their own accord, and neither they nor the wagon showed any indication of damage. Having satisfied himself in this respect, Yahkop found time to look around for the unlucky youth, who stood there the picture of consternation and anxiety, his clothes covered with dust, surveying the confusion produced by his imprudence. For him, the irate teamster had neither caresses nor soothing words. His eyes blazed with wrath. He was angered beyond measure at the thoughtlessness of the boy, and at the flagrant violation of the peremptory orders he had given him: his wrath heightened not a little by the consciousness of his own imprudence in committing the team to the inexperienced hands of the young lad. He sought relief for his overcharged feelings in a flood of invectives such as Victor had never listened to before.

“Vy in Dunder you liek der saddle-hoss ven I tells you liek der off-hoss, hey?” he burst out. “You don’t ken der off-hoss, hey? and you don’t ken der saddle-hoss?”

Victor was disarmed. He stood with downcast eyes, saying not a word in defense or justification.

“Und vy in Dunder you don’t holler me ven der hill gums, hey?” he continued savagely. “Don’t I tell you, holler me

ven der hill gums, hey? Und vy in Dunder you don't shtop, und holler me ven der hill gums?"

A glow of shame colored Victor's cheeks. He felt the rebuke to be just, and had nothing to say.

"Und vy in Dunder you drihfe down der hill mit a gwickness like you vill go to der hell, hey? Mit six hosses und fiftig hundred pound in der vaggen, hey? Und vy in Dunder you drihfe down der hill und got no shoes on, hey?"

"Shoes?" Victor inquired in utter bewilderment, casting a wondering glance at the covering of his feet, and then at his interlocutor.

"Yahs, shoes!" thundered the teamster. "Vy you don't put der shoes on ven you drihfe down der hill mit fiftig hundred pound in der vaggen?"

"But I *had* my shoes on," said Victor, in meek astonishment at this strange accusation.

"*Your* shoes!" screamed Yahkop, a curious mingling of anger, sarcasm and amusement working in his features. "Who talks 'bout *your* shoes! I don't talk 'bout *your* shoes; I talk 'bout der vaggen shoes, der lock-shoes — *dese* shoes!" And he pointed to the irons hanging on either side of the wagon, attached to strong chains, and intended to serve as drags in descending steep places, at the same time locking the hind wheels and protecting the tires against ruinous friction.

A sudden gleam of light burst in upon the bewildered boy. This, then, was the secret why the sagacious animals had halted on the brow of the descent, — they had meant to give him time to lock the wheels: and he had so stupidly failed to understand them. This, too, explained their vigorous pull on starting again! He felt deeply humiliated. But he must not permit Yahkop to believe that he had wantonly invited the danger. "I did not believe the descent to be either steep or long," he said meekly. "And I forgot about locking the wheels."

"Yahs!" growled the teamster, "you tingks you drihfe a baby-vaggen mit goats on a waxt floor!"

Presently he continued in a more moderate voice, "Now you run der vaggen in der mire, now you pull 'im out!"

Yahkop examined the situation. The wagon had been run against an oak of considerable size, by that unlucky liek given to the wrong horse, and the question was how to get clear of it. It was wedged in between the right fore-wheel and the tongue, and so violent had been the collision, that the trace-chains had snapped like glass. "What ve go do now?" he asked with a scowl.

Victor could give no information. The striking results of his skill in driving had quite exhausted his scanty stock of self-assurance. Nevertheless, since an answer was evidently expected of him, he timidly suggested: "Could we not hitch the horses on behind and haul away the wagon?"

"What! Putt der vaggen before der hoss? Ain't you smart!" said Yahkop, with profound contempt. But he nevertheless walked straightway to the rear, as if to ascertain the feasibility of the plan suggested. An emphatic shaking of the head soon showed his companion that it found no favor in Yahkop's eyes. "Der hossen don't ken pull behind," he announced, and walked round to the front again, where the prospect was equally unpromising.

"Could we not unload the goods, and then draw away the empty wagon?" Victor once more ventured to intimate.

The answer came promptly, and quite as Victor had expected. "Yahs," the teamster sneered, "mebby ve trow out der goots. Und who go trow 'em in again den? You go trow a hoxett in der vaggen mit half tousand pound? You eat more pacon und corn-bret fust, ven you do dat."

"Some people may pass, who will be willing to help us," Victor suggested.

"You shust vissle fur 'em!" Yahkop growled. He had not yet recovered his temper.

Victor ventured no more suggestions. "If only that tree were out of the way!" he sighed, in hopeless dejection.

"Dunderation!" cried Yahkop: "dat ish der ting. Ven

der vaggén don't go out der tree's vay, den der tree go out der vaggén's vay. Ken you chop mit der ax? "

Yahkop's voice had sounded so much less acrimonious, that Victor felt greatly relieved. Admitting that he had never done any work in that line, he thought that he could easily do it, and inquired eagerly whether he was to chop down the tree.

A curious expression flitted across Yahkop's face. It was not a genuine smile, nor even a grin, that found lodgment in it; but a sly, though not ill-natured suggestion of triumph displaced the angry scowl that had hitherto dwelt there. "Yahs," he said, "git der ax and chop down der tree. Und don't you go do it too gwick."

Victor went to work with great alacrity. High he swung the ax, and weighty blows he struck the doomed oak. Deep in the trunk he buried the glittering blade, so that it cost him quite an effort to dislodge it after every blow. But it required many strokes before he even chipped off a piece of bark; because he never struck twice at the same place. Pausing, presently, to wipe the perspiration from his face, he was dismayed to find what little progress he had made. Yahkop watched him complacently. Finally, a broad grin lighted up his face as he said, "Gum, Fictor, let me try. You ken drihfe more better oss chop drees. You chop so gwick, oss a new tree grows up before dis tree falls down."

Ashamed of his lack of skill in even so rude an accomplishment as chopping trees, Victor yielded the ax as readily as he had taken it up, and his sturdy comrade went to work with a will. He had better success: the chips flew merrily in all directions. But the oak against which he essayed his power was a stately tree. More than a hundred summers had contributed to its growth: the storms of more than a hundred winters had wrestled with it, achieving no greater things against it, than to despoil it of its annual crop of leaves and acorns. And very soon Yahkop, too, paused in his work, to breathe and wipe his forehead, and to look with dismay upon the insignificance of the work he had accomplished.

Before he resumed, the rumble of an approaching vehicle was heard, which soon emerged from the woods and proved to be a light and elegant, though strongly built traveling wagon, drawn by a span of fine horses. The reins were in the hands of a rather tall, somewhat sparely built man of middle age, who occupied the front seat. Another figure was discernible in the interior of the wagon, but so deeply shaded by the leather covering of the vehicle, that Victor could not plainly make it out. Having reached the scene of Victor's late exploit, the gentleman halted his horses and exclaimed:

“Why halloo, friend Yakhop! What in the world are you doing here? You don't mean to camp so early in the day?”

“No, Kernel May,” said Yakhop laconically. “Not ven I not must.”

“Aha!” cried the stranger, whom Yakhop addressed as Colonel May. “I see what is up. You have run against a tree?”

“Yahs,” the teamster admitted, with an indifferent attempt at a smile. “Und I wish it vas down.”

“A thing that will not happen very soon if you don't do better work than this,” the gentleman observed, the smile upon his face giving it, as Victor thought, a very winning expression. “But how, in the name of mischief, could such a thing happen to you, who are known as the best driver between the city and Brookfield?”

“So:” said the teamster, his face aglow with pleasure over the compliment to his skill; “I got a new drihfer, und he found a new vay to Brookfield, und der new vay go across der dree.” A slight shrug of his shoulder in the direction of Victor served to indicate who the new driver was, and a cunning grin accompanied the joke.

Colonel May glanced at Victor, who blushed with pleasure. The gentleman in the carriage possessed a strong fascination for him. And the blush deepened when the stranger asked Yakhop to introduce him to the young man.

“Dis ish my new drihfer,” said Yakhop, winking slyly.

“ He go shtorekipper fur old man Van Braaken : und his name ish Victor mit his front name, und Waldhorst mit his name behint.”

“ Well, young man,” said the stranger, with a gracious bow and a smile that completely won Victor’s heart, “ it seems to me that I have heard of you before. My friend, the Mynheer Van Braaken, informed me that he expects a young gentleman from the city to assist him as salesman in his extensive establishment. I trust that you may like our people when you get to know them, and I bid you welcome as a new neighbor.”

The friendly greeting delighted Victor, but he was at a sad loss to know what to do or say. While in the act of imitating the bow he had seen Colonel May execute, a lovely head bobbed out of the carriage and a maiden’s silvery voice resounded in merry laughter.

Colonel May regarded the young lady with a rebuking glance. Unabashed, however, she climbed into the front seat by his side, and said, as soon as her fit of laughter subsided, “ Oh, papa, he is such a funny gentleman ! And it must be so droll to hear him, and Yahkop, and Mr. Van Braaken talk gibberish in the Dutch store ! ”

“ Do not mind the child’s silly talk, Mr. Waldhorst,” said the Colonel. “ But let me introduce you to my daughter Eleonora, whom we call Nellie for short. You have probably heard our friend Yahkop call me May. Nellie, my child, this is Mr. Waldhorst, who is to be our neighbor soon.”

Victor had never been introduced to a lady and was painfully conscious of his profound ignorance how to behave on the occasion. To be sure, Miss Nellie was not a grown up lady ; but then this consideration by no means lessened the embarrassment of the awkward boy, for the self-possession of the damsel impressed him all the more, perhaps, on that account. Blushing to the roots of his hair, he mechanically repeated the motions through which he had gone in imitation of the Colonel’s bow, and did this in so original a manner, that the young lady

found it difficult to resist a new outburst of merriment. Mindful of papa's reproachful glance, however, she bravely conquered the temptation and extended her hand with so winning a smile, that Victor was charmed out of what little presence of mind was left to him. There was no misunderstanding that inviting gesture, however: so he stepped boldly forward and seized the dainty fingers, carrying them, on an unconscious impulse of gallantry, to his lips.

The hand was quickly withdrawn. But she said, in the sweetest voice that Victor thought he had ever heard, "I am very glad, Mr. Waldhorst, to make your acquaintance, and that we are to be neighbors. You must come and see us right soon."

"May I?" he inquired with an eagerness that left no doubt as to the sincerity of his pleasure on receiving the invitation.

"Why of course," she replied, looking at him as if wondering at the question, and then added: "And you pardon my rudeness, do you not?"

Victor was in a mood in which he would gladly have pardoned any crime the young lady could have committed, and was on the point of telling her so, when it occurred to him, that to grant a pardon presupposed an offense, and he could not conscientiously admit that he had been offended. Quite the contrary; he had never been so sweetly charmed, as when he heard his full name, coupled with the title "Mister" pronounced by her rosy lips. So he answered, with a diplomacy quite foreign to his nature: "If I had anything to forgive, I would gladly do so for the pleasure of hearing you laugh as you did a while ago."

Victor had immediate reward for his gallantry; for she, thus encouraged, indulged herself in an unchecked peal of musical merriment, before she exclaimed, "You are indeed a droll young man, Mr. Waldhorst."

"He has given you an example of courtesy worthy of imitation," said the Colonel. Then seeing that Yakhop had resumed his laborious task, he turned to him, saying: "But our friend

So he stepped boldly forward and seized the dainty fingers.



here needs a lesson in wood-craft. This is an art upon which we in the back-woods pride ourselves." With these words he threw the reins to his daughter and leaped to the ground. Divesting himself of his coat, he took the ax from Yahkop's hand. "You are making sorry work of this," he said. "If you go on in this way, the tree, when you get it down, will obstruct the course of the wagon. Besides, you must do better than this with the ax." — pointing to the jagged, irregular opening that had been cut into the trunk of the tree — "If you don't want to be laughed at by our backwoodsmen."

Both Victor and Yahkop were astonished to see with what ease and dexterity he swung the ax; the blows fell rapidly and with a precision which produced a perfectly even, smooth surface of both edges of the triangular section he cut into the trunk. Even the chips which his swift strokes dislodged, were larger and more regular than those that Yahkop had produced. Presently he motioned his daughter to drive a little further down the hill, so as to be out of danger from the falling tree, in case it should come down in an unforeseen direction, and induced Yahkop and Victor to remove the wagon horses also, to make sure against an accident.

A few more weighty blows, and the tree swayed slowly from side to side, as if making ready for the tumble; then the crown inclined majestically toward his brethren of the forest, maintaining his dignity to the last. A loud crash now spoke his angry protest against the violence done him: then accelerated downward movement, renewed crashing, a hissing of the leaves and twigs as they were forced through the air, and the giant lay prostrate. It had fallen precisely as indicated by the Colonel, and the road was clear for the wagon to pass on.

Yahkop approached the Colonel, who leant upon the ax and complacently regarded the result of his work. They shook hands, and Yahkop was about to say something in acknowledgment of the valuable aid received from him, when the Colonel interrupted:

"Spare your words, my friend. One neighbor must always

be ready to assist another by any such trivial service as this. Besides, you know, I am a candidate. If you want to do me a particular favor, you may vote for me for Congress at the next election, if it don't go against your conscience."

"I bet chew!" the teamster exclaimed, shaking the Colonel vigorously by the hand. "Und I licks all mine friends what don't go wote fur you, ebery times."

Victor looked about for the carriage with the young lady: it was gone. He ran out into the road, to see: there, some distance down, where there was a curve in the road, he saw the vehicle, the horses running with frantic speed.

"Colonel—your daughter!" he cried, turning deadly pale. Then he ran, as he had never run before.



II.

ONE OF THE F. F. V. OUT WEST.

IN the valley approached by the road ran a creek of considerable size, which, after the heavy rains sometimes experienced in this latitude, assumed the proportions of a lively river, to cross which safely it was necessary to find some place known as a reliable ford.

To reach such a ford, the road led aside from its direct course up the creek for some distance, until the ford was reached, and on the other side retracing its course along the creek to a point almost opposite the place where the detour began. Much of the bend so described was visible from the elevation where the travelers had met.

Colonel May, the moment his attention had been called to the danger of his daughter, mounted that one of Yakhop's horses which, after a swift glance at them all, he judged to be the fleetest, and dashed down the road at the top of his speed. Victor had dashed off in a different direction. Surmising that the frightened horses would in their flight keep to the road, he plunged through the woods down a steep descent, making a bee-line for the nearest part of the road on the other side of the creek, which he hoped to reach before the horses, because he thus cut off the great detour described by the road in the shape of a horse-shoe. To be sure, the declivity was very steep on the line in which he ran, and dense brush and underwood often rendered his progress difficult; but he was swift of foot, and the obstacles in his way only fired his zeal. On reaching the valley, the road again became visible and the sight of the runaway horses, having by this time crossed the creek, and tearing down the road with terrific speed, spurred him to renewed energy. Hav-

ing reached the creek, he plunged in without a moment's hesitation. The water was deeper than he had calculated: after pressing forward a few steps, it reached to his armpits, and the strong current carried him a considerable distance down stream. But he did not lose his footing, and soon gained the other shore. On dry land again, he rushed onward, and reached the road as he had hoped, before the runaways had passed. He placed himself directly in their way, stretching out both arms to intercept them. Of course, he failed to stop them; but their endeavor to avoid him — one of them pulling to the one, the other to the other side of him — lessened their speed considerably. As they came within reach, Victor seized the bridle of either horse, one in each hand, and hung on with his whole weight. He was quickly lifted from off his feet by the rearing animals, and dragged along by them; but as he held on with iron grip, he presently regained his foothold. His efforts were seconded by a strong pull on the lines from within the carriage: and it was not long before the animals were conquered, and stood, trembling and snorting with fear, but reduced to obedience once more.

Victor likewise stood trembling and panting. The exertion had been well-nigh too much for him. His heart beat in violent throbs, his breast heaved with a vehemence that seemed to shake his body to pieces. But a triumphant smile lit up his features, and became an eloquent substitute for the words which his agitation prevented him from uttering, as he stepped around to make his bow before the young lady. She sat quietly, her little hands still holding the reins firmly; her face a shade paler than was natural to her, but otherwise cool and self-possessed. If she had been really frightened or excited, Victor could see no trace of it.

Great was his astonishment on beholding the unparalleled courage and presence of mind of this remarkable little lady. But his enthusiasm received a sudden check when a hearty peal of laughter greeted him from those beautiful lips, before he had been able to say a word. The voice was clear and silvery.

as it was when he had first heard and found it so sweetly melodious. But he did not now so much enjoy it. It occurred to him that her hilarity was, under the circumstances, a trifle out of place. He had expected to find her wild with excitement and fear: yet there she sat, as unconcerned, apparently, as if, since he had seen her before, a life had not been in jeopardy, to save which he had periled his own — and laughed at him for his pains.

“ Oh, Mr. Waldhorst! ” she said, as soon as she recovered her voice, “ if you knew how you *do* look, — for all the world just like the scare-crow papa put up in our wheat-field! ”

Victor cast a glance over his person, and became aware of the cause of her merriment. She was right. A scare-crow could not present a more comical sight than he did at this moment. Both sleeves of his light coat had been violently torn and hung in great rags, leaving one of his arms quite bare, and the other visible through a torn shirt sleeve. The coat-tails had gained in length what they had lost in breadth and symmetry, in consequence of great rents sustained by them, and his pantaloons gave ocular demonstration that their fabric had been unequal to the strain upon them by the briars and brush of the thickets through which he had forced his way. Even his shoes proved the worse for their rough usage in Victor's encounter with the horses, exposing through great gaps between their soles and uppers his toes, innocent of covering save by a layer of dust. Dust profusely clung, also, to the remaining portions of his garments, which the soaking they had received in the creek rendered peculiarly adhesive.

She was right. This was not a plight to appear before any one, least of all before the sharp eyes of the mirthful young maiden who sat there so provokingly self-possessed. His humiliation was complete; but with it was blended a keener pain, — a sense of injury, of wrong — the source of which was as yet a mystery to him. Perhaps, if he could have accounted to himself for the hurt to his feelings, he would have ascribed it to the dimming of the bright image that had won for itself a place

in his heart. He sought refuge behind the carriage, which served him at once to hide his ludicrous plight, and to conceal the chagrin and mortification that he could not at once repress, from those keen, sparkling eyes.

He had not been in hiding long, however, when he heard a soft, half coaxing, half reproachful voice pronounce his name :

“ Mr. Waldhorst ! ”

The voice had great charm for Victor. Still there was a trace of the deep disappointment he felt audible in his answer :

“ Yes, Ma'am ? ”

“ You are not going to run away ? ”

“ Indeed, I should like to.”

“ And leave me to the mercy of these wild horses ? ”

“ You do not seem to be the least bit afraid of them.”

“ Oh, but you do not know what a terrible fright I was in,” the sweet voice continued to plead, “ when the horses ran with such terrific speed down that long hill, and I had great trouble to keep them in the middle of the road, and I feared every moment, that they might dash the wagon against a tree, or upset it ! And then what courage it gave me to see you fly to my rescue — yes, literally fly — for then I knew that you would save me, and I was no longer afraid, not even when you threw yourself right before the horses, like a hero of olden time. If you leave me now, I shall just jump out, and let the horses run away again.”

How eagerly the proud boy drank in the delicious flattery ! What a glorious thing it would be, to accept the tempting situation and play protector to the pretty child ! But he remembered that she had shown greater skill and self-possession than he, in the management of the runaways ; nor could he forget the ringing laugh of a moment ago — nothing should induce him to subject himself a second time to such painful humiliation.

“ Please excuse me,” he said rather reluctantly, however. “ I really cannot show myself in the presence of a lady in the fix I am in.”

“Pshaw! I am not a lady at all,” Nellie retorted, a little impatiently. “I am only a school girl and spoiled with too much petting, papa says. I shouldn’t think a brave hero like you would mind the silliness of a little school girl. Do come in and take the lines. until papa comes!”

Victor, who found it exceedingly difficult to resist the maiden’s entreaty, was saved the necessity of further struggling against his own inclination by the appearance of Colonel May, who came galloping up as fast as the borrowed horse could carry him. “Here comes your father,” said Victor with a sigh of relief.

Nellie, hearing her father mentioned, leaped from the carriage and ran to meet him with outstretched arms, while Victor stepped to the front to hold the horses, and to conceal his deranged toilet from the eyes of father and daughter. The Colonel sprang from his horse and embraced the girl.

“Here I am, dear papa!” she exclaimed, returning the embrace with fervor. “All safe and sound!”

“Thank God!” he cried, “I hold you in my arms, unhurt and safe! But what a fright you have given me!”

“I was frightened too, papa!” she said with a sweet smile. “But you see all is well. And for this we are indebted to the mercy of God and the courage of Mr. Waldhorst.”

“Tell me, how on earth did it all happen?” the Colonel inquired eagerly.

“The horses were frightened by the terrific crash of the tree as it fell,” Nellie related, as they walked leisurely toward the carriage, the Colonel leading his horse by the bridle. “At first it was only Alec that shied; but I never saw him so wildly excited. For a little while Pompey was perfectly quiet and tractable; but Alec dragged him along down the hill, and pretty soon Pompey got wild also, and then both ran with all their might. It was impossible to check them. When they got to the creek, I was awfully afraid that they would upset and drown me; but you see we got through all right. And then I caught a glimpse of Mr. Waldhorst tearing down

through the brush and briars: and I knew he was coming to head off the runaways. I was perfectly sure that he would master them. And oh, you just ought to have seen him — how he dashed right into the horses while they were running at 2.40 speed, and caught them by the bridles, and how they just lifted him up from his feet, and how he held on to them, like grim death, and made them stop! Oh, he was just like a Roman hero!”

“So Mr. Waldhorst proved a readier and more efficient champion than I!” said the Colonel, smiling fondly on the enthusiastic girl. “But where is the young hero, that I may thank him for his chivalrous exploit?”

“He is hiding on the other side of the wagon,” Nellie answered, with downcast eyes. Then, raising them to her father’s face with a look blending humble penitence with roguish assurance, “Only think,” she said, “how naughty I have been! But he looked too funny for anything! In tearing down the hill, you know, and rushing right through densest brier-bushes and everything, and swimming through the creek, and swooping down on the horses like a whirlwind, he muddled and tore his clothes, and looked such a perfect scarecrow, that I could not, to save my life, help laughing at him.”

They had by this time approached so near, that Victor could not, without silly affectation, avoid meeting them. Nellie approached with beaming face and offered both her hands. “Let me thank you for your brave and noble deed, as I ought to have done long ago!” she said, “instead of laughing at you like an ungrateful goose.”

“She is a child,” said the Colonel, now also stepping forward and shaking him heartily by the hand. “A very much spoiled child, I am afraid. But don’t stand there and blush, as if you were ashamed of the heroic deed you have done. Truly, I count it high honor to shake your hand, and hope that you will permit me to regard you as my friend. That naughty puss there, and I, we are both too deeply indebted to you to square accounts by saying I thank you.”

“ Indeed, I do not deserve such kindness ! ” stammered the bashful boy. But notwithstanding his deprecatory words, he revelled in an ocean of bliss.

“ And may I now further trespass upon your good nature by asking you to drive our wagon back to the place where we left our friend Yakhop ? ” said the Colonel. “ He must have his horse back ; and after her experience just now, I would not let my hairbrained girl try another experiment with these horses.”

“ Oh, Mr. May,” said Victor, pleading with evident earnestness, “ Miss Nellie would surely prefer that you should drive instead of me ; and I can return the horse to Yakhop so that you need not be at the trouble to turn back.”

“ Well,” said the Colonel, after a brief pause, “ if you insist on it, you may oblige us in this respect also. I only fear that, wearied as you feel, you will find a ride without a saddle rather trying.”

“ Not in the least ! ” Victor asserted eagerly. “ I am quite accustomed to riding bare-back.” Saying this, he led the horse to the other side of the wagon, and proved the truth of his assertion by straightway climbing on his back.

He could not refrain from looking back before he had trotted a hundred paces, and was surprised to see that the carriage had not moved. When, on reaching a bend of the road which would take them out of his sight, he ventured another backward glance, he saw the carriage still in the road, but father and daughter were no longer visible — they must have gotten into the vehicle.

At the ford of the creek, he dismounted, and went through a process of ablution, bestowing much more care upon this operation than had been his wont. Before he had quite finished, he saw the freight-wagon approach from the other side of the creek. Yakhop had driven down the hill with four horses, the fifth tied on behind. As soon as Victor could get at the wagon, while Yakhop was hitching up the third pair of horses, he got out a bundle containing his Sunday clothes, and hurried to put them on, in place of the rags he had brought

back from his adventure. Of course the teamster plied him with numerous questions as to the outcome of the runaway, and kept Victor busy in satisfying his curiosity touching the details. He was thoroughly laughed at on honestly mentioning the condition of his wardrobe at the termination of the affair, and poutingly informed Yakhkop that the young lady had already performed that job in a very sufficient manner, though he kept to himself what the damsel had said about a scarecrow.

When he had got through with his toilet, Yakhkop had also completed the hitching of the horses, and Victor bestrode the off-horse to continue his chat with the teamster. He was burning with curiosity to learn from the latter all he knew about the gentleman who had so thoroughly aroused his interest, hoping to gain, incidentally, some information touching the young lady. To his great disgust, Yakhkop disposed of the latter by calling her a forward little hussey, badly spoiled by her parents and brother, because she was the pet of the family. The Colonel, however, he described as the richest man in Vernal County, having many friends, and also many enemies, and who expected to be elected to Congress at the next election. He grew quite enthusiastic in dwelling on the many excellent qualities of this remarkable gentleman, — the best farmer in the County, he described him, “if he do come from Ole Wirtshimny,” where they generally know precious little about farming, — a talker, that could out-talk any lawyer, and not even tell a lie, — a friend of the poor, not too proud to speak with a common chap. “Und how he ken blay mit der axt, you seen yourselves,” he concluded. “I shust vish I ken blay mit der axt like he!”

The team had meanwhile reached the bend in the road where Victor had last seen the carriage, and he was surprised to see it still standing there — a circumstance, to which he at once called Yakhkop's attention.

“Shoor!” said Yakhkop. “You dingks der Kernel ride to Brookfield mitout der coat on 'is back?”

Victor remembered that the Colonel had pulled off his coat before felling the tree, and eagerly inquired: "Did you bring it along?"

"What you dingks?" Yahkop rejoined. "You dingks der Kernel's coat ish too much fur four hosses to pull?"

The Colonel met them with a pleasant smile. As if in response to Yahkop's statement, he said: "You have brought my coat, have you not?"

"Shoor," the teamster replied, "der vaggen got room fur yer coat. Fictor, you git der Kernel's coat out der vaggen."

While Victor complied with alacrity, the Colonel expressed his obligation. "But this is not all that I have waited for," he went on. "If I can prevail on the young man there, I wish to take him from you for the rest of the trip to Brookfield. Can you spare him to us?"

"You likes to hire a new drihfer?" Yahkop inquired with a sly grin. "Tek him. Und tek der axt too. Mebbe you chop down some more oak drees."

But Victor protested. "I — I thank you," he said, coloring deeply at the prospect of a ride in the same vehicle with the young lady who had such sharp eyes, and could laugh so merrily and unmercifully. "I believe it would be improper for me to leave the team. Mr. Van Braaken might be displeased."

"Leave that to me," said the Colonel, in a tone at once so kind, and yet so authoritative, that Victor's resistance melted away like snow in the sun. "I propose to introduce you to Mynheer Van Braaken myself. In two hours we will reach Brookfield. You must be our guest for to-night, and to-morrow morning we will pay our respects to the Mynheer, before Yahkop gets there."

"We see, ven you git dere fust," growled Yahkop. "Ven Fictor find some more drees, und you chops 'em down, den ve see."

"I like you for this," said the young lady, receiving Victor

with a gracious smile, and making room for him on her own seat in the rear. "I would have been quite put out, if you had refused papa's invitation."

The Colonel followed, after a few parting words with Yahkop, and started his horses at so lively a trot, that they quickly left Yahkop with his team far behind. Victor found riding in the elegant spring wagon, seated on a soft cushion, quite a novel luxury. And when the Colonel, by a few well directed questions, had succeeded in putting him at his ease, he quickly forgot all his shyness, and talked as confidentially with his new friends, as if he had known them all his life.

One of the subjects of their conversation was Victor's knowledge of the English language. It interested Nellie vastly to learn, that he had hardly ever spoken English with any one since leaving school, where he had been compelled to learn the language, because no one there spoke his own.

"Have you learned French, too?" asked Nellie.

"Oh, no!" was his reply. "I am very sorry to know, that I have learned very little, indeed. One of the reasons why I am very glad to get the situation in Mr. Van Braaken's store, is the promise he made me, that I shall have leisure to improve myself by private study."

"What, for instance, would you like to learn?" the Colonel made inquiry.

"Oh, everything!" Victor said. "I should like to study mathematics, and Latin, so that I might become acquainted with the works of great men who explain to the world the nature of things, and justice, and freedom."

The Colonel looked at Victor in some surprise. "So ambitions?" he said smiling. "But you need not study Latin in order to become acquainted with the works of the greatest of men. Your own fatherland has produced a number of as good and great men as ever lived, while the history of England is replete with shining examples of wisdom, virtue and heroism. Above all, however, let me recommend to you the teachings of the founders of this glorious republic of ours. All of them

“speak to you in our own tongue, of which you have sufficient knowledge for all purposes of study.”

Victor listened with deep attention. “But,” he ventured to suggest, “did not the governments of Greece and Rome serve as models of our own, and is it not necessary to become acquainted with the works of their statesmen, in order to understand ours?”

“Hardly,” said the Colonel with some complaisance. “The form of government established for the republic of the United States of America is without parallel or precedent, — so far above the republics of Greece and Rome, as the Nineteenth Century is above the middle ages in culture and civilization.”

Victor made no answer, pondering over what he had heard. But Nellie soon interrupted his meditation.

“Tell me about the school you attended. Was it a large one?”

“Rather a large one,” Victor informed her. “In the department of the boys there were about four hundred pupils; but only one teacher.”

“Did you say four hundred boys, and only one schoolmaster?” the Colonel inquired. “I have read of such schools, conducted on what is called I believe, Joseph Lancaster’s System. Does the plan work well?”

“Quite well,” said Victor; “at least I believe that it did so in the school which I attended. The master conducted the upper two or three classes in person, the pupils of which took turns in instructing the children of the lower classes. Monitors were appointed daily to note the names of all the boys who, in any way, violated the rules. The offenders were punished by the master in person, who inflicted chastisement by means of a thin rattan, the number of cuts being determined by the grade of the offense charged against the culprit. The list of delinquents was called at a regular hour every day, and it usually required from ten to fifteen minutes to get through with this part of the discipline.”

Nellie found the school quite an amusing theme and asked numerous questions, which Victor conscientiously answered.

But the Colonel, wishing to learn more of Victor's personal history, directed his questions to that end, and soon drew from him a simple narration of as much of his previous life, as Victor thought worth mentioning. He informed his attentive listeners, that he had come to this country with his parents, when he was quite a young boy; that his father invested the greater part of his means in the purchase of a house and lot, for which he paid cash, and did quite well for a while, carrying on a bakery, "until one day a stranger called at the house and told father, that the house and lot belonged to him, demanding payment for it. Father showed him the deed but the stranger laughed at it, saying it was signed by his son, who had the same name as he, but that the house did not belong to the son, but to himself. At this father got angry, and told the man to leave the house. After that he came back one day with another man, who said he was a sheriff, and left a paper with father: and three or four months after that, this sheriff drove us out of the house, put our furniture in the street, and we had to rent a house to live in. We were then quite poor, for father had not much money left after paying for the house he had bought."

"What scoundrels those men were!" said Nellie, coloring with indignation.

"But—did not your father employ a lawyer?" the Colonel inquired with some astonishment.

"Yes," said Victor, "but not until after the sheriff had taken possession of our house. It was then too late, the lawyer said. But he also explained to us, that he could not have helped us, even if father had employed him at once, for that we had been defrauded by a rascal, and that we could not recover anything from him by law, because he had no property in his own name."

The Colonel remained silent; but Nellie queried further:

"What happened to you then?"

“My father,” Victor continued, “was very much grieved over our loss. His business did not prosper after that, and we had sad times. Then came the cholera, both parents took it and died in the same week.”

“And then?” Nellie eagerly pressed, as Victor overcome by the sad memory paused in his narration.

“And then,” he went on, “when our parents had been buried, and the sale of our household goods had produced hardly enough to pay the doctor and undertaker, we had nothing. I hired out as a journeyman baker, an occupation which I have followed ever since, and my sister found a home in the family of a distant relative of ours, back in the city.”

“Oh, then you have a sister?” exclaimed Nellie with animation. “Tell us all about her!”

“She is the dearest sister a brother ever had!” Victor announced proudly. “Not quite so old as I am,” he added in response to Nellie’s eager questioning, “and her name is Pauline.”

“A pretty name, — Pauline!” Nellie mused. “Is she a beauty? Does she look like you?”

“Like me? No indeed!” Victor protested, blushing violently. “She is not so beautiful as some ladies,” he continued, throwing a sidelong glance at his fair neighbor, “but I don’t think you would laugh on seeing her for the first time.”

“Now, Mr. Waldhorst!” the young lady pouted, shaking her forefinger at him, “you ought to be ashamed of yourself for reminding me of my silliness. Please, don’t do that again.”

“Indeed, indeed, Miss Nellie, I meant no reproach!” protested Victor, so earnestly, as to preclude any doubt of his sincerity, “I only meant to say that my sister is not so — so awkward, as I am.”

“I venture to say,” the Colonel interfered, suspecting that further words on the subject might increase the bashful young man’s embarrassment, “that Miss Waldhorst is an accom-

plished young lady, whom Nellie would be proud to become acquainted with."

"Of course I would," Nellie eagerly assented. "I know I should love her if she is as good as Mr. Waldhorst says she is. I have a brother, Mr. Waldhorst, but no sister. It must be beautiful to have a sister."

"Is your brother older, or younger than yourself?" queried the young man.

"Oh, he is much older than I am," Nellie went on. "Why, he is really a grown man. I think you will like him, Mr. Waldhorst, when you get to know him. Everybody likes my brother Leslie."

"I am sure I shall like him, if —"

Whatever he was going to say remained unsaid; for he cast down his eyes and blushed, instead of finishing his remark.

"I know what you were going to say," proclaimed Nellie, laughing blithely. "You were going to say, if he is like me. Now that would have been a pretty compliment, and you need not be ashamed of it."

"Does he live with you at Brookfield?"

"Yes, when we are at home; that is, we live at May Meadows, which is the name of our place; it is quite close to Brookfield, but not just in it. I expect to meet brother Leslie, who is home from Harvard by this time. And I will be so glad to see him, after being away from him for nearly a year. For I am myself just on my way home from the seminary at Columbia for the vacation."

"Ah! And brother Leslie is also at home for the vacation?" Victor inquired. "Where is Harvard?"

"Why, don't you know about Harvard University?" said the girl, evidently pitying his ignorance. "It is a great college, or something, away down East, among the Yankees, in Cambridge, or Boston, or somewhere. My brother was very proud, when papa sent him to Harvard."

"How I should like to go to college!" said Victor, evidently envying the happy brother.

“You have no cause for regret, young man,” said the Colonel assuringly. “The lessons which you have learned, and are still learning, I trust, by being thrown on your own resources, are worth more to you in the way of your education and development, than a regular course in the best college in the world could ever be, if, as I am sure is the case, you have the stuff in you to make a man of.”

In the course of the conversation Nellie had mentioned the fact, that she had emigrated, with the rest of the family, from Virginia, — emphasizing the name of her native State with a degree of patent pride which made Victor wonder — while still a child, but that she remembered their great plantation which papa had sold: and that they had brought all their negroes to this State, because papa would not sell them to strangers.

“The negroes?” Victor inquired, with a puzzled air.

“Why yes: the slaves, you know.”

“Slaves?” Victor repeated, with still greater astonishment.

“Our young friend probably forgets, that ours is a slave State,” Colonel May remarked. “I fear that you consider us behind the enlightenment of your native Germany, in this respect, since they no longer tolerate slavery there.”

“They never had slaves in Germany!” Victor declared, with great emphasis.

“I would not insist on that so firmly,” the Colonel replied with an indulgent smile. “It is not a thousand years ago, that men there sold themselves and their children into slavery, and the law tolerated this, and protected the masters in their right over their slaves. I remember having read of one instance, where a father, having gambled away all his possessions, staked his own daughter, who was the most beautiful maiden of the tribe, and she was delivered over to the winner as his absolute property. — So you are not pleased with this ‘peculiar institution’ of ours?”

“How can you ask me?” said Victor, who had listened with astonishment to the Colonel’s words, and was strongly inclined to doubt the correctness of his information as to the

existence of slavery in Germany. "Can it be right, or just, or wise, to deprive a human being of his freedom? Why, to me this seems a greater wrong than to take away his life."

"Let us not pursue this topic," said the Colonel, quietly, but authoritatively. "We will hardly have time to come to an understanding on so important and vexed a question; for there I see the grove which shelters our dwelling. We will reach it in a few minutes. But permit me to caution you against making any but your most intimate friends the confidants of your very positive views on this subject. You will hardly make converts, and it might entangle you into unpleasant, even dangerous, complications."

Victor remained silent. Colonel May had evidently spoken with the kindest intention. But why should it be necessary for him to conceal his conviction on so important a subject, the right and the wrong of which were so palpably evident? Could this be a free country, if the expression of his opinion could draw after it "unpleasant, even dangerous complications?" Wherein, then, consisted the freedom of speech and conscience, which he had so often heard extolled and prized as the proud privilege of the citizens of his adopted country?

The long summer day was meanwhile drawing to its close. When the travelers arrived in front of the gate to the grounds of the mansion bright lights were already shining through the doors and windows. It was not so dark, however, but that Victor could see, and greatly admire the tastefully laid out little park, with its broad, gravelled walks, smoothly shaved grass-plots and brightly blooming shrubs and flowers. The whole was surrounded by a grove of stately old trees of original forest growth, thinned out and cleared of underbrush to invite the breezes of summer, without admitting the full rays of the sun. Upon Victor the Colonel's residence produced the impression of comfort and elegance, which greatly enhanced his appreciation of the honor involved in being invited to enjoy the owner's hospitality.

A number of dusky servants ran to assist the travelers in

alighting. They opened the gate and took charge of the horses and carriage. The young guest watched the scene with curious interest. He was surprised to find quite a different picture from that which his imagination had created. Could these faces, shining with contentment, many of them bright with evident pleasure in welcoming their master, for each of whom he had a word of cheer or encouragement, belong to the class of abused victims of oppression and tyranny? Here was subjection, unquestioning obedience, indeed. But where was the look of abject terror, the eloquent though unspoken, protest of a down-trodden race against the despoiler of their human rights, which the immigrant boy connected in his imagination with the condition of slavery? Nothing saw Victor of any such: these slaves enjoyed their master's jokes as keenly as if they were his equals, and sometimes retaliated with ready wit.

At the gate stood a lady of pleasant appearance, into whose open arms Nellie sprang the instant her feet touched the ground. "My child!" and "Mama!—dearest mama!" Victor heard, as they embraced and kissed. A tall, handsome young man, of intellectual features, so far as Victor could discern in the twilight, stepped out and cordially shook hands with the Colonel. "You are late, papa!" he said. "What kept you so long?"

"Yes," the Colonel replied cheerfully, "we had quite an adventure. There will be something to talk about at the supper table."

Nellie had hardly quitted the arms of her mother, when both her hands were seized by a bright quadroon woman, who covered them with kisses, and then, holding out the girl at arm's length from her, seemed to devour the lovely figure with hungry eyes. "My darling honey!" she addressed her, "sweet balm to my tired old eyes! How it rests 'em to look at yer purty doll-face! Ye're bringin' sunshine back wid ye, an' good luck to de ole place. An' my, how you's growed! An' what a fine lady you got to be! God bless you, my sweetest young missis'!"

“ Well, Cleo, are you going to give me a chance after a while, or do you mean to keep your young mistress all to yourself? ” the young man spoke up, as his father saluted his wife.

“ My dearest Leslie! ” the girl exclaimed, flying towards her brother, who took her bodily up in his arms, and carried her straightway into the house, in spite of her laughter, struggles and protestations that she was no longer a baby.

The Colonel and his wife now approached Victor. “ My dear,” she said, “ I have brought you an honored guest, to whom we are deeply indebted. This is he, — Mr. Waldhorst. Mr. Waldhorst, let me present you to Mrs. May! ”

The lady bowed with much grace and dignity. “ I am happy,” she said, “ to become acquainted with a friend of my husband, and to welcome you to our home.”

The great sitting room was lighted up brilliantly, and a cheerful fire crackled in the spacious fire-place. Male and female servants, in all shades of color, from the light yellow of the quadroon to the honest black of the unmixed African, flitted about. One of them conducted Victor to a room, which he was told to consider as his own during his stay. The servant also informed him, that after he had arranged his toilet, he would be called down to tea.

Before taking their seats at the table, Colonel May introduced Victor to his son Leslie May, and also to his overseer, Mr. Jeffreys, who had been invited to take his meal with the family on this occasion. At table the conversation soon turned upon the adventure with the runaway horses and Victor's exploit in connection therewith. The Colonel related what he knew of the matter, but Nellie frequently interrupted him with droll remarks, taking care, however, always to turn the laugh against herself, while she lauded Victor's prowess without stint. The latter would gladly have escaped the lavish praise bestowed on him, and endeavored to hide his blushes by keeping his eyes upon his plate; but he could not avoid noticing, that Mr. Jeffreys seemed much displeased with the favor shown

him by all the members of the family, for even Leslie was profuse in showing his appreciation of what Victor had done for his sister Nellie to whom he was tenderly attached.

When, late in the evening, Victor was conducted to his chamber, he left his newly found friends with the conviction that they constituted the noblest and happiest family he had ever met. The promise of Colonel May to introduce him in person to his new employer, led him to hope that he might thereby gain in the merchant's esteem, and perhaps improve his future prospects. But his happiest reflection when the events of the bygone day passed in review before his mind, was that he counted among his friends the noble, high-minded Colonel May, his frank, good-natured son Leslie, and — by no means least — the bright merry maiden, who could laugh so cruelly, and so charmingly, and who was so proud of belonging to one of the First Families of Virginia.



III.

A WESTERN TOWN AND ITS RIVAL STORES.

BROOKFIELD, situate near the edge of the forest which had, in the course of time, encroached on the prairie, once constituting a part of the great plains extending from the Ozark to the Rocky mountains, was a small town, owing its origin to the intersection of two important roads, one of which traversed the State from east to west, the other from north to south. To its locality on this intersection was due, also, its dignity as the county seat of Vernal County, in virtue of which it numbered a court house among its public buildings. The court house was the only brick structure within a circumference of many miles. It stood on the precise spot where the two roads crossed each other, in the center of a square into which the roads led from the four cardinal points of the compass.

This court house was no less conspicuous for its prominent location, than for the important functions it served in the affairs of the town. Its legitimate purpose was, of course, to furnish the place for holding court, and the offices for the circuit clerk, the sheriff, and the State's attorney. But incidentally it served as a public hall, where the citizens were wont to meet on occasions demanding a discussion of measures of public concern. In it sat the conventions of both political parties when laying their plans for the capture of lucrative offices. On Sundays and holidays it served as the meeting house of the Christian sects of Brookfield and its environments — Campbellites using it in the morning, Baptists in the evening and Methodists in the night; or haply in the reverse order. Traveling minstrels and itinerant lecturers dispensed amusement and instruction in useful knowledge within the sacred Temple of

Justice to all who had a quarter to spare, or could borrow one for the occasion.

On the north side of the Square, where the Boonville road debouched into it, stood the hotel, with its broad porch extending along the whole of its front, facing the court house, next after which it was the largest building in town. Its chief characteristic and ornament was a cupola in which there hung a bell — a veritable bell, perhaps the only one in all the southwestern part of the State. Naturally, the Brookfielders were proud of this bell, which constituted one of the chief features of the town. Its primary office was to summon the guests of the hotel, three times a day, to its dining room. But since the fewest of the inhabitants sported the luxury of a watch of their own, it performed the functions of a town clock, and housewives learned to regulate their meal-times by its ringing. It pleased mine host to hear it said, that the sun regulates his rising and setting by the ringing of this bell. Then, too, it did extra duty on Sundays, calling church-goers to their devotions, evincing most liberal tolerance, in that it made no kind of distinction between the sects in this respect. It was equally impartial in summoning whigs and democrats to their party pow-wows; and when, on extra occasions, there were public festivities, or if the mortal remains of a departed fellow-being were to be conducted to their final resting place, it gave the joyful signal, or sounded the funeral knell with serene equanimity.

The chief pride of Brookfield, however, was that it boasted two stores, — one on the east side of the Square, and one on the west side. It seemed almost providential, that the court house stood between them; for such was the spirit of rivalry possessing their respective owners, that but for the interposition of that august structure, which served as a screen to hide the doings of either from the keenly watching optics of the other, serious consequences, affecting the peace of the town might have been apprehended. The stores were inferior in size to no other building in town, save the court house, and

the hotel. They vied with each other in showing the smoothest weather-boarding, coated with the brightest of white lead, and the most intensely green window-blinds. But if their exterior was gaudy enough to attract the eyes of the idlers, the untiring efforts of the owners to lure customers originated a lavish hospitality, which made them the favored resorts of all whose time hung heavily on their hands. To this rivalry Brookfield chiefly owed its commercial importance: for the constant endeavor of both merchants to capture each other's customers by cutting down the prices of goods, and to give the greatest possible publicity to their determination in this respect, secured for the town the reputation, that goods were sold cheaper here, and customers served more promptly, than at any other place outside of the metropolis. Thus it came to pass, that buyers from all parts of the Southwest poured into the town to do their trading, many of them passing by larger towns lacking such fame.

Historical accuracy compels the admission, that Mr. Barnes, the proprietor of the older establishment, situate on the east side of the Square, was an unwilling party to the fierce competition. He was one of the original settlers of the town, and took much credit to himself as having established, not only the business presided over by himself, but that of the whole settlement. It pleased him to consider himself one of the important men of the country, a pioneer who had introduced the blessings of civilization into a remote wilderness, to whom the later comers owed their comforts, — even, to a great degree, their prosperity. For it was he, who, in the remote antiquity (some five years or so ago) when the Kickapoo Indians had just left the neighborhood to settle upon their reservation in the Indian Territory, had brought from the far off city a stock of coffee, sugar, spun cotton, unbleached muslin (known more popularly as domestic) together with some boxes of iron, tin and earthen ware, and offered them for sale in a primitive log house erected near the cross roads, or to take in exchange for them the furs, peltries, or wax from the hives of wild bees gathered by the

hunters. A blacksmith, and then a wheelwright, soon erected their shops in the neighborhood of the "store," to which, in the course of time, a harness maker and a cobbler added their log cabins. And when Mr. Barnes had sold out his goods, or bartered them for the products of the chase, he sent the latter to the city, where he disposed of them with handsome profit, and "imported" a new stock of merchandise — a procedure, which he repeated annually ever after with great regularity. Notwithstanding the scarcity of cash in those times, — for the new settlers rarely brought with them more than necessary to pay for the land which they required to live on — his business prospered and increased. It would have been his own fault if he had not grown wealthy, since he fixed his own prices, as well for the goods which he sold, as for those he took in exchange. Game was still plenty: and for a long time properly prepared skins served as legitimate currency, exchangeable in the East for silver and gold. Government found it necessary, after a time, to locate a land office and appoint a receiver of public moneys at Brookfield, to accommodate the steadily increasing stream of emigration from the South, North and East; a post office, serving as a distributing office for quite an extensive territory, followed, and the town prospered, and increased its population.

Mr. Barnes began to be looked upon, as he had long considered himself, a merchant prince. But the monopoly he enjoyed became oppressive, because he could not be induced to send for goods oftener than once a year. Prudent merchant that he was, he always proportioned his orders to the sales of the preceding year: and since the demand for goods increased with the population, it frequently happened that the supply gave out, and there was dissatisfaction and grumbling among the disappointed customers.

One day, when the stock of goods happened to be at an ebb, a rather heavily freighted two-horse wagon drove into the town and stopped in front of the hotel. An elderly, but quite active little man with a weather-tanned face and one clear, gray

eye, alighted from it and demanded accommodation for himself and beasts. The Brookfielders were on the look-out; for the appearance of the wagon, recognized at once as belonging to a peddler, had aroused their curiosity. The quaint, outlandish look of the mercurial little man made him the object of unusual interest; and it was not long before the spacious porch in front of the hotel was filled with inquisitive idlers of the town, which seemed greatly to please the newcomer. He nodded familiarly to all who approached, gleefully rubbed his hands, and while with his sound eye he surveyed the crowd surrounding him, a spasmodic twitching of the lids of the one he had lost produced so comical an effect upon the audience that a titter of half suppressed merriment became audible. When the colored groom had unhitched and taken charge of his horses, he took out of his wagon a box of considerable size, set it down on the porch, and took off the lid.

“ You wish to buy? ” he addressed the by-standers in fluent English but with so foreign an accent, that he greatly touched the risibility of the onlookers. “ I have in this wonderful box everything that heart may wish for, except money, and that I wish to get from you. ” He then cast a swift, keen look over his audience, and continued, taking out of the box one article after the other, and showing it around. “ Suspenders! Every man of you wears, I dare say, his own breeches, even if he is married. Don't he? Therefore he wants suspenders. Or breeches: Suspenders without breeches are of no use, except upon a gallow; and there they use a rope instead. But if you are all supplied with breeches, you may need buttons. Here they are! Big and little, white and black — manufactured out of honest bone, or horn, warranted to stick until torn off. Or thread, to sew them on with, or have them sewed on by a pretty girl. Or needles: For without needles the sharpest lassie will be unable to pierce a button. Talking about lasses — I know you like to hear about them — see, I have something here for the darlings: scissors! They can use them to cut off the thread, as they cut off the thread of a sweetheart when

trenching on forbidden ground. See, most wonderful scissors! Keen and sharp as a woman's tongue — bright and clear as a maiden's eye — of adamant hardness, like the heart of a lassie when she gives you the mitten. Don't you all want a pair of such wonderful scissors? See, — the blades are like two lawyers trying a case: they slash away at each other, but cut only the purses of the clients that come between them."

In such manner the peddler showed around his goods, amusing the crowd by droll conceits, the effect of which was heightened by the nervous manner in which he jerked out his sentences, and his outlandish pronunciation. In the crowd stood Mr. Barnes, the pioneer merchant. He volunteered the opinion, delivered with a smile of derision, that this man might make an excellent clown in a circus, but had not the stuff in him for a decent peddler. "Has he succeeded in selling a single article?" he inquired of Mr. Smith, standing beside him. "He seems more desirous of parading his stale jokes, than of selling his wares."

"You may be right, neighbor Barnes," said Mr. Smith, who was none other than mine host of the hotel. "If he knew what he was about he might do a smashing business now, for you've had nothing worth looking at in your store for a young coon's age."

"I shall start for the city to replenish my stock next week," Mr. Barnes replied a little testily: "and then I will show you goods, alongside of which this buffoon would not dare to let his rubbish be seen. Everybody knows that I am to be relied on, and you might have patience for a few days."

"You give us no other chance," Mr. Smith replied. "But look: Old Jones is standing in front of his box. Doesn't he look exactly as if he meant to buy that watch he is picking up?"

"Indeed," cried Mr. Barnes sneeringly. "The peddler really thinks he has found a customer. If he had a grain of knowledge of human nature, he would know at once, that *that* fellow hasn't got a cent that he don't need to color his nose with."

It really seemed as if the peddler had set his heart on securing a customer in Mr. Jones, — him of the copper-colored nose: for he addressed himself to this individual with such a comical twitch of his eyelid as to produce a shout of laughter. “Do you need a watch, my friend?” he jerked out. “Look: here is one expressly imported for you from the city. It is made of pure metal, warranted not to hurt in the eye. Its works are a marvel to behold. It keeps time, twice a day, as accurately as a chronometer for which you would have to pay a hundred pounds. If you want it, I will sell it to you at your own price. Name your figure!”

Jones had by this time succeeded in opening the case. “Why, I see no works in it at all!” he exclaimed, looking nonplussed.

“No?” queried the peddler, putting on a perfectly innocent face, all spoiled, however, by that unfortunate twitching of his eyelid, which made him winking in a droll manner. “Then I am sorry for you, my friend. For that is a sad sign of weak eyes. Weakened, perhaps, by the red glare from your nose. Try a pair of my excellent specs. Cheap at half the price!”

The well known character of Jones as a lazy, drunken loafer, gave point to the peddler’s words, and turned the laugh against him.

“That peddler isn’t quite the fool you took him for,” Mr. Smith remarked to Mr. Barnes, smiling mischievously. “He seems to hit Jones’ character exactly.”

“As if that meant anything!” said Mr. Barnes superciliously. “Any baby might read Jones’ character in his besotted face. That doesn’t prove any business capacity in this itinerant clown. He has not sold a thing yet.”

“How can he expect to make customers of men he insults so shamefully?” asked a by-stander. “And I don’t suppose that people like to trade on the open street. He don’t appear to understand his business.”

“You are right, neighbor Burden,” said Barnes, rejoiced to

find his views supported by a fellow townsman. "It is unpardonable in a merchant to treat his public with such downright insolence."

The peddler, however, seemed not ill pleased to have the people laugh, rather than buy, just yet. Having shown most of the goods in the box, he carefully replaced them and returned the box to the wagon. "There," he said, cheerfully, "there are many such boxes in that stylish turn-out of mine. Nobody has asked for the price of the goods, so I will volunteer the information, for the benefit of the public, that I can afford to sell cheaper than any other honest man, and mean to so do, because I buy all my stock at auction for one quarter its value; then when I get one half of what the things are worth, I still make one hundred per cent profit. You will be astonished, when I call on you at your houses, how dog-cheap the finest goods can be sold, and what tremendous bargains you are going to make."

Then, bowing to all around him, he retired into the hotel.

"That's about it, I guess," said Mr. Barnes, smiling triumphantly. "He has bought up a pile of rubbish that no one else would have, at some auction, and now expects to palm them off on us in the backwoods here, at prices for which the best articles could be furnished."

The peddler counted on the notoriety which the oddity of his course was likely to obtain for him, and he was not mistaken. When, after taking his meal, he called at the several homes of the inhabitants, he was looked for with lively curiosity by the fairer portion of the community, and his goods found ready purchasers at very fair prices. His success was so far above his most sanguine expectations, that he was induced to inquire more minutely into the condition of affairs. As the result of his inquiries he determined to compete with the merchant pioneer for the trade which Brookfield had to offer.

Thus it had come to pass that a new impulse was given to the prosperity of Brookfield by the establishment of a second store. Barnes soon found Mr. Van Braaken, whose capacity

for business he held in such utter contempt, an inconvenient and formidable competitor. The first innovation he introduced was the purchase of a stout freight wagon and the necessary horses, which he kept almost continually on the road between the metropolis and Brookfield, thus enabling him to have a fresh supply of goods always on hand. His success was chiefly due, however, to the great reduction in prices which he introduced from the start. The "Dutch Store" soon gained the reputation of being the place where the best bargains were to be made far and wide.

The nickname of "Dutch Store," which Barnes had given to his rival's establishment, clung to it ineffaceably. He had counted on the prejudice of the backwoodsmen against foreigners, and particularly against the "Dutch," — a term that had become opprobrious in its application, not so much to the natives of Holland, but rather to the Germans, who were looked upon as descendants from those vile Hessians that had been sent over by the Britishers to crush out the spirit of American Independence — thinking, by fastening upon him this offensive epithet, to drag him down to ignominious failure.

Mynheer Van Braaken, however, who, as a native Hollander, saw no disgrace in the word "Dutch," was not slow to appreciate and utilize for his own advantage this convenient cognomen, which, he at once saw, would most effectually bring his business into public notice. The good natured naïveté, with which he accepted the offensive byname, disarmed opposition and deprived the word of its sting. It was noticed with amazement, that the new merchant seemed to be as proud of the distinction conferred upon him, as if the word "Dutchman" were intended for a compliment, in recognition of his merit in coming among them as a stranger. He took special pains to spread it as widely as possible, so that the fame of the "Dutch Store" soon extended to the southern and western limits of the State; and all along the great State roads; from the East and from the North the "Dutch Merchant" was known. Barnes discovered too late, that he had himself forged the mightiest

weapon with which his rival was fighting him. He saw, and bowed to, the necessity of employing other means of warfare against his active competitor besides derisions and sneers; he was forced to content himself with smaller profits, and to replenish his stock of merchandise at shorter intervals, and with greater circumspection. But he had suffered his rival to gain too great a start, rendering exertion and sacrifices necessary to enable him to hold his own.

Of course, there was no lack of secret envy and open opposition to be encountered by the adacious interloper. After the first wave of his popularity had begun to subside, some of the oldest inhabitants of Brookfield thought it incumbent upon them to espouse the cause of their ancient townsman against this intruder, who was, besides, a foreigner. Others, on the contrary, thought him a valuable addition to the population, whose business success meant prosperity and success for the town. Thus two parties gradually formed, with Barnes and Van Braaken for leaders, which soon assumed the semblance of organization. Not unlike two hostile armies in the field, they had their outposts, their scouts and spies. They met in skirmishes, and even in severer encounters, fighting the battle between progress and conservatism, their watch words being "Dutch Store" and "Pioneer."

The commercial greatness of Brookfield could not but gain by this rivalry. Even Mr. Barnes saw the validity of his rival's motto, "Competition is the life of trade." Though his gains were smaller than they had been under the enormous profits of former years, he could not deny that twice fifty precisely equaled once one hundred; and that many sales with small profits might add as much to his gains, as greater profits with fewer sales.

* * *

On the morning after Victor's arrival Colonel May accompanied him to Van Braaken's store. As the Colonel had predicted, Yahkop had not yet arrived with the wagon. Mynheer, as the Colonel persisted in calling the Dutch mer-

chant, was not a little astonished to see his new assistant approach the store in Colonel May's company, and without Yahkop. This at once aroused his anxiety as to the safety of his wares, and he inquired eagerly, "Where is Yahkop? Where is the wagon? Has anything happened to the horses?"

The Colonel answered instead of the young man. "Don't be alarmed, Mynheer, we left Yahkop with the team safe and sound some twelve miles out, last evening. If he hurries along, he will be here in an hour or two at the outside. Mr. Waldhorst has put us — I mean my daughter and myself — under very great obligation, and we did ourselves the honor to bring him to our home, where we kept him for the night. I now deliver him into your charge, as I had promised him before he would consent to come with us. I hope, Mynheer, that you will pardon the liberty that we allowed ourselves in making Mr. Waldhorst our guest before he paid his respects to yourself."

"So you have already made his acquaintance?" spoke the Mynheer, eyeing the Colonel somewhat suspiciously. "I like that. And you are pleased with him? I like that. And I like it that he has come. When the wagon comes with the goods we will have plenty of work in the Dutch Store. Does he know that our store is the Dutch Store?"

"I believe that my daughter has mentioned it to him," the Colonel said, smiling, while Mynheer's eye-lid twitched repeatedly.

"Yes," the latter went on. "The Dutch Store. But step in, Colonel. And you, Victor — that is your name, is it? — look about on the scene of your future fame. Because you belong to the Dutch Store, you will soon be much renowned."

"You will excuse me now," said the Colonel. "Having redeemed my promise to introduce the young man to you, I must look about after other affairs. So bye-bye."

"I guess you are in a hurry," said the merchant. "You have your hands full, as a candidate? But your election is sure. I don't think you ought to trouble yourself."

“ Ah, do you really think so? ” the Colonel asked suavely. “ And may I count on your influence? ” —

“ No! ” the merchant shouted, in eager deprecation. “ Don’t count on influence from me! ” Then he added apologetically: “ I am a man of business, and have no time for politics. Besides, I have no vote. I never staid long enough at any place to entitle me to my citizen papers. And what influence I may have, I need for the Dutch Store. But that will make no difference to you; you will be elected all the same. And I thank you for your kindness to Victor here. I am sure he ought to be much obliged to you.”

“ Tut! The obligation is all on my side, I assure you,” the Colonel replied, cordially shaking hands with Mynheer. “ And you, Mr. Waldhorst,” he continued, turning to Victor, “ must not forget to be a frequent visitor at our house, where you will always find a hearty welcome.”

Victor followed his new chief into the interior of the store, and was introduced to the head-clerk, Mr. Miller, as well as to a youth of about his own age, whose name was Robert Rountree, usually called Bob. The introduction over, Mynheer Van Braaken addressed himself to the by-standers. “ Gentlemen,” he said, “ this is our new German clerk, who will hereafter take pleasure in serving the patrons of the Dutch Store. He will have little or no occasion to use his mother-tongue; for I suppose that with the exception of my driver Yahkop, there is not another German nearer than fifty miles of here. I myself, you know,” he continued, nodding with a condescending air, “ am not a German, but a Dutchman, from whom the Dutch Store gets its name.”

Later, when Mynheer inquired into the particulars of the journey from the city, Victor conscientiously related the circumstances which had led to the collision. A shadow of decided displeasure settled on the merchant’s face, as Victor honestly related the mishap to the wagon.

“ Yahkop did not right to let you drive that team,” he said

rather severely. "I employed him to take charge of the horses and wagon, and want you in the store. Go on."

The recital of his exploit in trying to stop the runaway horses seemed to please the merchant. "That was a smart thing you did there," he said, nodding his head repeatedly. "Acquaintance with Colonel May will bring you advantage, for he can't help patronizing you. He is a candidate and will talk to many people about himself, and will mention you, and the Dutch Store."

Victor found very little edification in the words and manner of his chief. He had expected a different reception of the news he was communicating. What Mr. Van Braaken meant by the advantage of being talked about, was a mystery to him. But he said nothing; only the words of his chief had jarred on his ears, and he was at a loss to account for the depression they produced.

The establishment into which Victor had been admitted as youngest apprentice, was filled with wares and merchandise of all kinds. It was divided into compartments for the several classes of goods kept for sale. One of them was devoted to the exhibition of dry goods; hardware was stored in another; in a third, groceries and provisions were kept, while a fourth was used for the display of boots, shoes and hats. There were separate divisions for books and stationery, and even medicines, — among which quinine, Brandreth's pills and opedeldoc figured conspicuously, — had a particular corner assigned to them. In a little back building or annex, furs, peltries, and what other articles of barter the country afforded, were stored. The extent of the business carried on by Mr. Van Braaken, astonished Victor, and filled him with pride at the thought of identifying himself with an establishment of such magnitude. He examined everything with minute attention, and would have been pleased to enter on the discharge of his duties at once; but these consisted, for the present, in nothing more than to learn the names of the articles, and to note the prices and places where kept.

The arrival of the wagon with new goods from the metropolis always created a considerable stir in the little town. Even on ordinary occasions it was a treat for the idlers and loafers about town to watch the unloading of the wagon and the transfer of the freight to the stores; and of all the wagoners employed by the merchants, none enjoyed greater popularity than droll, simple Yalkop, whose sententious sayings and broken English afforded a rich source of fun and amusement. To-day in particular, when he narrated Victor's exploits in driving the team against a tree, — not, of course, without adding various embellishments and exaggerations, — a great crowd of townsmen surrounded the wagon, until the last box, barrel and bale had been unloaded and transferred to the interior of the store. The adventure itself, and Yalkop's comical manner of relating it, caused great merriment among the crowd, and the good-natured manner in which Victor sometimes joined in the laugh against himself, made him quite a favorite among them, so that Mynheer Van Braaken felicitated himself upon his valuable acquisition in his new apprentice.

Victor assisted with a hearty good will in unloading, packing and arranging the goods upon their shelves, showing such aptitude and docility in all that he put his hands to, that he gained the encouraging approbation of his chief, in this respect also.



IV.

BUNKUM: MERCANTILE AND LITERARY.

VICTOR readily adapted himself to his new avocation. He mastered the details of the business with ease and rapidity, and discharged his duties diligently and cheerfully. Mr. Miller, his immediate superior, was a not unamiable man, who patiently answered the numerous questions Victor had to ask about the rules of the establishment, nor disclaimed to satisfy his curiosity concerning the town, the country and the people, and other general topics.

In one respect, however, Victor found it exceedingly difficult to satisfy the expectations of his superiors. He could not understand how it could possibly conduce to the advantage of his employer, to deceive the customers as to the real quality or value of the goods they wished to purchase. He betrayed his lamentable ignorance — stupidity, Bob Rountree would have said — in the rudimentary principles of trade, by suggesting the silly and antiquated notion, that it was wrong to lie about the wares one had for sale, and that the habit of doing so must, in the long run, destroy one's business by frightening off the customers. Mr. Miller, in particular, was put to much trouble in the endeavor to correct Victor's heresies, and to impress him with sounder, more business like views.

One day, after Victor had made some progress in learning the names and prices of the various articles in stock, two ladies entered the store, to wait upon whom the chief himself, as well as every one of the employees showed great alacrity. Mynheer Van Braaken received them at the door and courteously escorted them to the counter; Mr. Miller made his politest bow, and stood ready on the inside of the counter to take their orders; even Bob Rountree ostentatiously paraded

himself before them to show his readiness to serve them, if he should be wanted. Victor's heart beat faster when his eyes fell on these ladies; with a thrill of genuine pleasure he saw them walk straight up to himself, and noted the kindly manner in which they acknowledged his salutation.

They were his acquaintances, Mrs. May and her daughter Nellie.

"Are you aware, sir, that you have been very naughty, Mr. Waldhorst?" These were the first words that Nellie addressed to him as soon as she had responded to his bow. "How many days have you been here, now, without once coming to see us, and telling us how you are pleased with our people, and your place, and inquiring after our health?"

"You are most kind, Miss May," stammered Victor, blushing with pleasure. "I shall make early use of your invitation."

"So you have said before," the girl replied. "But now that we are here to remind you of your promise, we may as well get you to show us some of the fine things you have for sale. I persuaded mamma to make our purchases in your store this time, to give you a chance to show off as a salesman."

"Was it not to hear us talk Dutch in the Dutch Store?" Victor inquired, with a bashful smile. "But Yahkop is not here to-day."

"You might talk Dutch with the Mynheer, as papa calls your boss," Nellie retaliated saucily. "But I regret to see that I was mistaken in you. I took you for a model gentleman, and now you take delight in teasing me with the silly words you heard me say."

"What does the girl mean?" Van Braaken asked Victor in German. "Answer in German. It will please her."

Victor complied and the result showed that the Mynheer was right, for Nellie burst out in a merry peal of laughter. "That sounds for all the world like the gabble of the Chickasaw Indians, that passed through here two years ago," she exclaimed, on recovering her breath.

“Nellie, you ought to be ashamed of yourself!” Mrs. May said reproachfully. “When will you learn to behave like a lady?”

“But it sounds so funny, mamma!” said the girl, endeavoring, with indifferent success, to compose her beaming features. “Well, then, Mr. Waldhorst, show me some of your finest white hose.”

“Hose?” Victor repeated boldly, though he had not the faintest idea of the meaning of the word. “For yourself?” he added leisurely, to gain time. Then it flashed into his mind that he had seen a box labeled “Misses’ White Silk Hose,” which he triumphantly produced, and submitted the contents to her inspection.

Having selected a pair whose elasticity she was testing by stretching them out to their full length, she inquired: “How high do these come?”

Instead of answering, Victor blushed scarlet.

“Well,” said the young lady, looking up in surprise, “can’t you tell me the price?”

“Oh, the price!” came from Victor in a voice hardly audible, the color deepening on his face. “The price is six bits.” He looked as if it would be a relief to him to be engulfed by an earthquake, or to be carried off by some friendly monster, out of range of those wide open, wondering eyes.

A faint reflex of the color in his face and a hardly perceptible smile brightened the face of Mrs. May, as she promptly came to Victor’s rescue, by requesting him to show her some stuffs suitable for a dress for Nellie. With a profoundly grateful heart Victor piled up everything of fine dress goods the house contained before them on the counter. The ladies examined, admired, compared, — nothing just suited them. At last Mrs. May requested him to show them a piece of silk, of a delicate blue color, which he had purposely not removed from the shelf. Victor complied with perceptible hesitation. He had addressed himself exclusively to Mrs. May after

stating the price of the hose; but he now cast a furtive glance in the direction where Nellie stood, — not, however at her, but at Mr. Van Braaken, standing immediately back of the young lady. He took no notice of Victor's glance. Mrs. May seemed pleased with the article shown her, and inquired the price. Again Victor hesitated; cast an appealing look at Mr. Miller, then another at his chief, and as neither of them seemed to understand his signal of distress, he stammered out, his voice gaining firmness, however, as he went on:

“We cannot recommend this article to you, Ma'am. It is a poor quality of goods, and the color will fade in the sun.”

The ladies looked at him in astonishment. They seemed nettled. Mr. Miller promptly stepped forward and said, with a most amiable smile, “The young man is mistaken, ladies. This is a most excellent and exceedingly fine quality of silk, and if the color suits your taste, you need not hesitate to buy. I assure you, that the sun will have no effect upon it.”

“I am not mistaken,” answered Victor, turning pale before the menacing frown he saw gathering on the brow of the chief, but standing his ground bravely. “I have my information from Mr. Van Braaken, who said that we had been shamefully cheated in this piece of goods, because neither the fabric nor the color was genuine.”

“This is a strange misunderstanding on the part of our young friend here,” Mr. Miller rejoined, keeping up his sweetest smile before the ladies. “I was never more deceived in my life, if this is not as fine a piece of goods as was ever brought to Brookfield. Just feel this soft and delicate, yet firm and solid texture; and the color is as true as gold. I take some credit to myself as a competent judge of this kind of goods. But here is Mr. Van Braaken, to whom the boy has appealed. He, surely, can give us the best information.”

Thus referred to Mr. Van Braaken could not avoid giving his judgment. He stepped up with a sober face, passed the silk lightly through his fingers, and said, regarding the ladies with a benignant look: “As usual, the young man is right.

I am extremely sorry, ladies, that I cannot, on this occasion, acquiesce in the judgment of Mr. Miller, who is usually so correct and reliable. That boy is an extraordinary boy — the smartest boy in Vernal County. You wouldn't take him to be a Dutchman."

And Mr. Van Braaken's eyelid twitched, and Nellie thought he was winking at them, and it looked so funny, that she found it exceedingly difficult to restrain her merriment. Mr. Miller, of course, was highly astonished. He deemed it scarcely possible that the beautiful, soft and even textile, which he again examined with engrossing attention, should be a base imitation. But Victor, in the joy of his heart, forgave his employer all the humiliating epithets with which he had so often wounded him. Was not his integrity, — aye, his judgment, too, — gloriously vindicated before the ladies? Let Bob Rountree sneer and grin, if it pleased him: Nellie had been a witness to his triumph!

"Well, Mr. Waldhorst," said Mrs. May on recovering from her astonishment, "since you insist on vetoing our own choice, suppose you indicate to us what yours would be. Show us the goods that you would select for a dress for my daughter."

"Yes," Nellie chimed in, "display your good taste by picking out for me the loveliest dress you've got in the establishment."

"If you would do me the honor to be guided by my choice," said Victor, modestly, but with the tone of conviction that knows no doubt, "you will take this." And he displayed before them a bolt of muslin de laine, which the ladies had laid aside without bestowing a second look at it. "Is not this a beautiful design?"

"Very pretty, indeed," said Mrs. May. "But unfortunately for your choice, Nellie already possesses a dress of this same pattern."

"But not in wool, mama," Nellie suggested with some eagerness. "See how much richer and brighter these colors show, and how much lovelier the pattern looks than on calico."

“I never saw a lovelier dress on a lady, than this,” said Victor enthusiastically. “It becomes you wonderfully.”

“What makes you so sure?” asked Nellie.

“I have seen you in one like it.”

“When—that day in the woods, when the horses ran away?” the girl asked in high glee, as if much pleased. “Sure enough, mama, I wore that calico dress on my way home from the seminary. Is it not strange, that Mr. Waldhorst should have noticed it, and remember it so accurately?”

Mrs. May smiled graciously. “Well,” said she, “if your friend insists on it, I don’t see how we can avoid buying it.” Then, turning to the merchant she said, “And you, Mr. Van Braaken, I must congratulate on your disinterested sincerity. I hope that you may prove the adage, that honesty is the best policy. For my part, I shall hereafter deal exclusively at your establishment; for it is quite a relief to be able to rely implicitly on your word and judgment, as, from what I have experienced here to-day, I feel confident I may do with entire safety.”

“Very much obliged for your good opinion, Madam,” said the merchant. “You are very right: Honesty is the best policy. And you may rest assured, we in the Dutch Store always speak the truth. One of the first principles I taught our young friend here was, to speak the truth to our customers always. And you see, he is an apt scholar. He will always, mindful of my teachings, speak the truth, even if, for the time being, it will lead to the loss of a bargain. Yes, indeed, Honesty is the best policy; and it is the motto of the Dutch Store.”

Victor hardly dared trust his ears. Had he so thoroughly misunderstood his chief, in suspecting him of encouraging unfair dealing with the customers? Why, what Mr. Van Braaken had said to Mrs. May was exactly what he himself thought right, and fair and wise. Of course, honesty is the best policy; and lo! this was the motto of the establishment! He must have put a wrong construction on the previous con-

duct and words of his superiors in the store, and done his employer grievous injustice.

But when the ladies had left the store, not without having repeated their invitation to Victor to visit them at an early day, Van Braaken informed him that he had, on this occasion, shown himself a fool. Victor colored with honest indignation, but listened quietly to what his chief had to say to him. Only when the latter repeated with emphasis, that a competent salesman must be able to praise up and to sell a poor article as well as a good one he modestly suggested that Mr. Van Braaken had himself declared honesty and truth to be the proper rule of action, which would insure success in business, and was promptly told for answer, that this declaration was meant for the customer, who must of course believe in the honesty of the dealer. But a merchant must not permit himself to be suspected of having been imposed upon; and the endeavor to convince a customer of the worthlessness of the goods his customer wishes to buy, was paving the way to bankruptcy.

Victor listened with eyes and mouth wide open. He was deeply impressed with the words of wisdom that fell from the lips of his chief; but the reflection was not edifying. He began to suspect, that there was a radical defect in the training he had received; that he lacked the essential elements for success in mercantile business. Not even the consolatory remarks with which his chief closed his harangue, restored his equanimity.

“But we have gained one great advantage to-day,” said Mr. Van Braaken. “We have secured the custom of the Mays, and all their influence. They will swear by the Dutch Store hereafter.”

* * *

The young man found solace in the leisure which his duties left him, and which he utilized to pick up such scraps of information, as the scanty means at his own command rendered possible, and which but augmented his thirst for the knowledge

and culture, the lack of which he felt so keenly. Among the books kept for sale in the store, he found Lindley Murray's Grammar of the English Language, and set diligently to work in studying it. But he found great difficulties to surmount: the text book that had fallen into his hands was calculated for the use of schools, presupposing the assistance of a teacher. Nothing daunted, however, he plodded on, making what progress he could.

One evening, on returning to the store after supper, he met with Leslie May, who was leisurely sauntering across the Square. He shook him cordially by the hand, and inquired what he was doing. In the conversation that followed, Victor confided to his friend the difficulties he found in the study of grammar.

"Grammar?" exclaimed Leslie, in some surprise. "Are you studying grammar? Then who is your teacher?"

"That is the trouble," Victor replied. "I have no teacher. And there are passages in my book which the closest attention does not enable me to understand."

"I should think so," said Leslie. "What!" he continued, with a smile of incredulity, "Studying grammar, and no teacher? What, in all the world, possesses you to take up this driest and most tedious of all subjects, — and without a master, too?"

"I am ashamed of my ignorance," said Victor. "I know neither my own mother-tongue, nor the language of this country. Everyone ought at least to understand his own language."

"Well!" replied his young friend, with an inflection implying wonder, if not doubt. "You have undertaken a job, sure enough; and I am not surprised that you get stuck at times. For though English grammar is sheer child's play alongside of Latin, I wouldn't for the finest horse in Vernal County be put through the dreary drill again. If you like it, you're a dryer poke than I took you for, from what Nellie told me about you. But talking about a master — we've got one among us right

now.— Haven't you heard that there is to be a lecture this very evening on this same subject of grammar?"

"A lecture on grammar?" exclaimed Victor, eagerly.
 "Where? By whom?"

"Why, — haven't you heard about it? That is strange. I thought you folks at the store got all the news first hand. It's at the court house. Time: 7.30. Close at hand now. Admission. free. It's some scheme most likely, to humbug the green ones out of their money. For who would expect a Yankee to do anything for anybody without pay, unless it were bait to some trap?"

"You know the lecturer, do you?"

"No. I have never seen him."

"Then how do you know him to be a Yankee?"

"Oh, no one but a Yankee would ever think of lecturing on grammar. Besides, I have heard his name; it is Caleb Amos. Ca-leb A-mos! Is that proof enough that he is a Yankee?"

"I would like above all things to hear him," said Victor.
 "Are you going?"

"Well, yes, I believe I will," Leslie remarked leisurely, as if the matter were not yet quite certain. "Yes; I think there are several reasons to induce me. In the first place, I don't know what else to do with myself this evening. Next, as the admission is free, I expect Brookfield to turn out strong. The young ladies will be there to a man —"

"To a girl, you mean," Victor interrupted, with a smile.

"To see the man, let us say, then," Leslie continued good naturedly. "Or rather to be seen by the man. At least to air their new bonnets, and patronize Art and Science. Thirdly and lastly, I have really some curiosity to learn what a keen-witted Yankee can find to say in a lecture on grammar."

"May I go with you?"

"Come, by all means," said Leslie cordially. "Let us go now; the time has almost come, and we must be early, so as to get a place from where we can muster the ladies as they enter."

The two young men turned their steps toward the court house, where they found a few early comers already seated.

Darkness had not quite set in yet in the open air; but the great hall of the court house was gloomy enough, though illuminated by two tallow candles, perched on the desk at which the lecturer was to hold forth, serving rather to make visible, than to dispel, the gloom.

“Will Colonel May be here?” asked Victor, as they entered.

“My governor? Why, of course. He is, always in for anything of this kind; and just now, when he is a candidate, you know, he must improve every opportunity to soft-soap the monster, and wheedle them into voting for him.”

Victor was puzzled to know what Leslie meant by soft-soaping the monster, but felt bashful about inquiring. He sat down by the side of his friend, near the door, where every one that came in had to pass by them. Leslie had prophesied truly; more than half of the audience which began to pour in as soon as the bell in the cupola of the hotel had tolled out the invitation, consisted of ladies, old and young, and Victor was proud to see how many of the fair comers had a smile and a nod of recognition for his friend. After a while there was a smile from a well-known face for him, too, and a maiden's pleasant voice whispered: “Good evening, Mr. Waldhorst!”

It was Nellie's voice, as she entered by the side of her mother. Passing by her brother, she said: “Why, what brought *you* here? This is the last place at which I would have expected to see you.”

Leslie paid no attention to what his sister said, but whispered into Victor's ear: “See, that is the lecturer! That fellow, that's holding on to the governor.”

“I thought you said you did not know him?” Victor asked.

“Nor do I,” replied Leslie. “But that long, narrow face, the sandy hair and whiskers, those ferret-like, hypocritical eyes and sharp nose can belong to no one but a Yankee. There, — see! the governor steps on the platform with him. That is the fellow!”

He was right. Colonel May led the stranger to the platform with the courtesy and attention, which a Southern gentleman bestows on an honored guest. He rapped on the table in request of silence, and said, addressing the audience:

“ Ladies and gentlemen! Friends and fellow citizens! To me has fallen the distinguished honor and pleasing duty to introduce to you our illustrious guest. Personally, he is a stranger among us. But his fame as a man of learning, as an indefatigable worker in the realm of science, as one of the great lexicographers of our age and country, has gone before him and reached us, in the primitive backwoods. — on the confines, so to speak, of civilization, west of the mighty Mississippi. You will hear a name, familiar to you all as a household word, when I introduce to you the illustrious Professor Caleb Amos, as the orator of the evening.”

The gentleman thus introduced bowed on all sides, and a general stamping of feet was the welcome accorded him by the audience. The Colonel, however, continued:

“ I need not, ladies and gentlemen, remind you of the honor conferred upon us in the backwoods, here, upon Brookfield, upon the whole Southwest of our glorious State, by the appearance among us of the renowned Caleb Amos, who will thus reflect upon us the splendor of his name and fame. And you, — all of you, — feel it to be, as I feel it to be, a sacred obligation upon us, to sustain the reputation of our country and people as patrons of the sciences, of enlightenment, and of progress, — thus doing our share of the work of building the Temple of Liberty, begun by our forefathers, so that our glorious Republic may truly become a Haven of Refuge and an Asylum for the oppressed of all Nations! ”

“ Now isn't that precious stuff! ” whispered Leslie into his friend's ear, as soon as the storm of applause had subsided, which the Colonel's patriotic speech had called forth. “ It is perfectly astonishing, what amount of nonsense my governor can supply, when he tries! ”

Victor made no reply. It puzzled him somewhat to under-

stand the connection between the glory of the Republic and a lecture on grammar; but he ventured no criticism.

The lecturer now took the Colonel's place. He had no manuscript, but at once launched out on the patriotic stream of laudation, taking his cue from his predecessor, pronounced a loud, if not eloquent, panegyric upon Liberty; paid a glowing tribute to the valor of the American people in their struggle against tyranny and oppression; reminded his hearers of the necessity of eternal watchfulness as the price of liberty, and demanded that every one of them stand to his post, resting, if need be, on their armour in the field. Then he spoke of Intelligence as the mighty weapon with which alone the American people could successfully resist the enemy from abroad, and treason from within. "For intelligence," he proclaimed, "is knowledge, and knowledge is power! To gain power, you must possess knowledge, and to gain knowledge, you must be master of your language. Language is the key to all knowledge. Thus you see the vital importance of Language to your liberty and to the welfare of the American people, and how essential it is to supply the rising generation with the powerful weapon Intelligence, for the struggle, the everlasting struggle, against Oppression, Tyranny and Treason, from within and without!"

The honest backwoodsmen applauded vigorously. Victor listened with rapt attention, beginning to see the point of the orator's patriotism. But Leslie whispered, with a sneer, "Now watch, Victor. Directly you will see the Yankee schoolmaster crop out, angling for pupils, with patriotism for bait!"

"For in a free country," the orator continued with unction, "Truth is mighty, and must prevail. But Truth is Thought, and Thought is Spirit, and Spirit dwells in the Word — in the Word as written, or printed; chiefly as spoken. And who is there among you, my fellow citizens, upon whom your country may not, some day, call to stand up in the fight for Truth, for Right, for Freedom? And how will you obey the glorious

summons without a thorough knowledge of your mother tongue, — that glorious tongue whose destiny it is, in the not far off future, to rule over the face of the civilized world? That blessed tongue, whose mission it is to bear the torch of Freedom and Enlightenment to the Nations languishing in darkness and ignorance? ”

The speaker paused, to give the audience time for a new round of applause. “ Can you tell me,” again whispered Leslie, “ who deserves the palm for stupidity, — the hypocritical Yankee with his bombastic nonsense, or that gaping crowd so eagerly swallowing his chumsy bait? ”

Professor Caleb Amos concluded his oration by a few explanatory remarks on the nature of grammar, comparing the aggregate of English words with the soldiers of a great army, suggested that as these, by a systematic division into companies, battalions and regiments were transformed from an unwieldy mob into a highly efficacious instrument in the hands of a general, so the former, by the science of grammar, were arranged into easily distinguishable classes, groups and orders; and then announced that he was ready, by means of an entirely new system, invented by himself, to teach the whole science of grammar in ten days, for the insignificant fee of one dollar, payable in advance, provided that a class of at least forty persons, without reference to age or sex, participated; the only condition imposed being, that they could read and write in the English language.

“ There! ” exclaimed Leslie triumphantly. “ Do you see? That’s the barb so bombastically baited. Forty dollars in ten days! Not so bad for the Yankee, eh? Wonder if he will find forty male and female fools in the settlement anxious to be humbugged by him? ”

Victor said nothing. He was nervously excited. The goal, so distant, and of so laborious approach to him, was shown by the lecturer to be within such easy reach. Only ten days! Only one dollar! He trembled with eager hope that his employer might allow him to improve this grand opportunity, and

revolved in his mind the momentous question, whether he might venture the suggestion.

Just then Mr. Van Braaken, who had also attended the lecture, approached, and electrified him with the proposition that he should test his mettle in the grammar class.

“I would be but too glad to do so!” he replied eagerly.

“Then you shall try,” said Van Braaken. “Come along. I see the new schoolmaster is ready to take subscriptions. Step up!”

They went up to the table where Mr. Caleb Amos was explaining to a group of citizens his terms and conditions, and inviting them to sign his list. Colonel May, Mr. Smith the proprietor of the hotel, and Mr. Barnes the rival merchant, were discussing the importance of the science of grammar, agreeing that it was a good thing and ought to be encouraged.

“So I think,” said Van Braaken, not without ostentation. “And I mean to give my Dutch apprentice a chance. You shall see that he will beat all the young men in the class, if he *is* a Dutchman. Put your name on the list, Victor, and show them that you are the smartest boy in the county.”

Victor blushed over the bombastic boasting of his chief; but he was too happy to take offense. His name was the first on the list.

“Here is his dollar,” Mr. Van Braaken continued, taking a Mexican dollar from his pocket and handing it to the Professor. “And if he needs books or anything else, he shall have them. We are not stingy at the Dutch Store.”

“Well done!” exclaimed Colonel May. “I know of no young man that deserves encouragement more than my young friend Waldhorst.”

Victor’s eyes sparkled with pleasure at the Colonel’s words, and Van Braaken walked away from the group with a complaisant smile and twitching eye-lid.

“We must give the townspeople a good example,” the Colonel went on. “My children are studying at the university and seminary; but it will do them no harm to brighten up

a little during the vacation. Put your name down, Leslie, and put down Nellie's, also."

"I?" inquired Leslie, in very evident surprise and displeasure. "Why should I attend the class? I went through English grammar some years ago."

"Never mind," said the Colonel good humoredly. "It won't hurt you to go over it again. Just put your name down."

"Oh yes, Leslie, do!" whispered Nellie, who had approached with her mother. "It will be so much nicer than at school! All the girls are going, and we will have such fun!"

"Are they really such geese?" Leslie replied, also in a whisper. "Are they going, sure enough? Who, for instance?"

"Why, Hettie Shamon, for one," breathed Nellie, with an arch smile and a meaning glance at her brother. "And then Emily Matlack will be sure to come, of course."

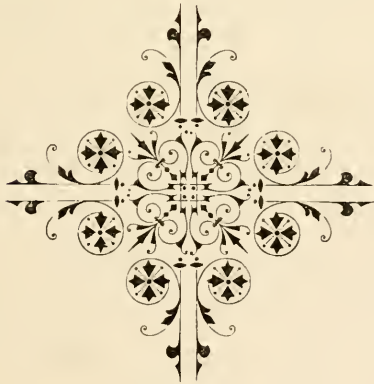
Leslie hesitated no longer. "Well, Pa," he said, with a droll smile of resignation, "if you insist on offering up your own children on the altar of Science and Patriotism,—why, let the grim Moloch devour us. So here — Nel-lie and Les-lie — May!" The two signatures followed Victor's in a bold, dashing hand.

It was an auspicious beginning for Caleb Amos. Mr. Barnes found it prudent to follow suit. So did Mr. Smith, and Mr. Jones, and after them many of the prominent citizens of the town, who subscribed for their children of both sexes and various ages. The requisite number of pupils was obtained before the meeting was over; Mr. Caleb Amos gleefully rubbed his hands, and the audience began to leave the court-house with the exalting consciousness of having saved the honor of Brookfield, and lighted a torch whose splendor would confound the Powers of Darkness.

But no one was happier than Victor, who indulged in delightful anticipations of slaking his ardent thirst for knowledge and culture. And when Colonel May requested his son to escort

the ladies home, because some trivial business would detain him yet a while in town, and Leslie invited his young friend to join them and conclude the evening with a walk in the beautiful moonlight, he accepted without hesitation. And he astonished Nellie by forgetting his bashfulness in the presence of the vivacious young lady, and still increasing her wonder by the readiness and spirit with which he met and parried her sallies on their walk to May Meadows.

Victor long remembered that delightful walk, and the events to which it gave rise.



A PEEP AT THE "PECULIAR" INSTITUTION.

AFTER a delightful hour spent in the company of the ladies and Leslie, on the broad porch of the mansion at May Meadows, Victor took his departure, bravely resisting the tempting invitation to stay all night.

It was not yet beyond the middle of June, and the weather was delightful. A soft, refreshing breeze, peculiarly grateful after a hot June day, caressingly fanned his cheeks and forehead. The moon, in her crescent, sent down a dreamy light. Her rays, percolating through the fluttering foliage of the grove that surrounded the May mansion, sketched grotesque mosaics on the graveled walks, and cast romantic glamour over the little village of huts just beyond, that served as roosting places for the negroes. Profound peace reigned all about; not a sound reached Victor's ears, save that of his own foot-falls. The cabins lay there in the bright moonshine like huge grids fashioned into gigantic squirrel cages. Victor had often seen these log cabins in the day-time, without noticing them closely, except to smile at the primitive architecture which constructed a habitation out of unhewn logs piled over each other; but now, in the serene calmness of the moon-lit landscape, they made an impressive picture. His imagination busily peopled the unpretentious hovels with men and women whose destiny it was to sow, for others to reap; whose toil produced the wealth in which their master reveled, while they subsisted on cornbread and bacon, wore rags to cover their nakedness, and were housed in these — picturesque cabins. He drew aside from his direct path, almost involuntarily, in the direction of the negro quarters, and the desire was strong upon him to witness the doings of the humble crea-

tures when among themselves. He noticed, as he approached that most of the cabins were surrounded by vegetable gardens and melon patches; many even were ornamented with flower beds and showy shrubs. In front of one or two of the cabins he noticed dusky figures stretched on the grass, but no other sign of life. Every one seemed to have gone to sleep, for no light was visible anywhere. Victor stood still to take in the scene he gazed on. Presently he saw what appeared to him, after all, to be a light, through the crevices between two logs of a hut just ahead of him. His curiosity was aroused; he approached stealthily to satisfy himself whether what he saw was really the light of a candle. He noticed that the door was closed, and that the window, composed of a single pane of glass, was curtained within. But he saw plainly, now, that the ray of light must come from a candle burning in that cabin. Giving way to the impulse of his curiosity, he peeped through the interstice, and saw a powerful negro seated on a low stool, a book upon his knees from which he seemed to be reading, but in so low a voice that Victor could not understand a word. At his side knelt a young girl, one arm resting on the negro's knee, the other holding the stump of a candle, by the light of which he was reading. She was evidently listening with close attention. Her face was turned from Victor, so that he could not see it; but her form, full of grace and beautifully proportioned, gave him the impression of exquisite loveliness. On a low bed, directly opposite, lay an old quadroon woman, whom Victor at once recognized as the one he had seen on the evening of his first arrival at May Meadows. This woman listened as eagerly as did the girl. Unable to make out a word of what the negro was reading, and curious to know what book it could be that interested them so much, Victor knocked for admission.

There was no answer.

Thinking that he had not been heard, he repeated the knocking with more emphasis.

“Who dat knocken’ at de doah’?” came, in a fretful voice, from within.

“A stranger!” said Victor, surprised by the hesitation to give him admission. “May I come in?”

The door was now opened, but Victor saw no light in the room. Every thing was in darkness. But the moon shed sufficient light for him to recognize the negro that had been reading. He asked Victor what he wished. Although his words were deferential, there was the same peevishness in his voice, as of one who had been roused from slumber.

“I thought you were reading just now,” said Victor, more and more astonished at the strange things he saw. “Did you not have a light in the room?”

“Light, Mars’? Did yo’ see light in dis yere cabin?” asked the negro, the inflexion of his voice indicating the highest degree of astonishment on his part.

Before Victor could answer he heard another voice, — evidently that of the young girl he had seen — whispering confidentially: “It is Mahst’ Walders, Uncle Xerxes. Let him come in: there is no danger.”

The negro meekly begged Victor’s pardon, and asked him to come in. Not until Xerxes had carefully closed the door again and bolted it, did the girl relight the stump of the candle, using for the purpose a friction match, which she ignited by drawing it through a piece of doubled up sandpaper.

By the light of the candle Victor now beheld a head of surprising beauty. From a face of purest oval, surmounted by a luxuriant growth of wavy black hair, a pair of large dark eyes of liquid lustre met his gaze with an appealing, timid, yet confiding look that strangely impressed him. The lips were full, but exquisitely formed, and of vermilion brightness; and through the clear, transparent skin of her round cheeks, a warm glow of rich carmine asserted itself, even by the dim light of the tallow dip.

“I am sorry to have disturbed you,” said Victor. “But I saw you reading, and have some curiosity to know what book it is that interests you so deeply.”

The old quadron on the bed and the negro whom the girl

had mentioned as Xerxes, looked at each other with troubled faces, but without saying a word.

"Don't fear; just tell him," he heard the girl say, in a soft, flute-like voice. "He has seen us any how, and Mahst' Walders will not betray us."

The girl accompanied the last words with an appealing, precatory look, which so impressed Victor that it haunted him for many days.

"Betray?" he said wonderingly. "What is there to betray?"

"You see," said the negro man, "dis yere Cressie — we calls 'er Cressie fur short, but 'er name's Looereshy — she larns me read'n' 'cause she larnt it from 'er missis, 'n' I — I jiss ben read'n' to 'er."

"And so you can read?" asked Victor, addressing the girl. "And your mistress taught you herself?"

"Oh no! no, no!" protested Lucretia, with an earnestness in tone and manner, as if she were defending her mistress against a grave accusation. "I only looked on when she was getting her lessons," she continued, with downcast eyes, as if confessing to some serious offense, "and I learned almost without knowing how."

"You learned all by yourself?" mused Victor, who was not rejoiced, somehow, to learn that it was not his young friend Nellie that was responsible for Cressie's education. He regarded the graceful figure and imposing beauty of the Octoroon girl with increasing admiration. "And you are really a —"

"Slave," the girl said in completion of the sentence, which Victor, blushing, had left unfinished. "Yes, I am Missis Nellie's own slave. And she is the sweetest, kindest mistress in the world. Mahst' May, he bought me for her, because my mammy nursed her, and she always liked me."

"'n' der nevvah, nevvah was a bettah marse 'n' Mars' May; nur a better missis in de wu'ld!" Uncle Xerxes proclaimed with solemnity.

“ I am very glad to hear you say so,” Victor remarked. “ Then I suppose you are all happy here at May Meadows, although you are — slaves! ”

“ Puffickly happy. Mars’ Wallers, eff on’y — ” The negro hesitated, and left the sentence unfinished. But Victor’s curiosity prompted him to ask :

“ Well — if only what? ”

Instead of answering, the negro looked uneasily at the others, and seemed to fear that he had already said too much. Victor, seeing his embarrassment, pressed no further. “ But you have not yet shown me the book you were reading when I first saw you,” he said, to change the subject.

“ It’s de book o’ books,” said Xerxes, with solemn reverence. He drew away the stool upon which he had been sitting, removed a piece of the flooring of the cabin, and produced from the cavity beneath a well-worn book, which he handed to Victor.

“ The Bible! ” exclaimed the latter in surprise.

“ Yes, Mars’ Wallers,” said the negro reverentially. “ It’s de preshus promise o’ de Lo’d to ’is lowest crechahs.”

“ Food to dem w’at’s hungry; drink to dem w’at’s thirsty; comfort to dem w’at lanngwish,” recited the quadron from her bed.

Victor was astonished at the profound earnestness of the negroes. He begged them to read to him. Xerxes looked inquiringly at the girl and on her nodding lightly, took the book from Victor and, opening it at a place marked with a slender ribbon, commenced to read :

“ Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

“ Take my yoke upon you and learn of me : for I am meek and lowly of heart : and you shall find rest unto your souls.”

Xerxes read with a slowness and difficulty painful to witness : but the solemn emphasis with which he pronounced each word after he had spelled it out, invested him with a dignity

which relieved his effort from tediousness, and greatly impressed his audience, Victor not excepted.

Lucretia now took the Bible and proceeded :

“ For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

She read with fluency, and a remarkably correct pronunciation. For a moment she paused, as if to give Victor the opportunity to speak, if he wished ; but he remained in his listening attitude, and she proceeded, turning to a passage in the Old Testament :

“ He is despised and rejected of men ; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief ; and we hid, as it were, our faces from him ; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

“ Surely he has borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows ; yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted ;

“ But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities ; the chastisement of our peace was upon him ; and with his stripes we are healed.”

The girl had long ceased, and given back the book to Xerxes. Victor pondered on what he had heard. Was this genuine piety ; was it religious conviction that brought these people together here ? Did they find in the word of God comfort and strength to bear the bitter lot assigned them ? Did the promise of redemption reconcile them with the ignominy and debasement to which the law of the land condemned them without guilt of theirs ? This powerful robust negro, in the strength of health and youth, — this aged, decrepit woman, near the close of a life of trouble and privation, — this beautiful Octoroon, of voluptuous beauty and graceful presence — was there for all of them but the one hope for liberation from the yoke that rested on their necks, — beyond the grave ?

A feeling of depression came over him as he remembered the words which Colonel May had once spoken to him, that it might prove dangerous to give expression to his views on slavery.

In the silence, into which all present had relapsed, the thrice repeated plaintive note of some bird of the night was

distinctly audible. It produced a strange effect on the occupants of the cabin: when the melancholy sound was first heard, the slaves looked at each other in evident alarm. At its repetition Xerxes replaced the Bible in the cavity under the floor, and hurriedly extinguished the candle. Victor hardly realized what was going on when he felt himself pushed gently into a corner by the soft arms of the Octoroon. "For heaven's sake, Mahst'," she rapidly whispered into his ear. "don't betray us! Keep yourself hidden, let no one find you here!" At the same time she spread a dress, that hung on the wall above his head, in such manner over his person, as to quite conceal him. As she stealthily joined the quadroon on the bed, steps without were heard approaching the cabin, and before Victor had time to reflect on the strange proceeding, and the odd predicament in which he was placed, the rickety door was thrown wide open by a vigorous kick.

"Whar's the light 'at's jist been burnin' yere?" thundered an angry voice, which Victor recognized at once as that of Jeffreys', the overseer.

There was no answer.

"Who's yere, anyhow?" the overseer sternly demanded.

"It's on'y me, Mars' Jeffreys," the negro answered meekly, "an' Cassandra, 'n' Cressie."

"Light a candle," Jeffreys commanded in a much mollified tone.

As soon as the light had been struck, which this time was accomplished by means of a flint and steel, and a tinder-box, Jeffreys approached the bed upon which Cassandra and the Octoroon were now seated.

In doing so his foot stumbled over the piece of plank which the negro had not accurately fitted into the floor.

"Hallo! What's this?" he cried, kicking aside the plank, and peering into the hollow beneath, from which he soon brought forth the Bible that had been hidden there. "Hallo!" he shouted in the triumphant tone of a beadle having caught a delinquent in *flagrante delicto*, "is that what you're up to?"

Hold'n' a prayer meetin', are ye? An' whar's the pa'son? Which o' ye's been do'n' the read'n'?"

No one made answer.

"Thunder an' blazes!" roared the irate overseer. "Ye don't mean to poke it down my throat 'at ye've been sitt'n' yere doin' noth'n? Didu't I see the light shinen' through the cracks o' yere mizzible shanty? Don't lie 'bout it, now!"

The negroes sat with heads bowed low; but none of them made answer.

"If 'twas you, me beaut'," he said, approaching the Octoroon with an amorous grin, "I'll let ye off easy. I'll not tell yer master, nurr flog ye meself, this time. Say, was't you?"

The Octoroon looked up. She saw the other two regarding her with deep anxiety. This seemed to arouse her to a resolve. Perhaps she considered, that they, at least, might be spared the punishment. "Do you promise, that none of us will be punished, if I tell you?" she inquired of the overseer, fixing her eyes upon him in a searching gaze.

"Ne'er a time!" sneered Jeffreys. "That's not the bargain. If 'twas you, I'll let *you* off, mind, if ye'll promise not to be so cantankerously ugly to me, when I'm doin' my level best to please ye!"

"It was me!" said Lucretia, with proudly curled lips. "I've learned to read from my missis, and come down to read the Bible to Uele Xerxes and Mammie Cassandra."

"Now see, what lady-airs ye do put on!" said Jeffreys. "I knowed ye'd make a capital pa'son. Well, I'll stiek to my word; no floggin' this time. See, how good I am to ye; now won't ye be friendly an' return the favor?"

"You know that it is not for me to grant favors," said the girl with haughty dignity.

Jeffreys cast an angry, threatening glance at her. "D'ye mean to defy me?" he cried. "Look out! Ye might rue it! An' you," he turned to Cassandra and Xerxes with a menacing

frown, "let this be the last time 'at I ketch ye with light in yer dirty shanty, after nine o'clock, if this yere stuck up wench be with ye or not. Ye know me, an' I'll stand no foolin'!"

Victor was in a most painful situation. He felt the hot blood of shame rushing to his face at the thought of acting the despicable part of an eavesdropper. Nothing but the fear of compromising the poor slaves, and bringing further trouble upon their heads—which he instinctively felt would be the case if he were discovered there now—prevented him from stepping forth and making known his presence to the overseer.

"Git, now!" commanded the latter. "Off to yer quarters. I'm goin' to go along—to see ye safe home!"

"I can go alone," Lucretia answered, preparing to leave the cabin. "Where is my shawl, Mammie?"

"There it hangs, Honey!" the quadroon replied, pointing to the corner where it covered the very dress which Lucretia had drawn over Victor to conceal him from the eyes of the overseer. Her eyes followed the direction indicated and dropped instantly, saying, as if she had changed her mind, "I believe I don't want it; its too warm, any how." And with these words she started towards the door with an air of utmost indifference.

"Stop!" shouted Jeffreys, who had noted the sudden dropping of the girl's eyes, and whose distrustful mind at once suspected a secret. "Wait a spell; I'll jist git ye yere shawl. Ye might take cold without." He had by this time removed the dress together with the shawl from the nail on which it hung. There stood Victor, with downcast eyes, shame and confusion but too visible in his burning face.

"Mr. Wallerst!" exclaimed the overseer in genuine astonishment. "An' what may *you* be doin' yere?"

Victor was about to answer, but before he had said a word, Jeffreys whose surprise quickly gave way to intense wrath, continued:

"I s'pose this 'ere prayer meet'n' 's o' your gittin' up, is



There stood Victor with downcast eyes.

it? 'Pears to me ye're gittin' 'long purty durned fast with the niggers, I do say, — 'busin' yer friend's hospitality, gittin' up onlawful midnight meetin's, 'n' havin' rendyvoos with 'is nigger wenchel! "

"There is no rendezvous, I assure you," said Victor, raising his eyes, but quickly dropping them again before the fierce scowl on the overseer's face. "My presence here is quite by accident."

"Oh, yaas, in course!" said Jeffreys with cutting sarcasm. "At this time o' night — in yer friend's nigger cabin — all by accident!"

"I meant no wrong," Victor stammered, deeply humiliated by the consciousness of having been surprised in a dishonorable situation.

"D'ye take me fur a darnation fool?" hissed the overseer, whose wrath increased as he saw the dejection of the young man. "Comin' yere in the deep o' the night, an' lockin' yourself up with a yaller wench! Blowin' out the light an' creeping under 'er petticoat when ye hear a white man comin'; an' ye think a white man 'll b'lieve ye, that ye meant nothin' ye need be ashamed of?"

"Ask the negroes — ask the girl herself," Victor begged him. "She will tell you, that until a few minutes ago we never interchanged a word in our lives."

"Ye don't say so! Ye want me to ast the niggers, do ye? The niggers, — ha, ha, ha!" laughed Jeffreys, grimly. "The go-betweens — the pimps, d—n their black souls! The cussed yaller wench, 'at put 'er petticoat on top o' ye to hide ye — the low-lived strumpet, 'at lets an outlandish Hessian Dutchman court 'er — "

"Stop, sir! What do you mean?" exclaimed Victor with spirit. Shame and the consciousness of thoughtless folly, as he now thought it to be, had disarmed him against what he thought justifiable rebuke from a man who was responsible for the conduct of the negroes. But the shameful insult conveyed by the last words stung him into resentment. "Do you sus-

pect me of anything wrong besides entering here without your permission?"

"Suspect? Oh, no, me fine bird. What I see, I needn't suspect. I know it!" The overseer spoke these words with derisive triumph. He then turned suddenly on the Octoroon and hissed out with increasing wrath: "As fur you, me hypocritical wench, ye shall taste the lash on yer naked skin to cure ye of yer rummin' after a Hessian Dutchman."

He had seized the girl by the arm, and pressed and pinched it with such violence as to extort from her a sharp cry of pain. Victor sprang forward and tore her from him. "Moderate your passion, sir!" he exclaimed. "And satisfy yourself, that there is no cause for your shameful suspicion. What has happened here, is by my fault entirely, and I do not mean to shirk my responsibility for it. These poor slaves are not to blame. But what you say about a preconcerted meeting with this girl, is simply a lie."

Victor had spoken with warmth and emphasis. The revolt of feeling caused by the overseer's tyrannical cruelty to the defenseless slaves, lent to his voice a vigor, and to his manner an earnestness, which was not without effect on the blustering tyrant. Nevertheless, he surveyed the slender form of the young man before him with a menacing air, as if he meant to chastise him on the spot. He concluded otherwise, however. "You call me a liar, sir?" he cried, with a haughty swagger. "Me, a free white man? That's an insult to me, sir, 'at I'll thrash you fur, as soon as I'll git ready. Jist now, I consider it me duty to the boss, to let 'im know what's goin' on behind 'is back. It's 'is bizness to settle with you fur meddlin' with 'is nigger wench, an' stirrin' up 'is slaves to sedition an' mutiny. You'll follow me, sir, to the maunshum, an' thar' ye shall answer Colonel May fur yer doin's yere."

This prospect filled poor Victor with dismay. What must his generous friend think of him, if he should hear how thoughtlessly and indiscreetly he had behaved? How painful

the prospect of having to talk with him on this unfortunate happening. But worse than this would it be to put himself in the power of this enraged overseer by betraying fear or hesitation. He would surely give a garbled account of the matter, presenting the occurrence not only in its worst aspect, but in a false light. So he concluded to be present with Jeffreys when he made his accusation, and promptly notified him that he was ready to visit the Colonel.

The Octoroon had already left the hut when Jeffreys, having in vain looked for her, marched off with Victor for the mansion.

The Colonel had just returned from Brookfield, and seemed to be in excellent humor. He smilingly commented on the honor done him by so late a visit from the two gentlemen. Jeffreys apologized for disturbing him at so unreasonable an hour; but the emergency, he said, was such as to call for prompt action. He dwelt upon the demoralizing effect upon the negroes by the presence of white people, or people that thought themselves white, at surreptitious and unlawful midnight gatherings at the negro quarters, who encouraged them in their seditious spirit, and outraged decency by shameful behavior with lewd colored wenches. Urged by the Colonel to speak more plainly, he related much of what he had seen at the negro cabin, and more that he surmised, not omitting gross exaggeration and malicious insinuations. He concluded by magnanimously submitting the nature of the punishment to be inflicted upon the young foreigner to the Colonel's discretion, but demanding for himself unlimited authority to deal with the negroes, and particularly with the obstreperous Octoroon, whose condign punishment was necessary as a warning example for the upholding of discipline on the plantation.

Astonished beyond measure, Victor listened to the shameful perversions of the overseer. It surprised him that the Colonel permitted such passionate language in his presence, on the part of an employee. It shocked him to perceive that the Colonel listened to the cruel threat against defenseless slaves,

who had not, even on the overseer's own showing, committed any offense, without protest or comment.

As Victor was about to speak, a commanding gesture of Colonel May demanded silence of him. At the very beginning of the overseer's report his brows had contracted; but he listened patiently until the close; put a few questions to obtain a clear insight into all the facts, and then dismissed the overseer with the injunction to take no steps in the matter until he received further instructions, and then addressed Victor: "To you, young man, I have a word to say; please remain."

In leaving the room Jeffreys cast a malevolent look of triumph at Victor, which forewarned him as to what he might expect at the hands of Colonel May.

The high esteem in which Victor held the Colonel, gave double pungency to the harsh words. He had not for a moment doubted that the Colonel would grant him a fair hearing, and that a truthful statement of the occurrence, such as he supposed the Colonel would give credence to in preference to the malicious tissue of falsehoods on the part of the overseer, for whose wrath he found it impossible to account, would disarm the worst displeasure of his friend. But the Colonel had not permitted him even to speak in his own defense!

When, after Jeffreys' departure, the Colonel desired him to give his side of the story, Victor's predominant feeling was one of indignation against the injustice threatened the poor slaves. Hence he spoke rather to establish their perfect innocence than exculpate himself, and the warmth with which he espoused their cause aroused the Colonel not a little.

"Do you know," he interrupted him on one occasion, "that the zeal with which you defend this Octoroon girl is a very suspicious circumstance?"

Victor was startled. "What can you mean?" he asked timidly.

"Why," replied the Colonel, a scarcely perceptible smile illumining his face, "you are so enthusiastic in the description

of her wonderful beauty that one might well suppose you would gladly improve an opportunity to arrange a rendezvous with her."

The young man's face grew scarlet. "I give you my sacred word of honor," he exclaimed, "that I never in my life saw her, much less spoke to her, before!"

"Well, now, that is remarkable," the Colonel went on, without changing a muscle of his face. "Then why does the minx blow out her candle, as soon as you knock at the door?"

"I am sure I do not know," said Victor, still deeply embarrassed.

"And why did you hide under a woman's dress as soon as you heard some one approach?"

"That was the girl's doing; and what in the world could have been her motive for it, is a mystery to me."

The Colonel seemed to enjoy the young man's embarrassment, but after a moment said, in a kind and confidential tone, "I will give you the key to this great mystery, my young friend. You do not know, I apprehend, that the blacks are forbidden to have candle-light in their cabins after a certain hour of the night?"

"No," said Victor, "I did not know that. It explains their anxiety to prevent the light from being seen on the outside."

"Quite right!" said the other. "Perhaps, also, you are not aware that it is a punishable offense for anyone to teach them to read!"

"No, indeed!" exclaimed Victor, greatly shocked, and forgetting, in his indignant surprise at so inhuman a law, as it appeared to him, his own embarrassed predicament. "And it is hard to believe, although I do not doubt your word. However harsh some masters may be in this respect, surely it is strange that *the law* should deprive a race of human beings of the possibility of culture and improvement. You, Colonel May, are not so cruel as to take from your slaves the comfort they might derive from reading, for instance the Bible."

“Thank you for the compliment,” said the Colonel, with quiet humor. “For I take it that you mean it as such, though in reality what you say implies, from your point of view, grave censure. Because I do not happen to think it cruel at all to deprive the slaves of what you call culture.”

Victor looked at the Colonel with amazement; he found it difficult to harmonize what he heard, with his estimate of his noble friend's character.

“Judge for yourself,” the latter continued, addressing the young man in a gentle voice, but with an earnestness that thrilled him, “would it be a kindness to these people, whom we deprive — whether justly or unjustly, let us leave undecided just now — of their human rights, to teach them the magnitude and value of that of which we rob them?”

“True enough,” Victor replied, after pondering a moment, “they would feel all the more keenly their degradation and wrong, the higher they rose in culture and refinement. But,” he added more eagerly, “is it permitted to brutalize a human being just to keep from him the knowledge of the magnitude of the crime committed against him? Is it not doubling the sin to rob him not only of his liberty, but also of his dignity as a human being?”

“Let me suggest to you, young man,” said the Colonel with impressive emphasis, “that no one can be robbed of that which is not his. A slave possesses neither human dignity, nor freedom. No free man has ever been degraded into slavery.”

Victor regarded the Colonel with a questioning look, indicating that he did not take in the full force of the remark.

“But,” the Colonel continued in a milder tone, “although I am sincere in my opinion, that the law, which deprives the servile race of the means of acquiring education and culture, accords with the dictates of genuine humanity, and is therefore a blessing to themselves, yet I do not pretend that it was enacted for their benefit. Its purpose is rather to serve as a barrier against the inflammatory literature, the libelous and

sedition tracts and pamphlets that are being scattered broadcast over the land by mischievous abolitionists, and so, in a certain sense, to protect our 'property,' if that word is not offensive to your fastidious ears. But be that as it may," the Colonel added, regarding the young man with a smile, "so the law is written, and you will do well to remember it. Cressie knew this, as well as the other slaves, and for that reason endeavored to conceal the fact that they had learned to read."

The latter words had been spoken with the smile on Colonel May's face that was so fascinating to Victor. He was not ready to assent to all that the Colonel had said; but he was so strongly attracted by the magnetism of his personality, that he felt neither the desire nor the ability to attempt an answer. "But I still cannot understand why the Octoroon was so anxious to conceal *my* presence in the cabin?" he said, after a short pause.

"There are two reasons for that," the Colonel informed him. "In the first place, the girl most likely suspected that your presence in the cabin together with her might be offensive to the overseer — how true her instinct was you have yourself seen — and then, in the next place, there is another law that you violated. Neither negroes, nor negroes or whites, are permitted to assemble in the negro quarters after dark. So you see, it was kind enough in the girl to try to shield you against the consequences of your own indiscretion, or ignorance, if you please."

"How thoughtless I have been!" exclaimed Victor. "And how much I need your kind indulgence to obtain your forgiveness! May I hope," he added with precatory earnestness, "that you will not permit the poor slaves to be made to suffer for my folly?"

A cloud again lowered upon the face of the Colonel. "I cannot promise perfect immunity for them," he said. "The authority of the overseer must not be jeopardized. Although I do not justify his over-severity in this matter, yet he must be

upheld in the enforcement of discipline. But you must excuse me now, young friend; I am weary after a busy day's work, and it is late in the night. Stay with us until morning; I will have a room made ready for you in two seconds."


Victor declined the proffered hospitality for the second time this day. He feared to displease his employer by remaining away from the store for the night.

"Let your mind rest easy about the slaves," said the Colonel on bidding him good night. "I shall see to it, that their punishment be not excessive."



VI.

LITERARY CULTURE IN THE BACKWOODS.

 AMONG the public institutions of Brookfield, the printing office, second in importance only to the stores, disputed priority with the post-office itself. Modest enough in architectural pretension — uniting in one room of moderate size the editor's sanctum, the proprietor's business office, and the printer's press and composing room, with space in one corner for the pallet of the printer's devil. Thence issued, in regular weekly editions of more than one hundred copies, the *Ozark Argus*, self-appointed Guardian of Freedom, keeping watch over the interests of Vernal County and the adjacent districts. With praiseworthy zeal and fidelity he proclaimed the gospel of Freedom according to the dogma of the Democratic party, and lashed, with inexorable severity, the pernicious heresies of the Whigs. The Constitution of the United States, as interpreted by Thomas Jefferson, constituted his Holy Writ of statesmanship. To doubt the infallibility of General Jackson, was rank treason. He was the terror of demagogues and delinquent office holders, of the wrong party, as well as the reliance and stronghold of political aspirants of the orthodox faith. What wonder, then, that the *Ozark Argus* should be the pride of Brookfield and the oracle of its politicians of the Democratic stripe?

The enterprise and public-spirited activity of him of the hundred eyes was not limited, however, to the field of politics. He announced on his title-page, in bold, black type, that he also proposed to be an "Organ of Art, Literature and Science." This part of his self-imposed task he performed by publishing weekly chapters of love-romances, or stories of adventure with robbers or ghosts; also by disseminating use-

ful receipts for the preparation of corn-salve, or some new way of making excellent pumpkin pie, and giving publicity to the sublime effusions of love-sick village poets and poetesses. By this means he gained the goodwill of the fairer and frailer half of the backwoods population in so far, that is to say, as these were accessible to the printed form of thought.

But the peculiar element of his utility, and wherein he shone a bright particular star, challenging the admiration of his contemporaries and of posterity as well, was referred to by the modest phrase: "And Chronicle of the Southwest." He sought and found his greatest pride in bringing to the knowledge of his fellow-citizens, and particularly of the citizenesses, all cases of births, deaths, engagements and weddings, as well as such other highly important items of news as serve to enliven the hum-drum of every-day-life, — who it was, for instance, that escorted the beautiful and fascinating Miss Molly Mumps, on last Sunday evening, from the meeting-house to the residence of her father, our highly respected fellow-citizen, Mopsey Mumps, Esq., and that the modest but aspiring young suitor had cast a timid, but significant glance at the blushing maiden; that Farmer Brown's exceedingly gifted housewife had appeared at meeting in a highly tasteful linsey-woolsey dress, spun from home-raised linen and wool, woven, dyed, patterned, cut out, sewn and ornamented by her own cunning hands; and what more there were of such curious and edifying topics.

That an event of such far-reaching importance to the citizens of Brookfield, as the opening of a "Course in the Science of Grammar," under the auspices of Caleb Amos, Esq., the far famed Professor of Lexicography, A. B., LL.D., &c., should escape the hundred eyes of the *Argus*, was of course out of the question. If it had, by any accident, done so, there was the patriotically inclined Caleb Amos to prevent so deplorable an omission of duty. For this deserving benefactor of ignorant humanity, mindful of the Savior's injunction, was not disposed to hide his light under a bushel, but meant it to shine

brightly in the eyes of mankind. To this end he sought out the editor of the "Chronicle of the Southwest," and imparted to him the glad tidings of the blessings in store for the benighted backwoodsmen. And the "Chronicle" sounded its trumpet, spreading the news in bold display of type and embellished with a profusion of exclamation points (at a low figure, and with a discount for cash) so that no reader of the *Ozark Argus* need be ignorant of the merit of the new system, nor of the fame and high sounding titles of Caleb Amos, Esq., Professor, A. B., LL.D., &c.

Precisely at the appointed hour of the day fixed for the momentous event, the ding-dong of the bell in the cupola of the hotel announced the beginning of the "Course in the Science of Grammar." Thanks to the trumpet-tongued promulgations in the *Ozark Argus*, the participants had increased to such a number that no room in town was sufficient to contain them, and the court house was put in requisition. To the court house, then, at the first tap of the bell, trooped the embryo grammarians, among them sons and daughters of well-to-do farmers of the vicinity: boys and girls, misses in their teens and virgins of riper years, as well as youths and young men. Leslie May was there with his sister Nellie, and the full complement of their male and female comrades. Emily Matlack embraced her "sweet friend" Nellie with gush and ostentation, while Hettie Shannon, a brown-eyed, dark-complexioned beauty of sixteen, gave her soft brown hand to the brother, inquiring anxiously after his health, and after the health of all the dear friends at May Meadows. Leslie squeezed the little hand and made a motion as if to carry it to his lips, whereat the little lady uttered a small scream, and Leslie moved away to speak to other ladies. It appeared to Victor, who patiently waited at a distance for an opportunity to speak to the brother and sister, as if Leslie were a decided favorite among the fair ones. He noticed that he had a friendly word for each, and now and then a blushing cheek or a sparkle of the eye gave token of the pleasure he conferred. As soon as

he caught sight of Victor, he stepped forward and seized him by the arm.

“Come, my boy,” he said pleasantly, “we are about to embark for a voyage on the Ocean of Science, and it will be well for you to make the acquaintance of some of your fellow-voyagers.” Whereupon he introduced Victor to a number of the bystanders with many a jocose remark. Victor ascribed the politeness with which he was received to the popularity of his friend.

Nellie, too, was surrounded by a bevy of young girls, so that she was difficult of approach. But when Leslie had released his arm, to speak to some young farmers that had just entered, Victor elbowed his way toward her, and Nellie came to his assistance by calling out to him as soon as she saw him. “Why, how do you do, Mr. Waldhorst? Come right along; I have some news for you from May Meadows, which, I am sure, will interest you.”

But before she had time to impart to him the “interesting news” from May Meadows, the tinkling of a bell in the hands of the teacher commanded attention. The buzz of general conversation ceased, and the pupils seated themselves on benches and chairs, as they happened to find them. Caleb Amos began his lecture. He sketched the plan upon which he proposed to conduct the studies, and begged the pupils to give their undivided attention to the matter before them. “Business before pleasure,” he said. “This is a sound and thoroughly American maxim, and we will scrupulously observe it, and may then expect a highly satisfactory result. For my own reminiscences of the rosy time of youth are not so far faded, but that I can heartily sympathize with the innocent pleasures of young people. And I see before me so much youth and beauty, so much intelligence and manliness in the faces of future citizens of our Republic, that I promise myself many pleasant hours in their company. Now, then, for business!”

It was evident that his words had produced a favorable impression. “Humbug!” Leslie whispered; but his loudly

clapping hands gave the signal for universal applause, in which the smallest boys made the greatest noise, and even the ladies did not refuse to join. This proceeding astonished Victor. It was quite different from the program he had expected; but as he saw that the teacher seemed pleased with the approbation of his pupils, he, too, clapped his hands: for Caleb Amos had won his hearty goodwill.

The plan of tuition was based on "Kirkham's Lectures on Grammar," (from which the teacher had also borrowed the comparison of the grammatical classification of words with military organization) commencing with an essay on the philosophy of language in general, and then proceeding to discuss the system and peculiarities of the English language. Caleb Amos had not a more attentive or more diligent pupil than Victor Waldhorst.

But, gratifying as was the progress he made in his studies, it gained him neither esteem nor goodwill among his classmates. The fewest of them were disposed to study with the close application demanded by the teacher and his system. Many attended the class for the sole purpose of "having a good time," as Nellie and Leslie had suggested, by meeting, under pretense of studying, with jolly people of their own and the other sex. Of course, the deportment of these was in contrast with that of Victor, which was felt by them as a silent but irksome reproach. And when, one day, the teacher took occasion to publicly praise him and hold him up to the class as an example for imitation, it drew down upon him the ill-will of them all. Even Nellie, whose existence he, in the fervor of his zeal, had almost ignored since the opening of the class, and who had waited in vain for him to demand of her the interesting news from May Meadows which she had promised him, felt provoked. It was a new experience to her to be slighted and to see her advances passed by unnoticed. And as she was conscious of having rather distinguished him by her favor, she felt his indifference, and the publicly expressed praise of the teacher, almost as a personal grievance.

When, therefore, her seat-neighbor, Miss Emily Matlack, poutingly remarked, "How big that gawky Dutchman must think himself!" Nellie nodded vigorously, and added: "The scare-crow!" And as poor Victor's figure occurred to her, as he had presented himself before her after her encounter with the runaway horses, she shook with suppressed merriment. The consequence was, that she had to relate the occurrence to her intimate friend, under the injunction, of course, of the strictest secrecy. Nellie possessed a lively imagination and great talent in relating a story, and so her intimate friend was vastly amused. The audible titter and chuckling of the latter aroused the curiosity of her intimate friend on her other side, and as the thing was too good, under present circumstances, to keep, she related it to Hettie Shannon, of course under injunction of strict secrecy. And as Hettie had another intimate friend, and so on, Victor's adventure, listened to by a lot of young and thoughtless people, most of whom had, just then, a feeling of resentment against him, had soon made the round of the class, not without having gained, on the way, in piquancy and ornamentation, to add zest to it, according to the taste of the individual channel through which it passed. Neither Caleb Amos, nor the unsuspecting Victor, could account for the ripples of merriment all around, the eager whisperings, and half suppressed laughter. But Nellie, if it really had been her intention to humble her German friend, had accomplished more than she had bargained for in telling that little story about the scare-crow.

On the very next day the teacher took occasion to congratulate the whole class upon the progress made by each and all of them; he was proud of their achievements, and expressed what he termed a well-grounded hope, that each one would become an excellent grammarian. But before entering on the next division of the text-book, he proposed to recapitulate what they had already gone over, so as to thoroughly prepare them for the lessons to follow. He suggested that this could be best accomplished by means of an examination; and in

order to excite a spirit of emulation, and also invest the proceeding with a higher interest, he proposed to enliven it by a parsing match, so that any one failing to answer properly should be "turned down" by the next one who gave a correct answer.

The proposition was received with applause.

"It remains now to determine," said the master, "how the ladies and gentlemen propose to be seated for the start. It would be difficult, if not impossible, to arrange you all according to your proficiency. I have therefore concluded that you should for the beginning be seated by lot. To that end I have prepared a number of paper slips which I will place in a hat, corresponding to the number of pupils, each containing a number; of these each of you will draw one, and take the seat indicated by the number he or she has drawn. Let me request you, ladies and gentlemen, not to open your papers until the drawing is concluded."

The teacher then called the names in the order in which they were entered on the subscription list, hence Victor took the first paper, with which he withdrew without opening it, mindful of the teacher's request. Leslie was less scrupulous. The triumph visible in his features betrayed that he had secured a small number. Nellie could not be expected to behave more discreetly than her elder brother, and she also peeped into the paper she had drawn. But what she saw there brought no smile to her face. There was a very perceptible pout, rather, and Victor, whom she asked as she passed him, to show her his number, thought he detected a tremor in her voice.

"I have not looked at my number," he answered, "because the teacher did not wish us to."

"I did," said Nellie, showing him her number, which proved to be one of the highest. "See what luck I had!" she added. "I dare say that you have been more fortunate." A scowl darkened her lovely face, and a sinister expression, as of envy, for a moment disfigured the mouth that Victor thought so sweet when it smiled. It pained him to see her

so impatient. Acting upon a sudden impulse, he said, with a sparkle in his dreamy eyes, "Will you do me a great favor, Miss May?"

"What can you want of me?" she asked in return.

"I have not seen my number; it may be a higher one than yours. But I would like to exchange with you."

"*You* want to swap with *me*?" she exclaimed in blank astonishment.

"Yes, if you please."

Victor was electrified by the bright smile that suddenly lighted up her face. "Here," she said, "take my abominable ticket. Yours cannot be worse."

She hastily opened the paper that Victor gave her, and he heard again that sweet voice in the silvery laughter that he knew so well. "Number one!" she proclaimed in high glee, holding up the paper for inspection, and dancing with it from friend to friend. "I've got the head place and I mean to keep it!"

Victor's pleasure, though not so demonstrative, was perhaps fully as intense as Nellie's, in spite of the conviction, ruefully entertained, that he had now barred himself of the chance of attaining a high rank in the parsing match.

When all the tickets had been drawn, the examination began. At first there was much merriment when anyone had to give up his place to a more fortunate competitor; but the interest excited by the rivalry soon became so intense as to exclude every other consideration. Save a few of the most indolent ones, all exerted their utmost ability to maintain their places, or turn down some one above them. Victor, originally one of the last, advanced rapidly, until he reached somewhere near the middle of the class; his progress then became more and more difficult, because those above him were more experienced scholars. Among the latter were Nellie and Leslie. The brother had advanced until he occupied the seat next to his sister, who on her part bravely maintained the place of honor at the head of the class, having successfully answered every question put to her.

Once, when it was her turn, the teacher asked, "How are abstract nouns usually distinguished from their adjectives?" Simple as the question seemed, Nellie was at fault.

"Well, Miss May," the teacher said encouragingly, "surely you can tell us that?" But he was mistaken: Nellie could not give the information, and after the ominous "One — two — three!" spoken, perhaps, a shade more lingeringly than usual, he added, "Why, then, Miss May, you will have to give up the place of honor to your brother."

But Leslie could not, or would not, at least did not, deprive his sister of her preference. "I don't know!" he answered curtly, when the question came to him.

"Well, this is strange," said the teacher. "Next!"

But neither the next nor a number of those following, gave the answer.

Miss Hettie Shannon, when the question was put to her, answered timidly: "By their meaning!"

"Very good!" said the teacher. "One knows a lady by her — being a lady. But that does not answer the question. Next!"

Victor watched the proceeding with eager interest. His face colored with excitement. He thought he knew the answer which the master expected, and was astonished that no one else had thought of it. If it should come his turn —

The next answer was wrong again. Mr. Caleb Amos grew impatient. "Miss Matlack, do you clear up the matter," he said, as he came up to her. "How —"

"By the form," answered the young lady.

"Well," exclaimed the teacher, "that is something. But the goose has a form as well as the swallow; and by the test you have given us we would not be able to distinguish one from the other. Next!"

Victor's heart beat violently in breathless suspense. When the question reached his next neighbor, he was almost sure that the answer would come; for he had been told that this

young man had been a student at a college for some years. But Ralph Payton, instead of answering the question, seemed disposed to quarrel with the teacher.

“ A swallow is distinguished from the goose, among other things, by its tail,” he exclaimed, to the great amusement of the class. “ But I fail to see that either adjectives or nouns have tails.”

“ You do?” counter-queried the Professor, opening wide his eyes, and betraying surprise by the inflection of his voice. “ You must be exceedingly averse to figurative language, or possess a tame imagination. I see no impropriety in comparing suffixes of words with tails. What think you, Mr. Waldhorst? How — ”

Victor, trembling with excitement, fairly jumped from his seat, and shouted before the question was finished, “ By the end-syllable n-e-s-s!”

“ You see,” the master spoke up, “ Mr. Waldhorst has saved the honor of the class. He has discovered the tail of abstract nouns, and so raised himself to the head of the class. Take your seat at the right hand of Miss May.”

Victor complied with palpitating heart and flushing cheek. His blazing eyes were bent to the floor; but he could not conceal the exultant triumph that radiated from them. Both Nellie and Leslie welcomed him with pleasant smiles and encouraging nods, and when he sat down by the side of Nellie, the young conqueror was reveling in unalloyed bliss.

But he was not long to enjoy his triumph. Energetic whispers were heard all around the circle of pupils, which soon swelled into open expressions of discontent and anger. “ It is not right!” was plainly heard. “ The teacher is partial — He helped him — He always did favor the Dutchman — This foreigner sha'n't make fools of us — We won't stand it ’ — and other like accusations and criminations were heard on all sides. The temper of the pupils was wrought up to a pitch threatening open revolt. Let the teacher command silence never so authoritatively, — he succeeded in quelling the uproar for brief

moments only, and then it would break out anew with increased violence. In vain he appealed to their self-respect and sense of dignity; in vain to his authority as teacher. "You have abused your authority!" Ralph Payton exclaimed in a loud voice. "By your silly metaphor of the word tails you indicated to your pet the answer you wanted, and helped him to an honor which is a shame and a disgrace to him and to you."

The speaker was not a popular member of the class. A show of haughty reserve, as well as a considerable degree of self-conceit, which he took no pains to conceal, had made him more opponents than friends. But in giving vent to his spite against the young "Dutchman" he had expressed the feeling uppermost, just then, in the minds of most of the pupils, and they heartily applauded him.

"And besides," the young orator went on, emboldened by the success that had attended his first speech, "your question and the answer to it were equally false and absurd. Abstract nouns have no common ending. It was nonsense to say that they ended in 'ness'. And the promotion of the Dutchman for giving such an answer is a shame, and an insult to free and independent Americans."

The "free and independent Americans" present in the class, including the fairer half of them, expressed their sympathy with the sentiment uttered by the speaker, by vociferous applause. Victor was at a loss to understand all this commotion. The teacher lost the coolness and self-possession so necessary for the control of an assemblage under excitement, though it be but of school-boys. He permitted himself to be betrayed into an angry reply, undertaking to defend both the question and the answer as perfectly correct, and designated the statement of the speaker as a pitiful attempt to cover his own defeat. This added fuel to the flames of discontent; for Ralph Payton's accusation gave a color of justice to the assault upon Victor, without which the clamor against the latter might seem to arise out of envious jealousy. Hence the attack on Payton's position was equivalent to an attack on their own

conduct. "Payton is right!" resounded through the hall. "We will not suffer him to be insulted!" And a voice, louder than the rest, shouted: "It is a disgrace to our class, to have at its head a miserable Dutch abolitionist and — scare-crow!"

Victor, notwithstanding the warning received from Colonel May on the subject of abolitionism, was not aware of the full extent of the insult intended. But the word "scare-crow" wounded him deeply. He cast an involuntary glance at his neighbor, as if looking for explanation from her. She dropped her eyes before his appealing glance, while a flood of scarlet suffused her face and neck. But quickly looking up again, her eyes met his unflinchingly, and with her sweetest smile she whispered: "Don't be angry! I have been silly and thoughtless. But that fellow," she continued, throwing her eyes with a withering glance in the direction of the last speaker, "is low and mean. I hope you will care as little for his cowardly insult, as for my thoughtless folly."

In the earnestness of her request, she had placed the tips of her fingers on his arm, and Victor felt a thrill of delight at the soft pressure. He knew not what answer to make, nor was there time to say anything; for Leslie, — who had jumped up on hearing the word "abolitionist," and placed himself in front of Victor, as if to shield him against harm, — now spoke loudly, but without passion or excitement:

"Boys, it is my opinion, that the greatest shame and disgrace to our class is to forget what we owe ourselves and to our teacher. In the presence of the ladies, too! Let us, before the gentler sex, at least, behave like gentlemen, and not like silly school-boys who are put out because somebody else has learned his lesson better."

Leslie's words met with favorable reception. The noise subsided perceptibly. But before the master could follow up the advantage so gained, and restore order, Orlando Jones, who had spoken the offensive words, again arose, and said:

"Leslie May, you ought to be the last one to undertake the



“ You are a liar ! ” Victor hurled back.

defense of a sneaking spy, who stirs up your father's slaves to disobedience and revolt. — who in his own person, teaches them to read and to write, — an outlandish ruffian, who don't know anything about propriety and decency, and who has shamefully insulted your own sister."

This was more than Victor could stand. He was stunned at the audacious perversion of the affair in the negro cabin, shocked at being called a spy and a ruffian; but to be accused of indecency, and more than all, of having insulted Miss May, — here in the presence of the young lady herself, before the whole class — this could not be tolerated. Forgetting all else in his intense indignation, he leaped to his feet and shouted, his eyes flashing with wrath, his voice trembling with passion: — "This is an infamous lie! And he who says it, is an infamous liar!"

Orlando Jones, as the backwoods code of honor prescribed, must chastise the offender on the spot. He promptly stepped forward with clenched fists and threatening gestures.

"Who do you call a liar!" he yelled fiercely. "Take back that word or I'll knock your teeth down your insolent throat!"

"*You* are a liar!" Victor hurled back. "You and anybody who says that I intentionally insulted Miss May."

Young Jones drew back his arm for a blow at Victor. But Victor, whose blood was boiling, anticipated him. He was not an adept in the noble art of boxing; had never been engaged in a fist-fight in all his life. But he was in a furious passion, and sprang blindly at his antagonist, dealing him a blow in the face that felled him to the floor. At this moment Ralph Payton rushed up, evidently to the rescue of his fallen partisan.

"Back!" was heard the loud, but still unimpassioned, and therefore all the more authoritative voice of Leslie. "Fair play! Let these two fight out their quarrel, Ralph Payton; and if your fist itches for a fight, try it on me!"

"Let him come!" shouted Victor. "He who lies is a

oward, and I am not afraid of all the liars in the class, if they are as big, every one of them, as the giant Goliath!"

Victor could not have adopted more efficient means to secure the respect of his fellow-pupils, than this display of personal intrepidity. Many of the old settlers remembered the time when prudence and valor were indispensable requisites for the protection of life and property against treacherous and cruel enemies, and courage was still looked on as the chief manly virtue. Victor knew nothing of this, nor that he was brave or courageous. But Ralph Payton knew it, and saw to his chagrin that so far the assault on the foreigner had resulted to his decided advantage. And Orlando Jones knew it, and felt the disgrace of defeat all the more keenly.

Threatening dire vengeance he arose from the floor. He permitted himself, with feigned resistance, to be led away, repeating when beyond the reach of Victor's long arms, his slanderous charges, counting on the popular intolerance against abolitionism, and emphasizing Victor's low instincts. "You have all seen," he cried when at a safe distance, "how this rowdy attacked me like an assassin. That proves the truth of what I say, that he is a dangerous abolitionist, who will bring bloodshed and servile insurrection into the land. I tell you he is ripe for the penitentiary. For a monster who will assassinate a defenseless man unawares, and disgrace a harmless girl, is capable of any crime."

Again Victor's passion carried him beyond control. He tore away from those surrounding him and rushed upon his adversary, striking at him in blind fury. Jones scarcely resisted, seeking only to protect his face and head against the weighty blows that Victor's arm inflicted.

"Enough!" Jones presently shouted, thus proclaiming his defeat. Victor ought now to have desisted; but he was lamentably ignorant of the code among the backwoodsmen, and kept pounding his adversary in defiance of code and etiquette.

"Ah!" and "Oh!" came from the lips of some of the

timid fair ones; "shame!" and "mercy!" from others. The teacher, in thunder tones, commanded order; but Victor heard him not. Ralph Payton again sprang to the rescue of his party friend, and again Leslie interposed, demanding fair play.

"Do you call that fair play when the upper man beats the one that is down, after he has acknowledged his defeat?"

Leslie saw that Payton was right. "It is enough now, Victor!" he said. But Victor still heard not. He was literally beside himself with furious passion.

Nellie had witnessed the contest with sparkling eyes and in breathless suspense. Her sympathy was evidently with Victor; but when she saw that he continued to beat his opponent after he had said "enough!" her brows contracted, and she shook her head in decided disapproval. Then she sprang forward, laid her hand on Victor's arm, and said: "That will do, Mr. Waldhorst. You must not strike a man after he says 'enough.'"

The touch of that little hand at once paralyzed Victor's arm. He stood speechless and motionless while Orlando Jones made good his retreat, and gazed at the intrepid girl.

The whole affair had lasted probably not longer than a minute or two; but to Victor it seemed an age since he had conquered the place at the head of the class, and the privilege to sit by the side of Nellie. And now she stood there, looking at him so reproachfully. With the return of his self-possession came the bitter self-accusation, that by giving way to his passion he had forfeited the esteem of his friends — that he proved himself guilty of the ruffianism with which Ralph Payton and Orlando Jones had charged him.

"Par-don me!" he stammered, manfully fighting back the tears that would force themselves into his eyes, as if taking advantage of the weakness and depression that followed the tension of his nerves during his late excitement. "I — I — meant not to insult you!"

"Of course not!" spoke Nellie, in her clear, bell-like voice, so as to attract general attention. "I know you, Mr.

Waldhorst, for a thorough gentleman and a brave hero, who saved my life at the peril of his own." And having thus made ample reparation for the unintentional injury she had done him, she held out her hand to him and said: "come!"

He followed her, not able to thank her in words. Before they reached their seats he heard Leslie say, also addressing the whole class:

"I deem it my duty to add a word in justification of my friend. It has been publicly charged here that he is an abolitionist, and carries on illicit intercourse with my father's negroes. I can give a shrewd guess at the source whence this infamous slander emanates. The originator of it is a dastardly liar, whoever he is. The disseminator is a no less dastardly slanderer. One such has to-day received well-deserved chastisement at the hands of my friend, and the like treatment awaits all that may follow the slanderer's example. I wish to add, that whoever doubts my word in this matter, may say so, and I am ready to settle with him at any time or place, as soon as the class will be dismissed."

In speaking the latter words, Leslie cast a look of defiance at Ralph Payton, of which that gentleman chose to take no notice.

"And now, fellow students," concluded Leslie, "let us, with the permission of our highly honored teacher, give a hurrah to the young man who by his natural capability and indefatigable diligence, has won the first place in our class, and by his personal courage and prowess has won our respect and esteem. Hip — hip — hurrah! Hurrah! Hurrah!!!"

The class — at least the great majority of them — heartily responded. The ladies were not tardy in their demonstrations, Miss Emily Matlack and Miss Hettie Shannon waving their handkerchiefs almost as enthusiastically as did Nellie May; even the teacher smiled approbation. When the noise had subsided, the latter declared the class dismissed for the day, and admonished the pupils to return promptly in the morning for the renewal of their studies.

VII.

A CANDIDATE IN A QUANDARY.

VICTOR left the court house in a state of bewilderment brought on by conflicting emotions. Elation over his signal success in the class; shame and poignant distress at thought of the spectacle he had made of himself by giving way to his passion; exultant delight over the decided partiality shown him by Nellie and Leslie, — all these contended for the mastery in his bosom. And above it all the puzzling experience, that he had been most applauded for that of which he was most ashamed, — the disgraceful broil with Orlando Jones. Not even the teacher had reprimanded him for his unseemly violence! But he felt keenly the humiliation that lay in Nellie's gentle rebuke. What must she have thought of his temper, and of his manners, to find it necessary to remind him of his cowardice toward a helpless adversary!

The brother and sister had cordially invited him to accompany them to May Meadows. It needed very little coaxing to induce him to accept the tempting invitation. He felt that nothing would so effectually restore his mental equilibrium, as the delightful companionship of his young friends.

“Tell me, Victor,” said Leslie with a jocular smile, when all three were on their way to the Colonel's residence, “were you born with a caul, and did some benevolent fairy stand god-mother at you baptism? That was a happy inspiration, this morning, that prompted you to the one only course to stop the mischievous gadding of those rowdies in the class. I confess, that I was always afraid that your excessive modesty, the like of which no maiden in Vernal County is blessed with, would ruin your prospects in life, at least before the public. But

to-day you have convinced me, that you have the stuff in you for a politician who will find Vernal County too narrow, some day, for his ambition."

This sweeping announcement startled and puzzled Victor. He was afraid his friend was quizzing him. "What is a politician?" he inquired.

"What a question!" exclaimed Leslie. "Why, politician comes from politics. A politician is a man who engages in politics."

"Papa is a politician, is he not?" suggested Nellie.

"I should think so!" the young man asserted. "And what a politician! He has made most wonderful progress in the fine art of humbugging since this campaign began."

"Is humbugging the height of a politician's art?" Victor inquired naïvely.

"Why, of course!" Leslie answered promptly, regarding his companion with an amused smile. "A politician goes in to win; and to win, he must stand in with the people. If he wants an office, he must make the honest voters believe that he accepts it from motives of sheer patriotism, at great personal sacrifice to himself; and he wheedles them into voting for him by promising all sorts of impossible things, — that the millennium will come, if they only will elect him, — and such — humbug."

"Then your father is not a politician!" Victor proclaimed, with an air of conviction that precluded doubt.

"Well, and why not?"

"Because Mr. May is too thoroughly a gentleman to do so dishonorable a thing!" Victor responded with enthusiasm.

Nellie gave him a proud and grateful look, while Leslie, looking a little ashamed, cordially shook him by the hand, saying "I think you are right, Victor. In that view of the case, the governor is not, perhaps, a politician. But we are so in the habit of using the word to describe a man who makes a business of politics; who hangs out the show-bill of patriotism, and makes of patriotic party platforms so many cloaks

for his ambitious, or covetous, but always selfish ends. Is not that humbug?"

"And why do you think that I will be a successful politician?" Victor asked.

"You prove it just now by dealing me this poser," said Leslie, laughing. "It would be difficult, indeed, to imagine you as dealing in hypocrisy or humbug, or believe you capable of deceiving even a babe. But I am right, for all that. Wrong perhaps in applying the word in this sense, to the governor. And yet, has he not produced an infinite amount of humbug and nonsense during this campaign? Let me remind you of the precious stuff he got off on the occasion of his introducing Professor Caleb Amos to the people of Brookfield. But, my friend," he added, turning with smiling face to Victor, "there are politicians, also, in a nobler sense. Statesmen, if you please, who devote themselves to the science of political economy; who organize parties on political principles, and who are as innocent of office-hunting, in the vulgar sense, as you or the governor. You would not object to being a politician in this sense, would you?"

"Still, I cannot imagine how you connect my behavior to-day with this subject," Victor remarked.

"I will tell you," the other rejoined. "You were in a most critical predicament to-day. How near you came to being a victim to the base slanders of your jealous detractors, you probably never suspected, nor realize even now. People stand no tom-foolery in this part of the country from abolitionists, nor allow the negroes to be encouraged in their discontent and wild notions of bettering their condition. And that is just what they represented you as being and doing. That is why it pleased me so well to see you nip the foul conspiracy in the bud by an emphatic word and a stinging blow, which at once made you the master of the situation."

"I can't imagine how that helped me!" said Victor, shaking his head dubiously.

"But I can see!" Nellie exclaimed eagerly. "It was a

mean thing of Orlando Jones to state publicly what I had meant for a harmless joke, to an intimate friend, and then to pervert it so shamefully, and make a public accusation of it. And so everybody was glad that you thrashed him for it."

"Let it be a lesson to you, my giddy-headed little sister, to keep that unruly tongue of yours under better control!" moralized the big brother.

"I know! You needn't preach me a sermon about it," said Nellie, trying honestly but with indifferent success, to put a sober expression on her face.

"But that wasn't the main thing," said Leslie. "That was only a private affair between you and Nellie —"

"But it was an infamous lie!" Victor shouted, with returning indignation.

"Of course it was!" Leslie assented. "And your towering passion and the energy with which you hurled the lie at him, showed up not only this infamy, but also — and that was of greater importance — the utter groundlessness of the cock-and-bull story about the negroes. And this is what I meant, when I said that you had the stuff in you for a thorough politician, who knows how to do the right thing at the right time."

"Ah," said Victor, with an admiring glance at the little lady and her brother, and blushing with pleasure, "it was not my doing that rescued me from disgrace, but yours, Miss May, and yours, Leslie. You both stood by me so bravely, and everybody admires and loves you so much, that for your sake they finally put up with me also. How immensely popular you are!"

"I hope you are right!" said Leslie, laughing. "A little popularity just now would not come amiss to the governor. The campaign is getting hot, and there is no telling what the end will be. It would be a duced nuisance, if that sneaking whig Waddle were to beat him."

"Your father?" (In a tone of incredulity.) "Why, surely, that cannot be. Everybody, I should think, is going to vote for Colonel May."

“ A consummation devoutly to be wished ! ” exclaimed the son. “ But I would much prefer certainty to the hope. That business about Jeffreys is ugly. If only the governor were free to deal with him as he ought to be dealt with for his insolence ! ”

“ With Jeffreys, your overseer ? ” asked Victor, eagerly.

“ Why, yes, ” Nellie spoke up. “ Did I not tell you a week ago, that I had news to tell you from May Meadows that would interest you ? But you never once came near me, so that I could tell. ”

“ How stupid of me ! ” he replied, and then added eagerly : “ Please tell me now. ”

“ It concerns you somewhat, also, ” Leslie answered for his sister. “ Jeffreys insists on it that you were stirring up the negroes, were teaching them to read and write, and such nonsense, — well, about the same thing that rowdy Jones said in the class. Now the governor did not want to believe everything he said, and they quarreled. There were not many words, but pretty sharp ones. Jeffreys will have it that there must be exemplary punishment of the negroes. Among the rest, he wants Cressie publicly flogged. He says that she is one of the worst ringleaders, and openly defied his authority. But Cressie belongs to sister Nellie, and she has taken it into her head, that Cressie shall not be whipped, and the governor takes Nellie’s view of the matter. ”

“ Don’t you think it would be cruel and wrong to punish Cressie, just because the overseer is mad at something ? ” Nellie spoke these words with an inquiring look at Victor, as if she hoped, but was not quite sure, that he would agree with her.

“ It would be the height of tyrannie injustice ! ” the latter exclaimed warmly. “ But is not Colonel May the master ? And if he will not permit this wrong to be done, does not that settle the matter ? ”

“ Under ordinary circumstances it would, of course, ” Leslie explained. “ But Jeffreys is headstrong and vindictive.

and threatens to leave the place if he does not get his way. If he makes good his threat, of course there will be a big row about it and all sorts of talk among the people. Jeffreys will certainly put the matter in the worst possible light, that is too plain to be doubted. The whigs would make tremendous capital out of it, and defeat the governor almost to a certainty."

"How in the world can this thing injure your father?" queried Victor, in anxious surprise. "It is not wrong for a master to discharge a servant who will not obey, is it? And whose business is this, but his own?"

"So I say!" Nellie put in. "Papa must know best what to do about his own affairs, and if he lets Mr. Jeffreys go, because they cannot both be boss, nobody can object."

"No one," replied Leslie, speaking more soberly than was his custom, "who knows the facts of the case. On the contrary, every one that will take the trouble to examine the facts at all, will say that he is right. But the question is not so much whether he is right or wrong, but how to avoid a scandal that will certainly prove disastrous on the eve of the election."

It troubled Victor to notice the seriousness of his friend Leslie, and he listened with a solicitude arising from a guilty feeling that his own imprudence had brought on all this trouble.

Leslie continued: "You see, if Jeffreys is discharged, the whigs will take up his side of the story and magnify it so as to make it a hundred times worse than even Jeffreys now puts it. The governor will be held up as a renegade on the slavery question, which just now causes so much excitement all over the South. They will make him out a hypocrite, who secretly does that which he publicly condemns; a traitor to the cause of the South, by permitting sedition and insurrection to be taught to the negroes of his own household. The discharged overseer will pose as a martyr, who would rather sacrifice a profitable position than become a tool in the hands of a traitor to his country! Orlando Jones has shown you this very day, how easy it is to spread lies, and how readily they are believed."

"But you have also shown how easy it was to put down the

lies!" Victor exclaimed exultantly. "A word from Miss Nellie, a simple statement by you, were sufficient to sweep away their web of lies."

"You happen to be mistaken, young man," said Leslie. "Your thundering 'liar!' and your ready fist did that. But, you see," he continued, relapsing into the sober tone in which he had been speaking, "we cannot lock up the whole body of voters in a schoolroom: nor can the governor demonstrate to them all with his fist, that his enemies are lying. No harm can come to him from any one whom he can meet face to face: danger threatens only from the lie that sneaks in the dark, like the snake in the grass that shuns the open light of day."

They walked on in silence for a while, pondering the situation. Presently Victor inquired, "What has your father concluded to do in the matter?"

"Nothing as yet," answered Leslie. "But I fear that he will yield to Jeffreys."

"Yield!" Victor repeated, emphasizing the word so as to almost make Leslie blush.

"Will *have to* yield," the latter added quickly. "Would you have him throw away his chance for the election, just to shield a slave from a flogging which she, perhaps, after all, deserves?"

The young German shook his head dubiously, but made no reply.

They had now reached the grounds of May Meadows. In passing the place from which the negro quarters could be seen, Victor looked eagerly in that direction. He seemed to regard with his eyes the hut in which he had surprised the negroes reading the Bible.

"Cressie is not there," said Nellie, who had followed the direction of his look, with a smile. "I ordered her to remain in the house until this matter is settled."

"That will do Cressie no good," Leslie remarked. "Jeffreys will not be thwarted in his purpose by your opposition."

“We shall see!” said Nellie, proudly holding up her shapely head.

Dinner was just about to be served at the mansion when they arrived there. Victor was kindly received, particularly by the Colonel, who had not long before returned from an electioneering tour, and was in high spirits. He expressed his pleasure at seeing the young man as a guest at his table, and inquired about the progress he was making in his grammatical studies. Of course, Nellie at once launched into a narration of the important events that had transpired at the class. Her vivacious description, spiced with droll imitations, put the company at the table in the pleasantest humor, and so engaged their attention, that none of them noticed how the entrance of Lucretia, who was waiting at table, affected the guest. He found the girl still more beautiful, if possible, in the full light of day, than when he had seen her by the flicker of the tallow-candle. She was of the same age as Nellie, but taller and more fully developed. The plainness of the garb she wore did not altogether hide the soft outlines of her voluptuous, Junonic form. Her whole appearance contrasted strongly with that of her sprightly, vivacious young mistress; yet it seemed to Victor that the charms of each were heightened by the comparison. Especially remarkable did he find the features of the two maidens, when Lucretia stooped by the side of her mistress to pass her some dish from the table, and brought the two faces into close juxtaposition, enabling him to note the happy, child-like, yet piquant and highly intellectual look beaming from Nellie's clear grey eyes, in contrast with the soft, dreamy, almost plaintive expression characterizing the liquid, dark, yet lustrous eyes of the Octoroon.

But it was not the appearance of the two girls that engaged Victor's busy thoughts. He pondered over the political necessity which subjected the faithful servant to the cruel caprice of a brutal hireling, notwithstanding the desire of a kind mistress to protect her, and the conviction of her master that she was innocent — because the sovereign voters might

choose to look on her impunity as a proof of a treasonable heresy in the master, from whom they must withhold their suffrages.

“ Now see ! ” exclaimed the Colonel, with a pleasant laugh, as Nellie related the triumph achieved by Victor, in giving the correct answer to the question that baffled the rest of the class, “ What an honor for us to entertain the Corypheus of grammatical science at our table ! ”

“ Yes, indeed,” Nellie continued ; “ and that was the smallest of his victories.” And she went on to relate the remainder of the morning’s experiences, interrupted now and then by a correction or explanation on the part of Leslie. The Colonel listened with attention, his interest in the narrative increasing when the slanderous charges against Victor were mentioned. His face took on a sober expression. When Leslie, who had assumed this part of the narration, mentioned the intrepidity with which Victor had met the charges and hurled the lie at the accusers, he threw an approving glance at the young man which brought a blush to his cheek. After listening with evident satisfaction to the further development of the fracas, he whispered a few words into his wife’s ear, whereupon the latter sent Lucretia on an errand resulting in her protracted absence.

“ It is high time,” said the Colonel, after Lucretia had left the room, without betraying by look or gesture, how much she would have liked to remain — “ it is high time that I should come to an understanding with Jeffreys about that unpleasant dispute between us. I infer from what you related of the occurrence in the class, that he has already, partially at least, made good his threats. What those silly boys tattled out in the grammar school is but the beginning of the attack on me. Jeffreys has evidently spread the matter and colored it to suit his purposes. His plan is to corner me by prejudicing the public opinion. It is a bad business ! ” There was a pause during which the Colonel thoughtfully paced the room. “ If only the election were a little further off ! ” he presently con-

tinued. "I have but a single day to spare for Brookfield; all the remainder of the time before the first Monday in August is cut out for business elsewhere. And if this talk gets out, my presence here will be indispensable."

"It is aggravating to think that this insolent Jeffreys is to have his own way, after all!" said Leslie.

"I just *hate* him!" Nellie chimed in; and the cloud gathering upon her forehead looked even more portentous than that on her brother's face. "And I hope that you will show him who is master here."

"What do *you* think of this?" asked the Colonel, turning round toward Victor.

"I?" stammered the young man, disconcerted by the sudden question. "I cannot presume to express an opinion. I cannot judge what your situation demands."

"But you *have* an opinion?"

"It is worth nothing to you."

"Speak, nevertheless. I wish to know your opinion."

"I have spoken. You know what I think," Victor said in a low voice, and with downcast eyes.

"And do you persist in your view, after all I told you the other night about public opinion in this country?"

"I must repeat, that I cannot judge as to your personal interests," said Victor, in almost a whisper, and under evidently painful embarrassment.

"Supposing that it will cost me my election if I discharge this Jeffreys?"

"If the Octoroon girl is to be punished for learning to read," said Victor, with a rapid glance at Leslie and Nellie, who were both listening attentively, "or because she went in the night time to her uncle and mother, to read the Bible to them, it is very cruel, but may be just, under your law. But if —"

"Don't be so pathetic about the uncle and mother," the Colonel interrupted him with a smile. "Xerxes is neither the uncle, nor Cassandra the mother of Cressie. That is a way

darkies have of talking about each other. Cassandra was the nurse of Cressie, as she was of Nellie. But— What were you going to say? ”

Victor cast a bashful look at Nellie and continued with downcast eyes: “But if the anger of Mr. Jeffreys is due to another cause, that is an honor to her, then her punishment would be a cruel and tyrannical mockery of justice. And,” he added, suddenly raising up his head and looking the Colonel full in the face, “in such case you will not permit it.”

“Not even if I were to lose my election in consequence?” the Colonel asked him, with a look that puzzled Victor.

“Not even then!” he promptly exclaimed, his eyes sparkling with eager enthusiasm. “But I do not understand how a simple act of justice should endanger your election.”

“Victor is right!” shouted Nellie, leaping to her feet. “Papa is not afraid of Mr. Jeffreys, I know. Cressie has learned to read long ago, and no one has ever found fault with her for it; and papa is not going to have her flogged, just because Mr. Jeffreys wishes it.”

Colonel May looked at his children with a peculiar smile. “I think we will hear what Jeffreys has to say for himself,” he remarked. “And you will oblige me by remaining,” he added, as Victor rose to leave the room. “What is about to transpire here, will hardly remain a secret. And then, you know, you are, in a measure, personally interested in the matter.”

Jeffreys appeared. When he learned for what purpose he had been called, he cast a sinister glance at all present. His face assumed a sullen, almost defiant, expression when his eye fell on Victor. “Are all these to stay yere while we do our talkin’?” he moodily inquired.

“Mr. Waldhorst has done me the honor to consent, at my request, to be present at our interview,” said the Colonel, quietly. “Your respective statements do not harmonize on all the facts of the case.”

“D’ye mean me to defend me words agin this — Hessian?” asked the overseer, in a tone betraying irritation.

“Mr. Jeffreys, pray do not forget that Mr. Waldhorst is a guest at my house, and a gentleman,” said the Colonel, somewhat severely.

“Time was, when a sneakin’ abolitioner wa’n’t allowed to count fur a gentleman,” said Jeffreys, with increased ill humor. “An’ as to ’is bein’ yur guest, ’e shamefully ’bused yer hospitality fur dirty doin’s —”

Victor sprang to his feet. He was about to utter his indignant protest, when the Colonel interrupted him and, with a peremptory gesture, demanded his silence. Then, turning to the overseer with the dignity of a Southern gentleman vindicating the honor of his house, he sternly said: “Not another word, Mr. Jeffreys, of this kind. Remember that you are addressing me, and that there are ladies present.”

The commanding attitude assumed by Colonel May, and the dignified emphasis of his voice, failed not of their effect. The overseer made an effort to moderate his manner. “I’m real sorry,” he said lowering his eyes before the keen glance of his master, “’at nur me actions nur me words are to the likin’ o’ the ladies. I aint got the gift ’o flatterin’ speech: ’n’ I like to name things be thar right names.”

“I learn from Mr. Waldhorst,” the Colonel continued, “that on the evening in question, his curiosity led him to Xerxes’ cabin, where he found the negroes reading the Bible —”

Jeffreys interrupted him with a scornful laugh, and the question “Is that what made ’im blow out the light?”

“No interruptions, sir!” the Colonel exclaimed severely. “You are aware, are you not, that the light was blown out by the negroes, because they feared to be discovered by you? Now, it is against orders for them to have a light in their cabin; and it was wrong in Lueretia to go there without first obtaining permission from you. But the offense is not so grave a one as to call for the infliction of the lash —”

“Oh,” Jeffreys again interrupted with a malicious sneer, “’twas all right fur that ’ere sassy wench ’n the Hessian thar — ”

“Silence, sir!” exclaimed the Colonel in a voice so stern as to awe the overseer into compliance. Upon a significant gesture from her husband, Mrs. May left the room, taking Nellie with her. “I had hoped,” he then continued, “that the presence of the ladies would be a sufficient restraint upon your rudeness of speech: I was mistaken. You have made it plain enough what foul purpose you impute to Mr. Waldhorst’s presence there, and with the mention of which you were about to insult the ladies. I now repeat to you, that your surmises are utterly without foundation. From this you may infer, that I do not deem the whole affair worthy of further notice. Let it drop right here.”

The overseer regarded his chief with unconcealed rage. “D’ye mean this fur yer last word?” he finally hissed out.

“I have nothing to add to it.”

“But me infloocene over the niggers ’ll not be wuth shucks, if ye balk me in this way!” he cried with increasing wrath. “If I can’t be ’lowed to have me own way, I can’t be responsible fur the niggers — ”

“I will assume the responsibility,” said the Colonel.

“Then take the work too!” A look of fierce defiance, not unmixed with lurking triumph, accompanied these words of the overseer, which contained an open declaration of war; for he deemed it impossible, under the circumstances, that his services would be dispensed with.

“You mean — ”

“I mean,” interrupted Jeffreys, giving full sway to his violent rage, “at I’m not goin’ to stay at a place, whar the master takes sides ’ith the niggers agin’ the overseer, ’n’ whar the whim of a baby counts more nur the discipline of the slaves; ’n’ whar’ an outlandish ’venturer ’s openly ’lowed to ’pint randyvous with lewd nigger wenches — ”

“Enough!” the Colonel exclaimed. His brows contracted,

and his eyes flashed threateningly. "Your infamous suspicion proclaims unmistakably the source of your jealous rage. It is well, Mr. Jeffreys, that you are minded to quit my service. It saves me the necessity of discharging you."

Jeffreys had not counted on being discharged. "Are ye thinkin' o' the crops 'at hain't been put by yet?" he asked in a moderated tone. "'N' 'at this is 'bout the bizziest season o' the year?"

"The negroes will have to get along without your superintendence," the master promptly replied.

"'N' now, with yer 'lection on hand, ye hain't got time to be lookin' after the niggers," the overseer suggested meekly.

"Permit me to manage my own affairs," the Colonel replied.

Jeffreys saw that he had gone too far. He had deemed the threat of leaving sufficient to compel compliance with his demand and was not prepared for the contingency of its acceptance. To Victor's unbounded astonishment, and immensely to his relief, the overseer changed his tone of defiance to one of almost cringing meekness, as he replied: "But me time's not up. I'm not goin' to leave ye jest when ye need me most."

"I have already indicated," the Colonel said quietly, "that I deem myself capable of managing my own business. You need not remain on my account."

"But me contract binds me, 'n' gives me the right to stay yere till the crops are in in the fall. I shan't break me contract, nur 'low you ter break it."

"Does that mean," asked the Colonel, "that you take back, without reserve, the threat to leave?"

"Well, yes, if you want me to say so."

"And you will obey my orders without gainsay?"

"About the niggers? Well, yes, then. Say no more about 'em. But ye'll have to take the consequences on yer own head."

Victor had followed the conversation with intense interest.



“ Apologize — to him? To this greenhorn of a Dutchman? ”

Between his indignation over the threatened cruelty to the slaves, the ethical baseness of which he felt all the more keenly by reason of the high esteem in which he held Colonel May and all his family, and the disastrous consequences to be apprehended from the vindictive Jeffreys if he should carry out his threat, his feelings were wrought up to a painful tension. He felt profoundly relieved, therefore, when the interview between the two men, that had begun so stormily, took this pacific turn. He cast a look of triumphant joy at his friend Leslie. This young man smiled mischievously, and whispered: "Just wait; the fun is not over yet. The governor is not the man to be played with so easily."

"Let me understand, then," said the Colonel, "that the matter is settled on this basis. There is not to be another word about it; neither to Xerxes, nor to Cassandra, nor to any living soul. And now, just one thing more. You have deeply insulted my friend, Mr. Waldhorst, and I deem it due to him, and to my honor, to demand that you should apologize to him. When you have done so, I expect from his courtesy to me, that he, too, will make no further mention of this disagreeable matter."

"What! To him? To this greenhorn of a Dutchman?" fairly yelled the overseer in newly kindled wrath. "Apologize — to him? Not by a d——d sight! Why, I'd rather beg pard'n o' the niggers 'emselves, nur o' this d——d Dutch abolitioner!"

"But you will do it, if we are to remain friends!" said the Colonel with that air of quiet determination, which brooked no resistance.

Jeffreys gnashed his teeth, and regarded the young man with a look of intense hatred.

"Please, Colonel, omit this!" begged Victor, who felt exceedingly uncomfortable, in a beseeching tone. "I wish no apology from Mr. Jeffreys."

"It must be!" the Colonel answered, unmoved by Victor's request and by Jeffreys' rage. "Mr. Jeffreys himself under-

stands, that an insult to a guest in my house is an insult to my honor, which I cannot permit without demanding reparation."

"I shan't do it!" roared Jeffreys.

"You mean then, to carry out your threat?"

"My contract don't bind me to no sich conditions," fumed the overseer.

"You forget, Mr. Jeffreys, that you, not I, canceled the contract," said Colonel May with emphasis. "You will either give me the satisfaction which I demand, or the contract between us is at an end. I do not permit terms to be dictated to me by my — servant."

The scarcely perceptible emphasis upon the last word seemed to sting deeply. "Don't forget," roared the overseer in a fit of passion in which he disregarded every consideration of prudence and propriety, "at the 'saryant' is a free American citizen! You'll find out, on 'lection day, what it is to insult a free voter! This country isn't sunk so low, yet, as to 'lect a sneak, 'n' a traitor, 'n' a hypoerit! I'll see to it, 'at the people finds out who 'tis 'at's whinin' fur thar' votes! I'll show 'em the wolf in sheep skin! A man't pretends to be a Demicrat, 'n' cringes to an outlandish abolitioner! Think o' me, Kurnel May, when 'lection day comes!"

The Colonel regarded his adversary with proud contempt. The scornful smile that curled his lips, proclaimed more stingingly than the keenest words could have done, how utterly he despised his now openly avowed enemy. "You wish to show the people a wolf in sheep's clothing, do you? A traitor? A tyrant? A hypocrite? You will not fail to accomplish your purpose. To be sure, I have never enjoyed the opportunity to admire your eloquence, except when you stood, lash in hand, before a trembling slave; but to show the people a low sneaking wolf, whose rapacity is visible even through his sheepish physiognomy, you need no other eloquence than your own appearance. But you will no doubt understand, Mr. Jeffreys, that it is high time for you to begin your patriotic mission. The sooner you begin it," he added, pointing with

imperious gesture to the door, "the better it will be for your bodily welfare."

Leslie rubbed his hands in high glee. Victor was charmed by the dignity and loftiness of the Colonel's bearing, but exceedingly apprehensive of the consequences that he might have brought down upon himself. Jeffreys had been lashed into fury,—less by the cutting words, than by the intense scorn and contempt of the tone and manner in which they had been uttered. He stood with gnashing teeth and clenched fist. For a while it seemed as though he meant to rush upon his enemy and fell him to the ground; but the Colonel stood firm, not moving a muscle, and the steady look that met the overseer, out of the Colonel's clear, grey eyes, cowed him. He slowly retreated toward the door. Not until he had gained it did he say a word; but then he raised his fist menacingly, and shouted: "Ye'll hear from me on 'lection day!"

When he had gone, Colonel May turned with smiling face to Victor and said: "Did I right, my young friend?"

"Indeed you did!" exclaimed Victor with unfeigned admiration. "Nothing could surpass the dignity and nobility of your bearing. But," he added, as the flush of admiration passed from his cheeks, "was it politic to challenge his wrath to the utmost? Have you not made of him an implacable enemy?"

"What?" cried the Colonel, in a tone of mock surprise, "do I hear aright? Does my German friend inquire, whether I acted prudently? Has your keen sense of rectitude already suffered demoralization in this land of politics?"

Victor made no answer. But Leslie shook his father's hand, and exclaimed: "You hit the nail squarely on the head this time, Pa! The pronounced enmity of this scoundrel is far less to be feared, than his underhanded machinations in the dark, while still in your service."

"Of course," said the Colonel. "Half-way measures would have accomplished nothing here. Besides, his stay at May Meadows was impossible for the further reason, that his

running after the Octoroon girl would have given rise to scandal and offense. It is clear from your statement of the affair at the grammar class, that he has talked about it to others; and though he did this simply out of jealousy of our young friend here, I could not permit it to go on. Yes, yes," he continued, with a mischievous smile toward Victor, "you have made him fiercely jealous by your meeting with Lucretia. Quite without reason," he made haste to add, as Victor, blushing deeply, gave him a beseeching look; "it is only his guilty conscience that has conjured up the preposterous idea."

"But will not Mr. Jeffreys do everything in his power to defeat you at the election?" asked Victor, to cover his confusion. "I fear, that my silly conduct has greatly endangered your success."

"Have no fear, young man," said the Colonel, with an air of such confident assurance, as tended greatly to relieve Victor's anxiety. "I even expect to make some capital out of the affair. It is fortunate, that in this case the public good is identified with my personal interest. I am much mistaken in the temper of my fellow citizens, if I do not succeed in furthering my own prospects by exposing this villain."

"You see," whispered Leslie, "therein the governor shows his greatness as a politician."

"I see nothing wrong in it!" Victor replied, cheerfully.

"But now we must reassure the ladies, who have been driven away by this ruffian," the Colonel remarked. "I apprehend that they are anxious to learn the upshot of our doings here. And I must take measures to supply the place of Jeffreys in directing the work of the negroes."

When Victor, on his way home, again passed the neighborhood of the negro huts, he suddenly saw the Herculean frame of Xerxes before him. He approached meekly, holding in his hand a tattered rag that served him for a hat.

"Mars' Wallers," the negro addressed him in a low, mysterious whisper, "am it true — is Mars' Jeffreys gone — fur good?"

Victor assured him that Jeffreys would return no more.

The negro reverently folded his hands, raising his eyes to the sky and spoke, in a voice whose solemnity and deep earnestness profoundly impressed Victor: "De Lawd hab heard de pra'er ob his unwuthy sa'vent. Glory be to Gawd on high! Amen!" Then he added with a significant look at Victor, "now May Meadows am a paradise, an' de sarpent's gone."

While Xerxes was yet speaking, two other figures appeared. Victor knew not whence. Cassandra, led by the Octoroon girl, seized his hand and spoke reverently: "De Lawd hab sent his angel fur our salvation. Glory to Gawd fur ebber and ebber!"

When she had dropped his hand, the Octoroon knelt before him, seized the hem of his coat and pressed it to her lips. "Miss Nellie has told me," she said in a feverish whisper. "And it was grand and noble. God bless you! And God bless Miss Nellie! God bless you both!"

Before Victor had fully realized what had taken place, the girl had arisen and disappeared with the others.



VIII.

BARBECUE AND SPREAD EAGLE.

THE grammar school class met next day, as usual; but Ralph Payton and Orlando Jones knew it no more forever. Victor remained at its head to the end. This procured for him the reputation, whether rightfully or otherwise has never been authoritatively decided — of being the best grammarian in Vernal County, — a distinction of which no one boasted more loudly than Mynheer Van Braaken. He was really grateful to his apprentice for having redeemed his vaunt of having the smartest boy in the county in his store. His speculation had proved a profitable one; for Victor was much talked about, and when his name was mentioned, the "Dutch Store" was mostly alluded to also. Victor, in turn, was grateful to his chief, to whose liberality he owed the advantage gained by his connection with the grammar class. He applied himself diligently to his duties at the store, where he likewise made good progress, except in the one particular in which he was so lamentably remiss, — the ability to deceive customers as to the quality and value of the goods kept for sale. The involuntary faltering of his voice and the tell-tale blush upon his cheeks, just when bold-faced effrontery or insinuating cajolery was wanted for the business in hand, rendered all his efforts at improvement in this direction fruitless. Not even the example of his colleague, Bob Rountree, availed him, although he soon convinced himself that most customers greatly preferred to deal with Bob, because they were assured that they got their goods from him at less than their cost to the merchant himself, by the simple process of permitting himself to be "beat down" from a price placed purposely high at first to admit of this process without loss.

But soon after the closing of the class a coming event of even higher interest to the public at large monopolized the town-talk among the gossips of Brookfield. The Fourth of July was approaching! And the politicians had determined to make it the occasion of a great festival for the inhabitants not only of Brookfield and vicinity, but of all Vernal County, whereat the natal day of American Independence was to be honored by patriotic speeches and the roasting whole and eating of oxen. Victor's expectation was raised to the top notch by the excitement which stirred the Brookfielders in respect of the magnificence of the coming demonstration, which was to eclipse anything of the kind that had ever been seen west of the Mississippi River. It was to be a feast fit for the gods, not only in a culinary point of view but also as an intellectual treat, steeping back-woods Americans in the bliss of self-conscious patriotism. Bob Rountree indulged in bold prophesies of the grand surprise in store for the friends of his friend, Ralph Payton: regretting, however, that he was not permitted to go into particulars. These vague hints Victor was disposed to attribute to a touch of envy on the part of his young colleague, which had been noticeable, now and then, particularly since the grammar class had made him a rather prominent subject of gossip. But even the prosaic head-clerk, Mr. Miller, grew enthusiastic over the prospective event, and ventured the remark, that Victor would see something to cherish in memory for the remainder of his life.

Leslie had much to say about the fun ahead. "You will get to see a whole menagerie of all the species of the *genus homo*," he said to Victor, "who will stand around open-mouthed, eagerly swallowing the patriotic clap-trap and worn-out phrases used in tickling the ears of independent American citizens. On the galleries you will behold the fairer half of Vernal County in all the colors of the rainbow, gaudy with gay ribbons and the latest monstrosities usurping the name of bou-nets. Look out for fun!"

Nellie had confided to him that she had an invitation from

Ralph Payton, — “that hateful fellow in the class, you know,” as she added, to Victor’s great satisfaction, — to accept him as her escort to the barbecue on Independence Day; and she added, to his even greater disgust, that she knew of no plausible excuse to decline the proffered honor. This last piece of information had an unaccountably depressing effect on Victor. It was sufficient to tone down his anticipated enjoyment of the glorious Fourth.

In the store too, and in the business done there, the excitement was apparent. Customers made purchases with reference to the festival; gossips criticised the merits of the speakers in advance; even the negroes of both sexes whispered and tittered among one another how they meant to enjoy Independence Day, and resurrected their hoarded up quarters and dimes for the acquisition of fineries and gee-gaws to be displayed on the festive occasion.

— Mynheer Van Braaken, whose absorption by and devotion to the cares of his business rendered him callous to the sentiment of patriotism, was drawn into the vortex of public excitement on his own level. When the committee appointed to solicit donations for the celebration called on him, Victor was apprehensive that the chief might refuse to respond and thereby incur the displeasure and invite the criticism of the public. But therein he greatly underrated the business abilities of his chief. For no sooner had he — wary merchant that he was — discovered that his rival on the other side of the square had distinguished himself by the donation of “one whole ox,” than he subscribed his name to the list, and set opposite thereto: One sack Java coffee (scarce *in those days, in Vernal County, and dear); One barrel sugar; One barrel fine rye whisky; five boxes Principe cigars. “Yes, yes,” he said, as the committee, speechless with astonishment at this unparalleled liberality, received back the paper, “they shall not say that the Dutelman is niggardly. Mr. Barnes need not brag about his ‘whole ox!’”

Such munificence was without precedent in Vernal County.

The two gentlemen composing the committee expressed their thanks in behalf of the grateful community and in the name of the "Goddess of Liberty," hoping that so signal a proof of whole-souled liberality of the generous donor would be duly appreciated. So, too, hoped Mynheer Van Braaken; and the sequel proved that he had reckoned well. For though the Barnes party hinted at pompous boasting and a transparent attempt to bias public opinion, yet the citizens looked with great favor on the generous offering, and the party of the Dutch Store scored several points in their favor.

Before sunrise of the eventful day Victor appeared at May Meadows; for he and Leslie had agreed to make the trip to the spot where the festival was to come off, on horseback. Notwithstanding the early hour of the morning, he found every one on the place up and stirring. The negroes were unusually alert, and busily engaged in the various preparations for starting. Leslie had two fine horses under saddle, which stood pawing impatiently in front of the dwelling house. For Nellie, a pretty pony stood ready to be mounted by his young mistress. The Colonel issued what orders he deemed necessary for the conduct of the darkies at the barbecue, and then joined Mrs. May in the traveling carriage, where Lucretia and Cassandra had already been placed, and started for the scene of the day's festivities.

After the departure of the family carriage the good humor of the negroes seemed, if possible, to increase. They teased each other in merry mood, paying but little heed to the presence of the young master in preparing to get away; while he, on his part, excited boisterous laughter, by many a rough jest. Some of the negroes were obliged to travel to the grand rendezvous on foot. They left in groups of two and three, chattering freely as they went their way. Others made free use of the remaining draught-animals and vehicles of the most varied description, to save the labor of walking. One whole family found accommodation on an ox-cart; quite a number of young and old of both sexes climbed upon a hay-wagon, drawn by a

yoke of oxen and a superannuated mule. Some, also, utilized old plough-horses to ride, single or double, as the temper of the animals permitted, or the riders could agree, to the place of great attraction.

Victor was interested in and much amused by the stirring and picturesque scene developing before him.

Presently Nellie appeared. She wore the dress which Victor had selected for her, and he thought he had never seen her so beautiful.

“How charming you look in your new dress!” he exclaimed, almost involuntarily, but with such evident and sincere admiration, that the young lady blushed with pleasure.

“Why, Mr. Waldhorst, you have actually paid me a compliment!” she said, with a gracious smile. “I have never heard you make so gallant a speech before. You have learned that from brother Leslie, I suppose. But let me caution you not to contract his outrageous habit of flattering young girls. He is incorrigible in this respect.”

“You shall not say that I am dishonest with you, at least,” the brother retorted, while scanning her figure from head to foot. “It is painfully evident to me, that your glass and your maid have both played you false to-day. You look as dowdy-ish as an unkempt owl in daylight.”

“You unmannerly slanderer!” pouted Nellie. “Why can’t you be as nice to your sister as you are to other young ladies?”

“Because my sister wants me to be honest,” said Leslie, regarding her with a mock-serious mien.

“If you were honest,” said Victor warmly, “you would not have found fault with Miss Nellie’s toilet. It is not more honest to censure unjustly, than to praise without cause.”

“Now you hear the words of wisdom!” Nellie exclaimed triumphantly, and both she and Leslie indulged in merry laughter, keenly enjoying Victor’s sober earnestness. “Let me advise *you* to learn from Mr. Waldhorst how to appreciate your sister’s exquisite taste. And I am sure that Mr. Payton

will agree with him; he will tell you so to your face when he comes."

"If he comes, you mean!" teased Leslie. "You may have to wait a long time for *him*. He has his grand oration to prepare for the barbecue. With his head full of so big a project, it will not be surprising if he forgets the little school-girl he has promised to escort on the way."

"Is it true?" Nellie inquired, showing such evident interest in the subject as caused Victor to wonder. "Will Mr. Payton speak to-day?"

"Of course!" the brother answered. "He is down as the first orator on the program. Immediately after the Declaration of Independence, he will see justice done to the spread eagle, and demonstrate that without it there could be no liberty, nor equality, nor independence. Under such circumstances you must excuse him if, until the supreme moment has come, when the eyes of Vernal County literally, and those of the whole unbounded continent figuratively, hang upon his lips, he shall prove a little taciturn and distracted, or, what is more likely to happen, if he shall forget all about the existence of the patient young girl so anxiously awaiting his coming."

The news imparted by Leslie had a strangely depressing effect on Victor; but Mr. Payton's appearance at that moment precluded further discussion concerning him. Nellie returned his greeting very graciously, and announced herself ready to start. As she stepped toward her pony, Ralph sprang from his horse to assist her to mount. Victor thought he had never seen a more graceful act of gallantry in his life. Ralph, whose powerful frame at this moment seemed to him the embodiment of manly vigor and beauty, seized the bridle of the pony with his left hand, and held out his right, so as to form a convenient purchase for Nellie's foot, from which, with an agile spring, she leaped into the saddle, thanking him, as she adjusted herself, with a bright smile and gracious nod, for his knightly service. Victor was enchanted by the elegance and grace of the lovely maiden on horseback. When Ralph

joined her, she turned to him a face beaming in youthful vivacity; and as Victor watched them cantering away, engaged in spirited conversation, he wished in his heart to be in Payton's place.

"Well, don't you think we had better follow them?" the voice of Leslie broke in upon him, as he gazed in perfect forgetfulness after the equestrians. "The sun is rising, and we will have a piece of sharp riding to do, if we mean to be off the road before the heat of the day sets in."

Victor, thus aroused from his reverie, mounted his horse, and the two set out on their journey.

Their road at first traversed the open prairie, and the riders urged their horses to a lively pace. They overtook other travelers on foot and in all manner of vehicles. To Victor it seemed as if the population of all Vernal County had turned out upon a pilgrimage. The charm of novelty, the refreshing influence of the balmy morning breeze, and Leslie's sparkling conversation, turning every occurring incident into a droll joke, soon elevated Victor's spirits; and by the time they had overtaken the other couple he heartily enjoyed the drolleries of his friend.

"Come!" exclaimed Leslie, spurring his horse into a gallop, as they passed Payton and Nellie, the latter listening, as it seemed, to a narration from her escort: "let us not disturb mighty genius in its bold flight. It is evidently big with a grand idea, and if we interrupt it in its labor, it might bring forth a frightened little — mouse!"

They dashed past the two in a sweeping gallop, Victor to the right, Leslie to the left. If Payton really engaged the attention of his fair companion with a rehearsal of the speech he intended for the grand occasion, the exercises were abruptly closed, for Nellie, as soon as the two horsemen came alongside, touched her pony with the riding whip, and in a very few seconds she was riding between her brother and Victor.

"You think you can leave my pony behind?" she said to Victor, in a tone clearly showing that she meant to challenge



“ You think you can leave my pony behind? ” she
said to Victor.

him to a trial of the speed of their respective horses. "If you do, you are mistaken. I can beat you three lengths at least in reaching that grove ahead of us."

Again the whip fell smartly on the pony's hide, and sent him forward at the top of his speed. Of course, there was nothing for Victor to do but accept the challenge. So he likewise urged his horse to his utmost, and for a while maintained his place at her side. But it soon became apparent that it was not the pony's speed that was to decide the victory, but rather the skill of the rider. Nellie dexterously avoided the passengers and vehicles on the road without in the least interfering with the pony's gait, while Victor, less skilled in the handling of his horse, seriously impeded his speed by awkward attempts to turn out, fearing danger to those whom he passed, or to himself, so that Nellie easily came off winner in the race.

"Sif, your gallantry is getting the better of your honesty!" Nellie exclaimed, with uplifted finger and a reproachful smile. "You are not just to the horse you are riding."

"What do you mean?" queried Victor.

"I know that my pony is swift of foot, and that there are not many horses in this part of the country that can show him their heels in a race, particularly when I ride him myself. But Grace Darling, — that is the mare papa had saddled for you — can give him several lengths in a quarter and always beat him. You have lost the race on purpose to please me."

"Upon my word, I did not!" said Victor, deeply mortified. "I did my best; but poor Grace Darling was not swift enough to make up for your superior skill in horsemanship. — But what a pretty name — Grace Darling! She must be a great favorite of yours."

"She is," said Nellie, as they trotted along, without waiting for Leslie and Ralph Payton to catch up with them. "I selected the name myself. She is papa's favorite saddle-horse. We raised her on the plantation, and papa allowed me to name her. I am proud to know that you approve of the choice I made."

The remainder of the road took them through a rather dense piece of wood, and Victor maintained his place at Nellie's side, even after the others had come up, until they arrived at their destination.

The place selected for the day's enjoyment was a grove of considerable size, quite free from undergrowth, dotted sufficiently with majestic forest trees to afford protection against the sun, without excluding the grateful breezes of the hot summer day nor seriously obstructing the outlook. The grassy sward was smooth as a carpet, sloping gently toward the east, where a brook of clear water meandered gracefully along the vale, offering its liquid treasures to the thirsty and panting animals. For the delectation of the human kind numerous gourds had been prepared as drinking vessels, and hung up near a spring, inviting the multitude to quench their thirst with its pure, clear water.

A murmuring of many voices, sounding in the distance like the buzzing of a swarm of bees, arose from the place. Along the brook, and all around the spot selected for the day's exercises, inclosing it on all sides like a corral, stood the wagons and other vehicles of those who had arrived before them, displaying in motley array the wealth of the county in vehicles of every imaginable kind, size and construction — everything, in fact, that the county had on wheels. Within the inclosure thus formed there was a scene of lively commotion, — men and women moving to and fro, grown people and children, black and white, all preparing for the coming frolic. And still they kept coming, — whole families on horseback, in wagons and carriages, and on foot: well dressed men and women, and men and women in gaudy finery: stalwart farmers in suits of butter-nut jeans, and portly farmer's wives in neat, home-spun linsey-woolsey dresses: sturdy youths and buxom maidens, ruddy and rosy mostly, yet among them faces paled and pinched by repeated attacks of fever-and-ague. Slaves, too, in all colors and shades, from the honest jet-black of the wool-capped African, to the yellow of the mulatto and the counter-

feit pallor of the quadrone and octorone, — some but scantily clad, others decked with kerchiefs, ribbons and feathers of the brightest hues.

Victor gazed in wonderment at the kaleidoscopic panorama.

Nellie had joined some girl friends whom she met there, and Ralph Payton disappeared as soon as the horses had been given in charge of the darkies. Leslie took Victor with him, to show him the preparations for the barbecue.

“What is this scaffolding for?” Victor inquired, pointing to a double row of boards nailed on posts set in the ground, and inclosing a large square on three of its sides.

“That is the gallery for the ladies,” Leslie informed him. “One should think that here were space enough for the whole population of Vernal County; but not a male soul will find room when the exercises begin. *Pro hæc rice*, as the lawyers say, we men will assume an upright standing, and look down upon woman-kind with the proud consciousness of our superiority.”

“And that little house there, hung all round with oak leaves and garlands, and a ladder leading up to it, — what does that mean?”

“Why, that is the platform!” Leslie explained, with some liveliness of manner. “A literal, downright platform, made of honest planks from Fullbright’s saw-mill. It doesn’t look overly strong; but I dare say that the governor will feel more at home upon it than upon the rickety concern which his party has constructed and calls the platform of its candidates. — Up yonder,” Leslie continued, “the speakers will hold forth. From thence, the gospel of Liberty is to be proclaimed: up there our friend Payton will cull his laurels, — or put up with oak leaves instead. — By the bye, he confessed to me, after you and Nellie had galloped away from us in that wild goose race, that he had gathered his inspiration for his maiden speech from you.”

“From me!” exclaimed Victor, in great surprise.

“From you!” Leslie repeated laconically. “But ask no questions; you will soon find out how.”

They walked on and soon came to the eating tables, — that is to say, to a long row of unplanned boards placed upon slender stakes stuck in the ground. Here there was great display of activity. Huge baskets were brought forth from various of the wagons, yielding liberal supplies of delph. cutlery and other eating utensils, picturesque in their variety, if not remarkable for elegance. Not far off there were numerous fires, utilized by colored cooks for the roasting and cooking of coffee. Busy darkies ran hither and thither, fetching fuel, and water, and executing other orders of their masters or mistresses, to whom the superintendence of this department had been confided. Down by the brook experienced huntsmen were engaged in the preparation of the barbecue proper, — the roasting of poultry, game, mutton, pork, and beef — each animal being carefully cleaned and split in halves left hanging together by the back bone, and in this condition roasted whole, — from tip to tail — “*barbe-a-queue*” — on live coals. To this end trenches were dug in the ground and filled, to the depth of a foot or more, with the glowing coals of hickory or pecan wood. Poles were laid across the trenches, and upon these the meat was spread, as upon a gigantic gridiron. None but experienced campers were intrusted with the responsible office of directing the barbecuing process, and greatly impressed were they with the dignity of their position. Gravely, like generals marshaling their troops in a charge on the enemy, did they order about the busy darkies: directing a fresh supply of live coals where the fire burned low; now ordering a piece done to the precise shade of brown desired, to be taken from the fire, or to be turned over, or to be replaced by another; then, after critical inspection, causing hot gravy to be poured over it, and the proper quantity of salt to be applied; keeping, all the while, the willing darkies flying busily from place to place.

In order to furnish a sufficient supply of live coals, great fires of hickory and pecan wood were kept up at different places. It was a novel and interesting sight to Victor, to be-

hold the brightly glowing coals filled into colossal kettles and, suspended on long poles, carried about by powerful negroes from place to place as wanted. And then the long lines of fiery ditches upon which the huge masses of meat lay sizzling and sending out an appetizing odor, — the grave, critical features of the dignified cooks, — the merry gambols of the delighted negroes, — the picturesque groups and couples of chattering and laughing humanity, — Victor would not soon forget the striking and fascinating panorama.

Toward eleven o'clock in the morning a long-drawn, shrill blast on a conch announced the beginning of the festivities. The crowd poured in from all sides toward the galleries, which, as Leslie had foreseen, were monopolized by the female portion of the audience. "Come," said Leslie, taking his friend by the arm, "let us pick out a place where we can muster the beauties on exhibition here. It will be a long time before you will again see such an aggregation of feminine loveliness, and find so inviting an opportunity of witnessing how sweetly the dear creatures blend envious jealousy and haughty pride with dove-like meekness and coquettish innocence. See, how charmingly patriotism sits upon the faces of our country daisies!"

Victor followed without gainsay. They approached the platform, on which the most prominent citizens of the county were now taking seats. One of the foremost of them was Ralph Payton, who climbed up the ladder with an air of conscious superiority.

"See," whispered Leslie, "does he not ape a Roman senator to perfection? It needs but the toga now, to make him forget that he is — a silly youngster!"

Colonel May, too, was among those who ascended the ladder: likewise, to Victor's wonderment, Mynheer Van Braaken. Gratitude for his liberal donation had procured for him this distinction. Of course, a like honor was due to Mr. Barnes, as the pioneer merchant of Brookfield. Among the prominent citizens, were, also, Mr. Rountree, the father of Bob Rountree,

sheriff of the county. "Yes," said Leslie, as Victor called his attention to the presence of the sheriff, "and yonder is Bob himself — see him? — talking to our discharged overseer. These two are up to some mischief, you may depend upon it; and let me advise you, Victor, to be on your guard against that precious colleague of yours. Birds of a feather you know." It was very evident that the subject of conversation between them was of absorbing interest to both and the scowl on the overseer's face portended no good. Victor turned to his companion, as if for explanation; but the latter found no time to enlighten him, if, indeed, he possessed the requisite information; for just then they were brought in contact with two young ladies, — the Misses Emily Matlack and Hettie Shannon — both of whom claimed the attention of Leslie, for a few words of friendly chat, at least. While they were yet talking, Mrs. May came toward them leading Nellie by the arm, and beckoned her son to her side the moment she saw him.

"You must accompany us," she said to him. "Mr. Payton, who was to escort Nellie, is wanted on the platform where the speakers are assembling."

"Ah, yes," said Leslie, offering his arm with ready acquiescence, "the American Eagle needs his sustaining eloquence. I told you," he added with a mischievous glance at his sister, "that your beau would forsake you. But you needn't get jealous; the American Eagle will drop him soon enough, and then you can go and comfort him."

Nellie had disengaged herself from her mother's arm, because they found it impossible to walk three abreast in the dense throng, and confidently took that of Victor, whereat the young man blushed with pleasure.

The seats, which Leslie skillfully captured for the ladies, commanded a fine view over the whole gallery, and were near enough to the platform to enable every word spoken there to be easily heard. The male portion of the audience formed a dense circle on the outside of the gallery, in which Victor and Leslie stood in the rear of their ladies. It was indeed a mot-

ley yet imposing sight that met Victor's gaze, and he listened with but half an ear to Leslie's droll comments on the various people and their doings.

Another loud blast on the conch, sounded by one of the men on the platform, had the effect of silencing the immense crowd.

"I move that the Honorable Thomas Shannon be elected president of this grand assemblage of the people!" proclaimed a stentorian voice. "All favoring this motion say, aye!"

A thousand voices assented; whereupon the same voice announced the unanimous election of the Honorable Thomas Shannon, requesting him to step forward and take his seat as president of the meeting. To execute an awkward bow, and comply with the request to take his seat, seemed to exhaust the sphere of the president's duties; for not a word did the portly old gentleman, thus distinguished, say, and not another thing did Victor see him do after taking his seat.

"Is this gentleman a prominent citizen?" Victor whispered into Leslie's ear.

"You see," said the latter, "that he is a man of considerable weight. He is Justice of the Peace of Clear Spring township, and possesses the merit of being Miss Hettie Shannon's father."

After the applause, with which the weighty president had been recognized, had subsided, the voice moved the further election of a number of vice-presidents, one for each of the thirteen original States, all of whom, as Victor wonderingly observed, happened to be present on the platform, and all of them were unanimously elected. As the name of Mynbeer Van Braaken was put to the vote, Victor betrayed some uneasiness as to the result. "Don't be afraid," Leslie whispered. "On an occasion of this kind everybody votes aye. To make sure of unanimity, the nays are not taken. The officers are all selected beforehand; the whole program is cut and dried."

With the election of the thirteen vice-presidents, the organ-

ization of the "grand assemblage of people" was complete, and the official celebration began. Reverend Joel Hayden stepped to the front of the platform, and read the Declaration of Independence in a clear, sonorous voice. But few of those present had never read, or heard read, this ever memorable document, by which a nation had announced its right to political autonomy: yet every one of them listened with proud self-consciousness and profound attention to the eloquent logic of the words, in which Thomas Jefferson had given expression to a people's demand of their right. Upon Victor the simple, yet convincing language of the alleged founder of the Democratic party wrought a powerful effect. Long after the jubilant applause, which had rewarded the eloquent reader, had died away, the closing words rang in his ears: "And for the support of this declaration, with a firm reliance upon the protection of Divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor."

The appearance of Ralph Payton at the front of the platform, announced as the first of the speakers, aroused him from his reverie. The applause, with which the young man was greeted, involuntarily increased Victor's respect for him. But when he saw Nellie wave her handkerchief and regard the young orator with sparkling eyes and an indescribably sweet smile, a keen pang shot through his heart, and he would have given worlds to be in his place, — to stand thus before a concourse of people, reveling in the incense of their applause, and gathering inspiration from the smiles of a lovely maiden.

Ralph, however, enjoyed his happiness for but a brief moment. As the applause died away, so faded the color from his face. Leslie bent down to his sister and whispered into her ear: "We must come to the rescue of your Demosthenes: his knees are shaking!" and without heeding her reproving "be ashamed of yourself!" he started a new round of vigorous cheering.

"My fellow-citizens!" came in a faint voice from the lips of the orator.

“Louder! Louder!” was shouted on all sides.

“Ladies and Gentlemen!” Ralph continued. His voice still trembled; but the exertion to make himself heard served, in a measure, to break his stage-fright. “This is a free country! Yes, my fellow-citizens, it is a free and a great country! It is free, because Americans made it free, and have enriched it with their heart’s blood!”

This announcement was a bold one, and was immediately rewarded by a round of vociferous cheering. “Good!” whispered Leslie, loud enough, however, to be heard by Nellie and Victor, “Heart’s blood of free Americans makes excellent manure!”

“And this is an independent country!” the orator went on. “An independent country of all the world! It is independent, because the noble American Eagle, the proud American bird, striking his talons in the Alleghany Mountains on the one hand, and grasping the Rockies with the other, dipping his beak here into the Atlantic and there into the Pacific Ocean, and laying his breast in the mighty Huron, while his tail sweeps the boundless plains —.”

The sketch of the American bird was too magnificent not to arouse the enthusiasm of the backwoodsmen. A loud and prolonged round of hurraing and cheering interrupted the speaker before he had placed the wings. Ralph had by this time fairly overcome the nervousness attending his opening words, and wiped the perspiration from his forehead. Leslie was one of the loudest in his demonstrations of approval, and exclaimed: “Good! Now engage the Eagle in a set-to with the British Lion, so as to give him something to do with his wings!”

“Fellow-citizens!” Ralph spoke on, “this is an independent country, because the valiant American Eagle has rescued it from the claws of the British Lion. (Renewed cheering.) And not only from the British Lion, but also from the Hessian hirelings, who helped him. And we conquered them all. And therefore this is a free and independent country.”

The speaker paused and again drew the handkerchief over his face, then continued with unctiousness :

“ But, fellow-citizens, the price of liberty is eternal watchfulness. Therefore let us be watchful against the British Lion, and also against the Hessian hirelings. America belongs to the Americans ; therefore let us suffer no Hessians among us ! ”

“ That is meant for you, Victor,” said Leslie. “ The milk in the cocoanut is, that he is appealing from the school-master in the class to the prejudice of the masses here assembled. He thinks he has got you at a disadvantage here, and that he can get his revenge for your turning him down. But in that he is mistaken, unless I am.”

Strange to say, the pause which the orator here made, was not filled up by the applause of the audience. He therefore concluded to bring his big guns to bear : “ What says the Father of his Country ? ” he asked. “ What says Washington, — he that was first in war, first in peace and first in the hearts of his countrymen ? (Enthusiastic cheering.) He says, ‘ History and experience prove that foreign influence is one of the most baneful foes of Republican government.’ And again, he says, ‘ Against the insidious wiles of foreign influence (I conjure you, fellow-citizens, to believe me) the jealousy of a free people ought to be constantly awake.’ So spoke Washington, the first in war, the first in peace, and the first in the hearts of his countrymen. (Renewed cheers for Washington.) Therefore, fellow-citizens, like Washington I say to you, let us suffer no foreigners among us ! I make this appeal to you to-day, on the auspicious birthday of American Independence, and on the natal day of American liberty ! I say, let us firmly resolve to stand manfully by America, for American Independence ! Let us thrust forth from us the foreigners, — be they Britishers, or be they Hessians — lest their baneful influence rob us of our birthright as Americans ! This is the parting advice given to the American people, by the greatest of men, Washington, that was first in war, first in peace, and first in the hearts of his countrymen.”

Sly Ralph had counted on the assistance of the father of his country for an effective peroration to his speech. But for some reason incomprehensible to him, the charm failed to work. Probably the eloquent quotation had been repeated once too often, so as to wear off the spice of novelty. Even after he had made his bow to the audience, to indicate that he would quote Washington no more to them on that day, there was but a faint murmur of applause, the lukewarmness of which drew from Leslie the stale reproach of the ingratitude of republics, seeing that Ralph Payton had generously given up the floor to other speakers.

Of these there were quite a number. The star-spangled banner, the land of the free and the home of the brave, and other patriotic themes obtained due recognition after the spread eagle. At last, Colonel May was announced as the "Orator of the Day." The simple mention of his name had the effect to stay the demoralizing tendency of the audience to scatter. After some pleasant introductory remarks and an anecdote or two, to put his hearers in good humor, he continued:

"The first of the talented speakers who addressed you on this auspicious occasion, observed, that this is the land of freedom. That was a happy thought, my friends. — a great, a noble thought! Yes, this is indeed the land of freedom, — the land of free thought, of free speech, of a free press! We are free to worship Almighty God according to the dictates of our own conscience, and to act as we think right, so long as we infringe not the rights of others. Here indeed, divine Liberty has reared her temple, and beckons to the persecuted and oppressed of all nations, holding out to them the promise of their birthright, that Godlike quality of man, — freedom, given of God to freemen only!"

Victor listened with closest attention. It escaped his notice, that Ralph Payton had approached Nellie, and was probably claiming his reward for the morning's brilliant performance; nor did he perceive the girl's curt manner, refusing

to have her attention diverted from her father's address. Victor's eyes were riveted upon the speaker, his ears closed to everything but the overpowering words issuing from those eloquent lips. The orator depicted in glowing words, yet simple and direct, the dignity and sacredness of freedom. The conviction began to dawn in Victor's mind, that freedom is the one essential attribute of man.

From this introduction the speaker passed on to a panegyric on the work accomplished by the revolutionary fathers in erecting that magnificent temple, in which Liberty is now enthroned, — the central pillar and keystone of which is the Constitution of the United States. In crisp and pointed words he sketched the fundamental principles of the government, as embodied in that instrument: autonomy of domestic interests, unity in national functions and foreign relations. As the State is a unit, though composed of individuals possessing inalienable rights, so is the Nation a unit, though composed of States which, under that constitution possess rights that may not be disregarded.

“ One dissonant element,” he then continued, “ has tempted internal demagogues and foreign enemies of free government to assail that sacred instrument: its implied sanction of slavery. As if slavery had been created by that instrument! As if it had not been forced upon the colonies by the mercenary policy of the mother country, and was not a deeply rooted institution with which the framers of the constitution were confronted! As if the glorious boon of freedom could ever have been secured to this blessed land upon any other condition than the perfect autonomy of the States! ”

This part of the Colonel's oration impressed Victor deeply. It seemed to him, sometimes, — and the hot blood rushed to his face at the thought — that the speaker's argument was aimed at him personally even as the speaker's eye most often sought out his.

Elaborating the impossibility of the formation of the Union without a recognition of the existence of slavery, and dwelling



The speech of the colonel created the wildest enthusiasm.

upon the disastrous consequences to the confederation that must have attended its abandonment, he once more indulged in a glowing eulogy upon the prosperity and liberty that had been secured thereby, and then asked: "What would have been your choice, my friends, if you had had the constitution to frame, — a Union, such as we have it, leaving the question of slavery to be decided by the States themselves, with the right to abolish it, if they deemed it right, or wise, to do so? Or would you have sacrificed the Union to the barren assertion of an abstract principle, which would, in all human probability, have resulted in the subjugation of the States by some foreign power, remembering that United we Stand, Divided we Fall?"

The jubilant applause, in which even Victor joined, left no doubt as to the views of the audience on this point. Then followed the argument, which Victor had already heard from the Colonel's lips in private conversation, against the party of fanatics and hypocrites who made it their mission to cast the firebrand of insurrection and civil commotion among the people, accusing the slave-holders of the blackest of crimes for simply claiming their inherited rights, guaranteed by the laws of God and man, — who branded that sacred constitution as a covenant with hell, and sought to paralyze the power of the South and West by means of iniquitous tariff laws, and making war upon its time-honored institutions. In a scathing diatribe, the speaker depicted the hypocrisy of the Croesuses of the North and East, who grew fat upon the blood and marrow of the operatives in their mills and factories, extorting from them the labor of their best years for scanty wages, and leaving them in their old age, with their helpless wives and children, to starvation and misery, while they turned up their sanctimonious eyes in make-believe horror at the sins committed in the South against their black brethren.

The speech of the Colonel, whatever may have been its merits, created the wildest enthusiasm of his audience. They questioned neither the truth of his statements, nor the logic of his reasoning, but abandoned themselves to the power of his

eloquence, which so triumphantly demonstrated to them the truth of what they wished to be convinced of. But Victor listened as to the annunciation of a new gospel — a revelation of the grandeur of the land of his adoption. In his exultation he then and there vowed to himself to love and cherish this glorious land, and to defend and serve it to the utmost of his humble ability. But the sentiment uppermost in his heart was that of admiration and reverence, amounting almost to adoration, for the man whose words were so grand and ennobling, whose eloquence was so overpowering.

The Colonel was too experienced a speaker to conclude without a striking climax. Pointing to some of the slaves skipping blithely about the grounds, and beckoning to some of his own servants to approach, he exclaimed: “Look there my fellow-citizens! Observe the jolly, shining faces, beaming with contentment and good cheer; imagine, alongside of them, the pinched physiognomies of Northern factory operatives, their scantily fed children, care-worn wives and emaciated old men, and tell me, which class of slaves appeals most to the sympathy of good men?”

When the thousand-voiced cheers elicited by this comparison had subsided, the Colonel begged permission to add a word in defense of himself, and alluded to the slanderous reports industriously circulated against him, as he had heard, by his enemies. Without mentioning names, he proceeded to narrate truthfully the occurrences already detailed between Victor, the negroes and the overseer. Victor blushed deeply as he listened; Nellie regarded him with smiling face, and Leslie whispered into his ear: “This is the milk in the coconut! His whole speech was but the introduction to this flagellation of that miserable Jeffreys. Do you believe, now, that the governor understands his business as a politician?”

The flippant words of Leslie grated harshly on Victor's ear. How could his own son speak so irreverently of the man whom he himself worshiped in his inmost heart?

The Colonel closed with an appeal to those present, all of

whom had known him long and well, for a just and impartial judgment between him and his traducers, and left the platform amid the deafening cheers of the applauding multitude.

This concluded the "intellectual part of the program," as Leslie described it, and a third blast on the conch announced the beginning of the more lively exercises at the tables. That the excited crowd rushed forward to the tables set in the shady grove in picturesque confusion, and devoured the tempting viands, prepared according to the most approved rules of the barbecue, with ravenous appetites, — that the crowd of human beings, so long condemned to silence, now sought to indemnify themselves by boisterous chatting and laughter, — that Colonel May was shaken by the hand and congratulated on all sides, goes without saying.

As Nellie succeeded in getting at him, she threw her arms about him and kissed him in view of all the people.

Victor regarded him in silent admiration. The Colonel took him by the hand and said, with his winning smile, "Well, my friend, how did you like my speech?" Whereat Victor made no answer in words, but reverently kissed the hand that had been offered him.

"Some of my arguments were meant for your especial consideration," said the Colonel, and led Mrs. May to the table.



IX.

POST-PRANDIAL PLOTTING.

THE profound impression made upon Victor by the speech of Colonel May unfitted him for the enjoyment of the scenes which grew livelier and more boisterous as the day wore on. He felt the need of solitude to digest and assimilate the mighty thoughts that he had heard expounded. In his exalted mood he felt the clamorous applause accorded to the rude jokes of some rural Demosthenes as a jarring discord. His soul was not attuned to the hilarious mood of those around him. Thus it happened that he paid but little heed to the lionizing attentions received by Ralph Payton as the just tribute to his genius; that even lovely Nellie's lavish smiles upon the petted orator, and the complaisance with which she permitted him to entertain her, failed to arouse Victor's uneasiness. Nor did it attract his notice that one of the post-prandial orators, when the whiskey donated by his chief was being tapped and distributed to the thirsty revelers, gave, as a toast in honor of Mynheer Van Braaken, the sentiment: "To the liberal Dutch Merchant!" and heard but as in a dream, that his friend Leslie undertook to answer (when Mynheer failed to respond, except by vigorously nodding his head and winking with his twitching eye). It may as well be mentioned here, that, although Victor lost the full benefit of his friend's remarks, Leslie was lavish in his praise of "the liberal-minded and generous donor," and "took this festive occasion" furthermore, to express the gratitude of the community to this "distinguished and highly honorable foreigner" for the impetus given by him to the prosperity and commercial progress of Brookfield, and of all the Southwestern part of the State. Of course, Victor failed, also, to notice, that Leslie,

under guise of extravagant encomiums upon Ralph Payton's maiden speech, dealt this gentleman some ugly left-handed compliments and that he aroused the adherents of Mynheer to wild enthusiasm, to which the Barnes party could not even make opposition. Nor, of course, did he see how Ralph Payton changed color when Leslie alluded to his oration, and abruptly departed from Nellie's presence without so much as taking leave of her, although this demure maiden, barring a sparkle in her eye, seemed innocence itself. As soon as opportunity offered, Victor left the scenes of gayety and sought the solitude of the woods to commune with his thoughts.

Ralph Payton, for his part, was not disposed to seek solitude. He moved about among the excited crowd until his eyes fell upon a small group engaged in earnest, though low-voiced, conversation, toward which he straightway directed his steps. It was a singular coincidence, that he himself and the rough handling he and his speech had just received at Leslie's hands, constituted the theme of discussion. But the balm for his wounded self-esteem, if such he was in search of, came in an undesirable form; for Gregory Jeffreys, the foremost of the group he had joined, accosted him with a derisive grin, and said:

“Well, Ralph Payton, be ye sat'sfied now, o' the rakin' down ye'r been gittin' from that puppy Leslie? Sarves ye right 'nough. 'Cause I been warnin' ye agin the silly notion o' makin' a speech agin these d—d fur'ners. But ye knowed better, an' now ye got it.”

Ralph turned red in the face. “What do you want, Jeffreys?” he retaliated, almost fiercely. “I made that speech with the best intention. I thought that you all wanted these upstart foreigners to be put down a peg or two. How can I help it, that Colonel May takes so much stock in them? Or that his son Leslie seems to find a pleasure in insulting me for their benefit?”

“That thar' old Dutchman 's leadin' public 'pinion by the nose with 'is braggin' 'bout cheap goods, an' competition, an'

all that, an' giv'n' away a bar'l o' rot-gut whiskey," Jeffreys retorted. "An' the young gawk 's got in fash'n, 'cause 'e's a d—d little sneak 'at worms into the lik'n' o' silly wimen-folks. It was a d—d piece of foolishness to 'tack 'em in public, an' give that blatherskit'n' Kurnel May the chance to put it in politics."

"How else can you assail them?" Ralph broke in. "In this way only, by arousing and turning against them the patriotic indignation of the public, can you safely get at them."

"Payton is right," said Orlando Jones, another of the disputants. "We must show up the danger these foreigners bring to our country. I hate them like poison."

"And no wonder," the last of the trio chimed in, who was no other than Bob Romntree, Victor's colleague in the Dutch Store. "It was a perfect shame, the way old Van treated your father, without cause or provocation."

"Hold your tongue, youngster, until your opinion is wanted," exclaimed Orlando, highly incensed by the allusion to the practical joke played on old Jones by the peddler.

"And Victor is insufferably proud and conceited," Bob continued, emphasizing his words by a vigorous shake of the head. "And it will be doing him a real service to let him know his proper place among white folks. That is Mr. Jeffreys' opinion, and it is mine."

"Sart'nly," Jeffreys assented. "What 'ud the outlandish gawk be 'thout the partiality o' the Kurnel 'n' 'is kith 'n' kin? An' how kin you, Ralph Payton, stomach the 'ristocratic airs o' that conceited pup 'at gave ye sich a kickin' t'other day at the grammar school, an' now agin here, to-day? An' the little hussey 'at carries her head so high 's no better—"

"Not a word about the lady!" Ralph exclaimed with emphasis. "I share your antipathy against the Dutchman, and grant you that Leslie has treated me shamefully. But all that is no reason for mixing up Miss May in the matter. I will not suffer it, as I want you, once for all, to understand."

"More fool you!" sneered Jeffreys. "She's lead'n' ye

by the nose. She thinks a heap more o' that outlandish greenhorn 'n she does o' you, 'n' you an honest 'merican. I'd just like to know, how the ugly scarecrow turns the heads o' the silly wimen-folks; fir 'e's cock in the roost with the missis an' the maid." That 'ere Octoroon gal 's crazy 's a loon after 'im."

"Come, now, Jeffreys," said Orlando Jones, "'taint as bad as that, is it?"

"Oh, they say that the overseer is sort of jealous of that Octoroon girl and my partner, the young Dutchman," said Bob Rountree, with a teasing smile that exasperated Jeffreys.

"Is that the reason why he hates the young foreigner so cordially?" Ralph Payton asked. "No wonder, then, that he owes him no good will. I am with him there. But," he added, turning to Jeffreys, "I don't want Miss May, or any of her family, disturbed. Mind that."

"Young man," the overseer exclaimed in great irritation. "I've been deadly insulted! Both on 'em insulted me, — that d—d Hessian, an' ek'ly that slick-tongued Kurnel. An' I'm not a dog, to lick the hand 'at's dealt me a blow. If sich is *yore* sentiment, we won't hitch hosses. I'm in fur payin' back an insult with int'rest. My 'pinion is 'at Kurnel May 's got to be put down! We kin do it easy, by provin' in a court o' law what a dirty comp'ny 'e keeps, an' showin' up 'is dirty doin's, 'at give the lie to 'is speeches an' palaver in public. Let's show 'im up fur the white-livered abolitioner 'at 'e is, protectin' that 'are d—d Dutch upstart, an' sid'n' with niggers agin white folks. Ye needn't bring charges ag'n' the Kurnel at all, lest ye'r amind to. It'll all come out loud 'nough, if ye on'y git that d—d young fur'ner in court."

"Them's my sentiments to a T!" Orlando Jones proclaimed. "He assailed me from behind, like a coward and an assassin: he insulted me before the whole class. That is against the law, and he must be punished. We have laws in this country, and we should appeal to them to get justice."

“Nonsense!” exclaimed Ralph Payton. “You bring an action against him for assault and battery, and if you convict him, he will be sentenced to pay a fine of one dollar, maybe; and like as not, somebody else will pay that for him. No, sirree! That’s not *my* opinion.”

“Nor yet mine!” Jeffreys announced, assuming an air of special importance. “If you bring the action, Orlando Jones, ye’ll have the costs to pay, like ’nough, into the bargain. ’Cause I hear’n say ye made the fust assault yerself, an’ they might prove it on ye. But thar’s a law ag’in’ sociatin’ with niggers, an’ stirrin’ up niggers to sedition an’ revolt. An’ ’e must be indicted by the grand jury, whar’ there’ll be no risk for the informer; an’ it’s felony, an’ it’ll be penitentiary if they fetch ’im in guilty.”

“Yes! And if they don’t, there is Judge Lynch to ride him on a rail, with a coat of tar and feathers on!” suggested Bob Rountree, rubbing his hands in high glee.

“At least, which would be better, he would be banished from the country,” said Ralph Payton.

“Then we are agreed to this?” Jeffreys inquired. “If we are, let us consider, how we’ll git ’im indicted. Fur if ’e’s got friends on the grand jury they’ll never indict ’im.”

“How so?” asked Ralph Payton. “Are they not sworn to find according to law, without fear, favor or affection? You must have proof and they must find according to the evidence.”

“Of course!” Jeffreys explained to the others, contracting one of his eyebrows so as to indicate his superior craftiness. “We know all ’bout the impartiality o’ grand juries. But the case is this: If ’e has friends on the grand jury, they’ll not find the evidence sufficient an’ ther’ll be no indictment.”

“But if the grand jurors are his enemies, — leastwise not his friends — then justice will get her own!” Bob Rountree remarked excitedly. “My daddy is sheriff, and I am his son!”

“Now, if Jones, Orlando’s old man, ’ud be on the jury,”

Jeffreys hinted, with a sly glance at Bob, " 'e'd see 'at the laws o' the land 'ud be obeyed. There'd be no trait'rous sympathizin' with fur'n spies to cloud'n 'is judgment, nur to hinder' 'im from doin' 'is dooty."

" He would remember foreign peddlers and hate Dutch interlopers," put in Bob Rountree, once more rubbing his hands in excited humor.

" Foreign influence is one of the most baneful foes of republican government!" quoted Ralph Payton from his speech.

" And I think Mr. Jeffreys ought to be on the grand jury," said Orlando Jones. " He knows more about the evidence than anybody else, and owes a duty to the community."

" Mebbe ye're right," the overseer generously admitted.

" And Mr. Barnes!" added Bob; " and all of Mr. Barnes' friends. There are enough of true men left in this country who are not afraid to do their duty against these upstart foreigners. And my daddy shan't know a thing about the whole matter."

" Bob's a smart young man, now, ain't 'e?" said Jeffreys, patting the apprentice on the shoulder with a patronizing smile. " It mightn't be nice to see the old man an' the Kurnel at loggerheads, as might happen if anything leaked out. An' it 'ud be foolish to let the enemy look into our hands. An' that reminds me," he added, casting a searching glance at the surroundings, " that we musn't stand yere whispering any more. I seen that 'ere Leslie's eyes on us one't or twic't, an' 'e's the very devil to put this an' that together."

" All right," said the apprentice, exchanging a look of tacit understanding with Jeffreys. " I've got my cue. Neither my boss, the Dutelman, nor my daddy, are to smell a rat. But if the next grand jury should indict my dear friend Vic for high treason, — you know who's sheriff, and who's his son."

" I guess we'd better scatter easy, like, so's not to draw attention," said Jeffreys; and Orlando Jones, acting upon the suggestion, moved away.

“And I shall devote myself to the pleasure of the fair sex,” said Bob Rountree. “Some of them have, no doubt, sadly missed me.”

And the group dispersed. “For all the world,” thought Payton, not without a touch of mis-giving, “like a band of conspirators.”

The promising young apprentice was in a highly exhilarated mood. The fair Emily Matlack was pleasantly surprised by his animated conversation, and the self-possessed smile that illumined his face. She was ready to make the most of his amiable attentions, notwithstanding — or perhaps because of — the slight which she fancied to have received from Leslie May. She was determined to prove to that young gentleman, that she could amuse herself quite agreeably without his company, and that there was no lack of admirers who sought her favor. He should be made to understand, that it was a matter of supreme indifference to her, whether he bestowed his favors here or elsewhere. In this spirit of laudable independence, she entered enthusiastically into the vivacious mood of her newly captured admirer. She found his attempts at witticism irresistibly funny, and rewarded his most trivial remarks with gracious smiles and appreciative laughter. This hitherto unexperienced success fired the young man to renewed exertions and ever bolder attempts to excite his fair companion's risibility, so that the merry young couple were thoroughly successful in attracting public attention.

But notwithstanding all this, Miss Emily seemed not altogether happy. A closer observer than Bob Rountree was at this moment, would have suspected the searching glances cast by the young maiden in every direction. But Bob saw in the excessive hilarity of his companion only the effect of his personal amiability, and it escaped his notice entirely that sometimes a shadow of keen disappointment passed over her face, when her wandering glances failed, evidently, to reveal the object of their diligent search. It was somewhat of a surprise to the young man therefore, to hear her suddenly exclaim “I

thought so!" just when he was giving her the benefit of a lively description of some startling adventure.

The immediate cause of this exclamation was the discovery, on the part of Miss Emily, of Leslie, whom her sharp optics deseried, in a distant part of the grounds, leisurely escorting her intimate friend Hettie Shannon toward the adjacent wood. Bob, looking up into his fair companion's face, followed the direction of her intent gaze; but he saw neither Leslie nor the young lady he was escorting: his eyes, instead, fell on a group on the furthest limits of the grounds, composed of Colonel May, his wife and daughter, and Ralph Payton. Naturally enough, he attributed her exclamation to her discovery of this group and more particularly to the fact of her noticing the attention paid to Miss Nellie by Ralph Payton. Now Bob possessed considerable acuteness of intellect, and a lively imagination. He at once concluded that Miss Emily was an implacable opponent of Victor Waldhorst, having heard from young Jones that it was she who had divulged the piquant anecdote of the scarecrow; and that she was agreeably surprised to notice that Ralph Payton still enjoyed Miss Nellie's good will, notwithstanding what had passed between them in the grammar class, giving expression to her delight by the remark he had heard. His surmises in this direction were confirmed by the very evident haste with which the young lady pressed forward in the direction of the group mentioned.

"I am quite sure," said he, with the laudable desire to say something pleasant to his fair young friend, "that my poor colleague has nothing to hope for in that quarter. Ralph Payton has cut him clean out there."

"Ralph Payton?" the young lady inquired innocently, without, however, looking at her escort. "Where?"

"Why, there, where we are going; with Miss Nellie May," said Bob, wondering at Miss Matlack's obtuseness.

"Ah, with Nellie May!" replied Emily rather absently. "Oh, yes! Why there she is sure enough. Let us not dis-

turb them. Wouldn't you like to take a walk with me in the cool shade of the wood? It is very warm to-day."

Bob, of course, gladly assented. He was delighted with the evident progress he was making in the young lady's favor, and stepped along so proudly by her side, that he failed to perceive her preoccupation, and the intentness with which she peered into the wood, which they were now rapidly approaching. He made up for her taciturnity by eagerly pursuing the topic of conversation, — Ralph and Victor — a theme which aroused his deepest interest, and upon which he had marvelous things to say. It was a pity, therefore, that his companion listened with but half an ear, else she might have learned that Bob Rountree was a warm admirer of Ralph Payton, but had little love for Victor Waldhorst.

In the cool and quiet solitude which they had now reached, her sharp eyes soon discovered, visible between the foliage of the shrubs and bushes, the bright straw-colored dress of her friend Hettie. "I thought so!" was the ejaculation that for a second time almost escaped her, but which on this occasion she succeeded in suppressing. Slowly the two walked on, the direction chosen by her enabling her to keep in sight the straw-colored calico dress, by the side of which the blue-jeans coat worn by Leslie May became visible. Bob's animated conversation must have reached the ears of those ahead, for the blue-jeans coat, as well as the yellow calico dress, came to a sudden standstill. Emily took her partner a step or two farther, and then, declaring that she was too tired to proceed on the walk, proposed to rest a while.

Meanwhile Leslie May, having reached this part of the wood in his promenade with the charming Hettie Shannon, was not a little surprised to hear the voice of the merchant's apprentice in lively conversation with Emily Matlack. Hettie, turning round, beheld in Bob's companion her friend Emily, and put her finger to her lips, thus signaling Leslie to remain silent. The latter raised his forefinger in mock remonstrance, and whispered a few words into her ear which made her blush; but

both remained perfectly silent. Bob had gallantly spread his silk handkerchief on the ground for Miss Emily to sit on, while he himself took a recumbent position by her side, continuing to entertain her with praiseworthy zeal.

Leslie May, who had remained silent, at first in deference to his lady's whim, soon listened with keen interest on his own account to Bob's lively talk, and in turn signaled his companion to keep silence when he saw her start to approach the other couple. So communicative had Bob become toward his fair listener, that he was presaging all sorts of dark things for Victor, among them the possibility of a trial for a great crime, and so many hints of trouble for the Dutch Store, that it was not difficult for Leslie to guess what was going on. He did not dream, however, of Bob Rountree's own part in the program, but imagined the whole plan an electioneering trick against his father. The importance of the interests at stake seemed to him to justify the part he was acting as eavesdropper. Besides, he had entered on the *role* originally only to please a charming young lady, whose curiosity had gotten the better of her discretion.

But the attention of both was claimed in a new direction by sounds as of one approaching. There was rustling of the leaves of the hazel bushes close by, and presently a hand became visible in the act of separating them to make room for the head that followed, and which Leslie recognized as that of young Victor.

"Now see!" he exclaimed, as unconcernedly as if the two had met alone in the wood. "*Lupus in Fabula!*"

Miss Emily had also heard the approach of the footsteps, but paid no attention to them. Not so Bob Rountree. He was too busily engaged talking to his lady to notice the slight noise. Leslie's remark, therefore, startled him. He quickly jumped up, and was disagreeably surprised to see Victor, as well as Leslie with his companion. The young lady also rose, but more leisurely, and both approached the others, Bob with a guilty look, but Emily as serenely and with a smile of such

glad surprise, as if she had just then become aware of the presence of Leslie and her dear friend Hettie.

“Where on earth have you been all the afternoon?” asked Leslie of Victor. “One would almost suppose that you are afraid of the sovereigns on this birthday of their national independence.”

“Don’t pretend!” said Miss Emily, with a sweet, though somewhat ironically intended smile. “I hope Mr. Waldhorst has as good a right to hide himself in the solitude of the woods as—certain other people!” These last words were accompanied by a look of superb contempt at Miss Hettie Shannon.

“Oh, certainly!” the latter retorted, returning the sneer of her virtuous friend with an angry flash of her eyes, “certainly! Just as good a right, at least, as a certain young lady has to appoint a meeting with her ardent admirer in the forest, and—to wallow in the grass with him, all alone in the wood!”

“*Honi soit qui mal y pense!*” exclaimed Leslie, stepping between the angry maidens. “Nobody to blame! I declare to you upon my honor, Miss Matlack, that it was only at my urgent request, that Miss Shannon accompanied me on a voyage of discovery after my missing friend Victor. That our way led into the woods, was certainly not her fault. But you, Miss Shannon,” he continued, turning to his lady, “are in danger of doing great injustice to your amiable friend, if you deem her capable of braving the dangers of the forest, even under the protection of the redoubtable Mr. Rountree, if she had not known that she would find you here also.”

The ladies listened, not altogether sure of Leslie’s sincerity. But this young gentleman, evidently sincere enough in his endeavors to reconcile the belligerent beauties, took one hand of each and laid it in that of the other. “I see,” he said with a winning smile, “how greatly pleased you both are to meet each other here. Now give vent to your joy, pour out your hearts to each other, and afford us poor youngsters the

happiness of witnessing the sisterly concord of so much feminine loveliness and beauty! ”

What remained for the poor girls to do, but to clasp each other's hands, and make at least an outward show of that cordiality for which Leslie commended them? Suspecting, in their secret hearts, that the saucy young man was, in some way, fooling, or at least teasing, them, yet neither had the courage to resist his coaxing request, and both did as he bade them.

Leslie himself then turned to Victor, who stood there as perplexed and ignorant of the meaning of what was going on as was Bob Rountree, and whispered into his ear: “ You must help me out of this scrape. Take that smiling Miss Hettie off my hands, or I shall incur the deadly enmity of the amiable Miss Emily.”

“ Of Miss Emily? ” Victor asked, in surprise. “ Why, she is friendliness itself. She fairly worships you.”

“ That's just why,” Leslie whispered energetically. “ If you don't help me, the lovely maidens will scratch out each other's beautiful eyes. I must take Miss Emily back to the grounds, or there will be a hair-bristling catastrophe.”

“ But Miss Emily has an escort,” Victor protested. “ Did she not come with Mr. Rountree? ”

“ Never mind that youngster: I'll get rid of him easily enough,” urged Leslie. “ But I must have Hettie off my hands too, or I can't make up with Emily. And if I poke her off on Bob, she'll get her back up and the trouble will be equally great in the other quarter.”

Victor was about to object that he foresaw the same consequence in the case of Miss Shannon, if she were “ poked off ” on him, but Leslie had already left him, and was coaxing Bob Rountree “ as a great favor ” to himself, to hurry off and inform Mr. and Mrs. May and his sister Nellie, that it was high time to prepare for the return home, and that he, Leslie, would be with them in a very few moments.

The young man was, as he had expected, willing enough to

oblige Leslie, and gladly embraced the opportunity to get well out of the company in which, since Victor had joined them, he felt ill at ease.

“ Now, when I walk up with the two girls,” Leslie, returning, whispered in Victor’s ear, “ you sidle up to Hettie, and tell her something flattering. If it goes against your grain to call her a beauty, or any such nice thing, say something complimentary of her father; that will do almost as well. Then you walk on ahead with her, or stay behind, whichever comes most natural. She’ll not let go of you after that.”

The young ladies graciously accepted his kindly offer to escort them back to the grounds, and Victor, mindful of Leslie’s request, walked by Hettie’s side, and ventured a few bashful remarks. But Hettie’s answers were so natural and amiable, that Victor began to hope that he might coin the compliment which was expected of him, for the young lady herself. In pondering what to say, he happened to remember the imposing figure and dignified bearing of the gray-haired old man, who had presided over the great assemblage in the morning, and completely won the heart of the filial daughter by the vivid description of the impression made on him, so that further compliment became unnecessary. Hettie, attaching herself to Victor, and turning toward him with an eager face, the better to listen to his remarks, loitered in her steps, so that the two couples were far enough apart to be out of ear-shot of private conversation. Thus it came about, that what Leslie said to conciliate the irritated Emily, remained a secret between them. But it must have been perfectly satisfactory to the fair one, for Victor noticed that she took his arm in a very cordial manner, and that the two chatted with each other, in lively, but perfectly harmonious style. The example thus given was readily followed by Victor, who thought it a part of the role he had assumed to offer his arm to his fair partner; and when Hettie confidently put her plump little hand upon it, he magnanimously forgave his friend for “ poking off ” this lovely girl upon him.

In this way they successively reached the grounds. Leslie led his charge straightway to her parents; but Victor was so pleasantly entertained by his companion, that he forgot all about going home. Nor did he take note of the circumstance that, while many of the participants had already taken their departure home, those that remained were so conspicuously hilarious, as to point unmistakably to the freely donated whiskey of Mynheer as the source of their inspiration.

But presently the silvery voice of Nellie broke in upon the pleasant chat between Victor and Miss Shannon. After a friendly word to the latter, she turned to Victor, and said, shaking her uplifted finger at him, in a serio-comic, chiding voice: "I am afraid, Mr. Waldhorst, that my brother has already corrupted your exemplary manners. If any one had told me, I would not have believed, what I now see with my own eyes: that you dared walk arm in arm with a young lady, in broad daylight, at a public festival! And to pass by your most intimate friends without even a nod of recognition!"

Victor, with a vivid blush of conscious guilt, cowardly dropped the arm of the young lady he was escorting, and lowered his eyes before the mischievous smile of the wayward child. "You forget," he stammered in great embarrassment, "that you yourself have done me the honor, to-day —"

"Oh, that was a mere make-shift," Nellie interrupted him. "I could not squeeze through that crowd without an escort, could I? But it seems to me, that you and Hettie came from a place where there was no crowd at all. Come, confess, sir, that brother Leslie has had you in training!"

There is no certainty as to what Victor would have confessed, because just at that moment Ralph Payton came along and interrupted the conversation. For once the appearance of this young gentleman was welcome to Victor. He announced, that the pony had been saddled, and that every thing was ready for the homeward ride. As Nellie turned toward Ralph Payton to accompany him back, she gave Victor a parting

injunction. "I charge you," she said, in playful banter, "to follow soon, else Grace Darling will tax the skill of her rider severely, if you want to catch up with us before reaching May Meadows. You have seen how swift of foot my pony is, and I surmise," — this with an arch look at Ralph — "that Mr. Payton's bosom has been relieved of an immense weight since morning, so that his horse, too, will travel smartly."

She left Victor standing abashed, as she departed with her cavalier, gazing after her with the vague longing which he had felt on seeing those two depart from May Meadows in the morning.

Suddenly he bethought himself of the young lady whose arm he had so ignominiously forsaken, and turned with the intention of thanking her for the pleasure she had conferred upon him. But she was nowhere to be seen. He looked around in perplexity, and as he failed to discover the least trace of her, he concluded that the young lady had joined her folks, and, extremely anxious to obey Nellie's parting injunction to be on the road as soon as possible, hurried on to find Leslie. From one of the blacks he learned that Leslie had just been seen with a lady in a straw-colored dress. "In a straw-colored dress!" mused Victor. "Why, that must be Miss Shannon. Where on earth did he meet her, and what can he want of her now?" Shaking his head over the incalculable moods of his friend, he quickly traversed the grounds.

The turmoil increased, although great numbers were constantly leaving for home. Many of those whom he encountered were evidently intoxicated. He felt ill at ease; and as he saw nothing of Leslie, he considered the propriety of ordering his horse and starting off alone. It would not be difficult, he reasoned, to overtake Nellie and Payton; perhaps it might please the little lady to have two escorts in place of one.

But before he could carry out his intention, some one seized his arm, and he felt wonderfully relieved to recognize his friend Leslie.

"Come, my boy," said the latter in his cheery voice, "it is

not safe to remain here much longer. Unless I am much mistaken, there will be striking illustrations before long, of the manly independence of the sovereigns. The whiskey of old Van Braaken is getting in its work."

"Where have you been?" said Victor, taking Leslie's arm and keeping pace with him on the way to where the horses awaited them. "I have looked for you everywhere —"

"And found me nowhere, certainly," said Leslie, in bantering tone. "Now, are you not a pretty specimen of a cavalier, to stand there and permit the lady intrusted to your care to be whisked from your side, without your ever knowing it?"

"Did you —"

"Of course; I took Hettie to the bosom of her anxious family, for I saw that you would never succeed in accomplishing that task yourself. Besides, we had a little account to settle between ourselves that required no witnesses."

"What do you mean?" asked Victor innocently.

"Why, she owed me a fee for having made me the participant of a great secret —. But there! I almost forgot that I must spare your sensitive ear. You might deem the reward I claimed almost as immoral as the conspiracy I traced by the aid of the fair one."

"Your words are all riddles to me!" said Victor.

"You will solve them when the time comes," Leslie answered. "But now tell me, what do you think of a backwoods barbecue?"

Victor complied. His naïve remarks, as he related the experiences of the day, and the impressions they made upon his mind, elicited many a subdued chuckle of amusement from Leslie. But the enthusiasm which caused his eyes to sparkle as he described the powerful effect produced by his father's speech, and the adoration of the man, expressed more eloquently by his rapt tone and transfigured features than by his words, in turn impressed the son.

To Victor's unspoken, but deep regret, Nellie and Payton were not overtaken by them before reaching home.

X.

BEFORE THE GRAND INQUEST.

THE Brookfielders habitually looked forward to the opening of court (on the second Monday of July and January each year) as an event fraught with great interest to them. It was a rare treat to the idlers and gossips. Not that there was pageantry, or brilliant display, or impressive ceremonial of any kind. The judge wore neither ermine nor wig, nor was the sheriff armed with either sword or tip-staff. Yet there was much to see and hear. It was something, for instance, to hear the sheriff's proclamation in opening court, perverting, to the disgust of judge and lawyers, the ancient formula of the Norman-French tongue "Oyez! Oyez! Oyez!" into the commonplace English "O yes! O yes! O yes!" And then there were speeches of the lawyers, belligerent and vehement, in the manner of fighting cocks; and the torturing of witnesses on the rack of cross-examination; and many a nugget of highly spiced scandal, furnishing welcome topics for gossip at the stores and the veranda of the hotel for weeks to come. It was something, too, to see the new faces which court day brought; first of all the circuit attorney, and the rest of the lawyers who followed the judge itinerant from county seat to county seat, all over the circuit, like the tail of a comet; harvesting rich crops of fees, since even the backwoodsmen were aware how much a fat fee stimulates the alertness and eloquence of a lawyer; wherefore anxious clients, on the eve of impending trials, came down more freely with their carefully hoarded "dust." Then the litigating parties from far and near; the twice twelve citizens summoned to serve as traverse jurors; and finally, the grand

inquisitors, twenty in number, enveloped in the mystic nimbus of secrecy.

Mr. Rountree, the sheriff, was a conscientious officer. He was deeply impressed with the grave responsibility resting upon him in designating the men who were to wield the power of calling their fellow-men to account for crimes and misdemeanors committed, or alleged to have been committed. For this reason Mr. Rountree usually felt some anxiety on the approach of court terms. But on the occasion in question he had found this most trying of his official duties so easy, that he congratulated himself on his unexpected success, ascribing it to the routine acquired by practice. The list of names had occurred to him as if by intuition, on the very next day after the barbecue, and while engaged in an unusually pleasant chat with his son Bob. If in accounting to himself for his extraordinary success he took undue credit to himself, ignoring entirely the merits of his son in this connection, let him not be judged harshly: for Bob was much too filially minded to permit his father to even dream, that the happy composition of the grand inquisition was not due entirely to his own ability.

More deeply, perhaps, than even the sheriff, was mine host of the Brookfield hotel interested in the advent of court days, in a pecuniary point of view at least. And no less the proprietors of the two stores whose respective establishments were crowded, on these occasions, with customers.

It was a rather costly honor to Mr. Barnes, to officiate as grand juror at a time when his presence in the store was so imperatively demanded. The proud consciousness, however, of outranking his rival of the Dutch Store as an officer of court, outweighed his business scruples. It was a soothing balm to his vanity to reflect upon the distinction involved in this sacrifice, which his country demanded of him. He saw in this mark of confidence on the part of his fellow-citizens a well-merited compliment in compensation for the unjust partiality shown to his rival on the occasion of the barbecue. And how

flattering was the deference shown him by his colleagues! How assuring the circumstance, that not a single member of the grand jury belonged to the partisans of the Dutch Store! True, he had never suspected what a dangerous, wicked individual his rival harbored in his store, in the person of his young apprentice, and what a treasonable influence emanated from these foreigners. Mr. Jeffreys, his colleague on the grand jury, opened his eyes in this respect, and Mr. Jones effectually seconded his efforts to warn the country of the danger threatening the peace and welfare of the law-abiding population from this source; and before the grand jury had been closeted one hour, they had instructed the Circuit Attorney to prepare an indictment against Victor Waldhorst, charging him with felony; which, when it had been read to and sanctioned by the grand jurors, was signed by Mr. Barnes as foreman and returned into court as a true bill.

Mynheer Van Braaken, meanwhile, was reaping a rich harvest. Shoulder to shoulder stood the eager customers in his store. Mr. Miller, the head clerk, Mr. Van Braaken himself, as well as both apprentices, had their hands full to attend to the business. Victor, in happy unconsciousness of the portentous thunder-cloud gathering over his devoted head, forgot for once, in his zeal of activity, what was expected of him in the way of lauding the excellence of the goods; and though he caught the eye of his young colleague resting upon him several times, with an unaccountable expression, in which both shyness and malice seemed blended, he was in no wise disconcerted thereby. For he felt that to-day prompt attention to the wants of the customers, close watchfulness in the exchange of goods and money, and a careful scrutiny of bank-notes and coin was all that was expected or demanded of him. And in these respects he felt himself fully the equal of Bob Rountree.

Neither of the apprentices, however, was completely wrapped up in the business of the store. Victor's curiosity had been aroused by the information he had gathered from

Leslie's conversation about the powers and functions of the judge, jury and attorneys, and about the several offices performed by the grand and petty juries, in the administration of justice. The same subject engaged the thoughts of Bob Rountree; with this difference, however, that in his case they assumed a more concrete shape, — the interest that he felt being a direct and personal one. His thoughts engrossed him to such an extent, that his behavior excited the notice of his chief, as well as of Mr. Miller, and drew from them warning glances of disapproval.

While Victor's sense of duty was sufficient to insure his undiminished attention to business, it did not exclude the lively desire to see, with his own eyes, an American court of Justice in all the majesty and panoply of its power. The "Grand Inquest," as Leslie had described it to him, more particularly piqued his curiosity. The imposing name suggested to him continually the stern austerity of the Spanish Inquisition, investing the subject with a degree of romantic interest contrasting strongly with the sober reality about him. Leslie May had in words not entirely devoid of pompous exaggeration, represented this institution as the grand bulwark of liberty, which the English people had, after many struggles, extorted from their rulers and incorporated in the Great Charter of English Liberties; from which it had come down, as a precious inheritance from the mother country, to the American Colonies, and now constituted an essential part of the Bill of Rights of every American State. No wonder, then, that Victor's lively imagination reverted, now and then, to the mysterious doings that must be going on over at the court house, and that he regretted the impossibility of being an eye-witness to them.

No wonder, either, that the summons of his employer, calling on him to accompany Leslie May to the court house, greatly astonished him, for though the crowd of customers had by this time perceptibly decreased, he had not noticed the entrance of Leslie, nor that this young gentleman had been for some time

engaged in an earnest though whispered conversation with his chief. He readily followed his friend, feeling grateful to him for his supposed purpose of making him acquainted with the practical workings of the court. Nor did he note the look of open-mouthed expectation with which Bob Rountree regarded the two as they left the store.

Having stepped into the open air, Leslie cordially took Victor's arm. "Victor," he said lightly, "they are going to play a joke on you. They want to vex and frighten you. Now promise me, that you won't be angry, or at least, that you will not let them see your anger; and we will turn the joke against them so that all Vernal County shall shake with laughter at the stupid faces they will make on their discomfiture. Will you promise me?"

"What do you mean?" said Victor, with a puzzled look.

"Imagine," Leslie continued, not noticing his friend's question, "that you were about to join the secret order of free masons. You know, don't you, that they try to frighten the candidates for the mysteries with all sorts of hocus-pocus and absurd monkey shins, to try their mettle? And you know, too, that not one of them was ever hurt so much as by crooking a hair of his head? So here: You will come out of it all without a scratch or a bruise. They shall not even ruffle your temper, if you only have faith in what I tell you."

"But I don't understand you," said Victor, whose astonishment began to change to alarm at the strange words of his companion. "What do you want me to do?"

"Nothing, but to be true to yourself, and to exhibit the courage of your true nature!" Leslie exclaimed, with an encouraging look. "Above all things, to believe me, when I tell you that you are in no real danger whatever."

"But I dream of no danger!" Victor replied, with a look of alarm that belied his words. "I can't imagine where there should be danger to me."

"Well," said Leslie with a smile, the light irony of which did more to quiet Victor's apprehensions than his reasoning,

“the fact is, that you are about to be confronted with the majesty of that bulwark of American Liberty that I have been telling you about. The grand jury has perpetrated the practical joke of finding a true bill against you, — that is, they have indicted you for treasonable conspiracy.”

“Me? What for? What have I done?” cried Victor, turning pale now with real alarm.

“Nothing but what you thought right and just,” replied Leslie, in a calm, assuring tone. “You see, the whole thing is intended for a cowardly attack on my governor. They know very well, that they cannot hurt him, or you either, by this proceeding in court; but they mean to get up an excitement against the governor, so as to injure him in his election. At the same time they intend to frighten you, to revenge themselves on you for the insult they imagine you put on some of the silly fools. But if you will only keep a stiff upper lip, and laugh at them instead of giving them a chance to make merry over you, we shall turn the tables upon them in a way to make them laugh at the wrong corner of the mouth. Show them the stuff you are made of! Prove that my sister is right when she calls you the proudest, and admires you as the bravest, boy in Vernal County! Will you promise?”

Victor actually blushed with pleasure on hearing Nellie’s opinion of him, notwithstanding the alarming nature of Leslie’s statement. But he made no reply, for they had by this time crossed the Square and reached the court house. They stood on the threshold of the temple of justice, which Victor entered with a feeling of suspense and awe never before experienced.

Just as they stepped in; the Mystic Twenty, constituting for the time being, the bulwark of American Liberty for the County of Vernal, stood up to receive from his Honor, the judge, further instructions touching their duties, and then marched by, in Indian file, on their way to the room assigned them for their deliberations, where they moved and carried an adjournment for the day.

“Mark their faces!” Leslie whispered. “You know a sufficient number of them to be able to understand, now, how they came to accuse you of treasonable practices.”

“Why, there is Jeffreys! And Jones! And Matlack!” whispered Victor eagerly. Are *these* the men that constitute the Grand Inquest?”

“And Barnes and all his supporters,” Leslie went on. “Not one of them has any love for the Dutch Store. And Mr. Rountree is sheriff, and Bob is his son. Do you begin to see method in this madness?”

“You don’t mean to say that Bob — ”

“Yes, I do, though!” Leslie interrupted him with an air of triumph that puzzled Victor still more. “Bob Rountree has undertaken to personate, for once, the Genius of Liberty, and to have a hand in the construction of its bulwark. He has carried Ralph Payton’s political maxim into practice, and here is his first blow at the baneful effect of foreign influence. Now for the first counter-stroke! It will never do to give them the satisfaction of seeing you taken to jail, or even letting the sheriff lay hands on you.”

“Jail! Sheriff!” The words fell with terrific effect on poor Victor’s ear. He began to understand, that there was no child’s play going on, and that courage was, indeed, needed.

But Leslie gave him no time to indulge in gloomy forebodings. “I have already engaged a lawyer to conduct your defense,” he said. “There he is. The first thing to be attended to is, I suppose, to get you off on bail, that has also been provided.”

The gentleman pointed out as Victor’s defender approached as soon as he saw Leslie, who introduced him to Victor as Mr. Bedford.

“You are just in time to avoid the necessity of a bench warrant,” he said, in a cheerful voice, to Victor. “The judge was about to issue one. You may now waive arraignment and the reading of the indictment. I will cause your plea of not guilty to be entered of record, then we will give bail for you, and

that will finish the business for to-day. To-morrow, then, the trial may begin, if I can get the State's attorney to consent."

"But how can I plead not guilty, when I have not heard the accusation, and do not know with what offense I am charged?" Victor objected, with a seriousness which caused both the attorney and Leslie to smile.

"Oh, that is a mere form, my friend," said the lawyer. "It is self-evident that you must plead not guilty, else there could not be a trial at all. And then I happen to know the content of the indictment; I looked over it just now, to see whether I could find a loop-hole in it, for which I might move to quash, or at least wear out the patience of the prosecution by dilatory motions. But brother Yancey is a sly old fox; you might as well attempt to drill a hole through a cast steel bar with a rotten lead pencil, as to pick a flaw in one of his indictments."

With these words, Mr. Bedford stepped forward to the platform, upon which the judge sat behind his desk, thus cutting off Victor's eager questions as to the nature of the charge against him.

"May it please your Honor," Mr. Bedford spoke, "we are ready to waive the reading of the indictment in the case of *The State vs. Victor Waldhorst*. We plead not guilty, and pray your Honor to fix the amount of bail to be given."

The judge demanded the document for inspection and asked the State's attorney for his opinion. "It is an unusual charge," said the judge apologetically. "I do not remember to have ever seen an indictment framed under this section of the statute."

Victor listened attentively to the statements of the judge and the lawyers, hoping to gain some notion of the particulars of the charge against him: but he listened in vain. Neither the judge, nor any of the lawyers, ever mentioned the offense, the gravity of which they discussed with so much volubility. The only thing that Victor understood from the learned debate was, that bail was demanded in the sum of one thousand dollars,

which his lawyer declared (but so as not to be heard by the judge) to be an outrageously high amount, and a plain violation of the constitutional inhibition against excessive bail. Leslie announced, that the amount was a matter of indifference, and nodded to a man evidently on hand for this purpose, who stepped forward, and declared himself indebted to the State in the sum of one thousand dollars, lawful money of the United States, to be well and truly paid, on condition however, that Whereas, &c.

The judge then inquired of the counsel whether they had agreed on the day for which the trial was to be set. The prosecuting attorney answered that they had not been able to agree, and demanded sufficient time to consult with the witnesses, as well as to examine authorities and precedents, in order to be able to present the case properly before the court and jury. But Victor's lawyer opposed delay. He was evidently acting in the interest of his employer, for he never even consulted the wishes of the real defendant in the case. Victor noted that his lawyer was possessed of an exceedingly ready tongue, and that he urged immediate action with a loquaciousness which seemed to carry everything before it, until Mr. Yancey, the State's attorney, exposed the futility of his arguments in a few, in Victor's opinion, convincing words. If the latter had been free to choose his defender between the two lawyers, he would, without a moment's hesitation, have chosen Mr. Yancey. This gentleman was of tall, imposing stature; a frank, kindly expression about the mouth redeemed the face from what would otherwise have stamped it as forbiddingly severe. His clear grey eyes had for a moment rested on Victor, and from this glance the boy caught the impression that the State's attorney was a reliable, whole-souled man. He spoke calmly and to the point; his voice was both clear and melodious; Victor felt instinctively that it would possess powerful influence over judge and jury. For the present, however, his own lawyer scored a victory over his opponent; for the judge, after listening patiently and with patent impartiality

to the argument on both sides, cut off further debate by fixing the next morning for the beginning of the trial. "Justice delayed," he explained sententiously, "is justice denied. The defendant has a constitutional right to a speedy trial."

"Ah, ha!" Mr. Bedford exclaimed, turning with triumphant mien to Leslie, and rubbing his hands in high glee, "you see, we are one too many for the sly old fox. We have easily beaten off his first assault and I flatter myself that our counter move has somewhat discomfited the enemy. It is quite an advantage gained over the old fellow to compel him to go into the fight without preparation. Now, my young friends," he continued with a slight nod toward Victor, to indicate that he also was included, "let us discuss our plan of battle."

Leslie proposed that they should all three repair to the May Mansion to talk over the matter. "It is possible," he said, "that my father, who is absent on an electioneering tour, may return at any moment; and it seems to me to be important to have his views as to the course to be pursued in the defense."

"Of course it would," Mr. Bedford promptly responded. "Indeed, it would be highly desirable that he should be present at the trial, so as to afford a sort of moral support to the defendant. Such things have a powerful effect on our honest yeoman sitting in the jury box."

"Particularly, as the whole plot is but a poorly masked attack on himself, to defeat his election," added Leslie.

"See, see!" Mr. Bedford remarked, seeming to be highly amused at this piece of news. "So you think that General Waddle has his finger in this pie? A little bold, — don't you think? — but sly, I grant you, prodigiously sly! The idea of manipulating the grand jury in furthering his electioneering schemes! And you really think, that old Waddle invented this clever trick?"

"No, I don't believe anything of the kind," Leslie replied. "I have no reason to impute particular intellectual ability to my father's opponent in this election; nor do I think him a paragon of generosity. I think him quite capable of acting

upon the maxim, that in an electioneering canvass, as in love and war, everything is fair that promises success. But I do not think him such a knave, and certainly not such a fool, as to attempt to bribe or influence the grand jury. No! This brilliant idea grew in another head; and the motive was not love for General Waddle, but hatred for Colonel May."

"You don't say!" exclaimed Mr. Bedford, casting an admiring glance at the young man. "You seem to be well informed. Where did you get your information?"

"That is my secret!" said Leslie, laughing. "But there is no magic about it. I only put this and that together."

Victor listened with eager ears to the discussion that followed, in which Leslie explained to the lawyer the particulars of the case, so far as he knew them, but from which Victor could not learn more than that the charge against him was in some way connected with his visit to the negro quarters. Then it occurred to him, that Colonel May had warned him of the unlawfulness of meeting with negroes after dark, in their own quarters, without the consent of the owner or overseer. But the magnitude of the offense with which he stood charged, as well as the extent of the penalty thereby incurred, still remained the subject of painful anxiety to him. As soon, therefore, as he could succeed in putting in a word, he timidly inquired: "Is this matter so very serious? If I am found guilty, is there any danger of my going to the penitentiary?"

"You are right, my young friend," the lawyer answered, with a coolness and unconcern that shocked poor Victor. "In our slave states it is no joking matter to be accused of tampering with the negroes. It is almost equal to the crime of high treason, only that you may be found guilty on circumstantial evidence, while the constitution prohibits conviction for treason without the concurring testimony of two witnesses to the overt act."

"Don't let this lawyer frighten you!" said Leslie, whose calmness and assuring smile did much to allay Victor's fears. "He is trying to exaggerate his case in order to quiet his conscience for charging an exorbitant fee. The long and short of

the matter is, that you are charged with inciting my father's slaves to insurrection. Do you understand, now, how utterly ridiculous the whole thing is?"

"Less ridiculous than perilous." Mr. Bedford insisted. "We must proceed with the utmost caution in selecting our traverse jury. For a mistake in that direction would surely prove fatal. Let one or two fire-eaters be among them, and they will so fanaticise the whole twelve, that you could no more prevent a verdict of guilty, than you could stop a runaway horse by holding on to its tail."

"Let it be my care to assist you in making your peremptory challenges," Leslie replied confidently. "I am pretty thoroughly acquainted with the citizens of the vicinage; and while the grand jury seems to have been picked out with consummate skill, I have no idea that the petty jurors have been tampered with. Depend on me and on the governor, if he should return before the trial begins."

The conviction began to impress itself upon Victor's mind, that Leslie was not sincere in treating the matter so lightly, concealing his apprehensions only to spare his friend's feelings. His thoughts reverted to the intense hatred of Jeffreys, who had preferred to quit the service of Colonel May, rather than make friends with the despised foreigner. The warning uttered by Colonel May, during that memorable ride with him and Nellie, recurred to him with appalling meaning, — to confide his positive views on slavery to no one but his most intimate friends, lest disagreeable consequences arise. And he remembered, how seriously Leslie himself had viewed the situation before there had been an indictment. It was not surprising, then, that a keen sense of peril deeply moved Victor, and that he sought and improved the first opportunity to withdraw from a discussion which was growing painful to him. In the solitude of his own little chamber he endeavored to prepare himself for the coming ordeal, and gather what composure he might, so as not to disgrace his friends with cowardly pusillanimity.

XI.

JUSTICE SEASONED WITH POLITICS.

EARLY next morning the partisans of the rival stores repaired in great numbers to their respective headquarters. On the Square numerous groups of men engaged in earnest conversation: the lawyers at the hotel, who after the morning meal resorted to the spacious porch to air their heels and pick their teeth, were joined by such of their lay brethren as braved the danger of incurring liability for a fee, in search of information which they were thought best able to impart, concerning the stirring news that agitated the town. For not only there, but far around the country the rumor had quickly spread, that the "young Dutchman" had been indicted by the grand jury for felonious misdeeds.

Mighty consequential men, to-day, were the Mystic Twenty, stalking about with solemn faces, looking down upon their fellow-citizens with the proud consciousness of stern duty well performed. Many an admiring glance followed them as they strode on toward the court house, and great was the curiosity to learn the particulars of the horrible misdeeds, to avenge which they had invoked the strong arm of the law. But neither broad hints nor suggestive insinuations, nor yet direct questioning, elicited more from the temporary Pillars of Justice than a portentous shaking of the head, or shrugging of the shoulders.

The disciples of Blackstone proved, on this occasion, less close than the grand jurors. They freely vented their views as to the importance of the trial, and its probable issue. Both the friends and the opponents of the alleged culprit found their extremest opinions represented.

The liveliest interest in this question was taken of course,

by the respective adherents of the two mercantile establishments. In the Dutch Store the view was openly expressed, that the indictment was a shameful subversion of justice; for was it not plain that Mr. Barnes had abused his official position, as a member of the grand jury, to strike a blow against his hated, because more successful, rival in business? Van Braaken himself said nothing; but the vehemence with which he nodded and blinked assent to this opinion left no doubt as to his conviction on this point. In the conservative camp, on the contrary, there was congratulation and rejoicing, that so heinous a crime, threatening the peace and safety of the community, was being dealt with in a lawful manner, thus avoiding the excesses of a self-constituted court of Judge Lynch.

The crowd of people in and about the court house increased. Pale with suspense, but putting on a bold face, Victor appeared with his friend Leslie and his counsel Mr. Bedford. The latter, fully aware of his importance on the present occasion, elbowed a passage through the crowd for himself and his companions. He indulged himself in the blissful foretaste of the fame which he expected to achieve; he imagined himself as the conqueror in this contest with the State's attorney — as the successful champion of the standard bearer of the Democratic party, — as the gracious recipient of the homage of an admiring populace. For he had construed Leslie's statements as an indication that the political aspect of the case was of the first importance, to which the interest of the real defendant was but secondary.

At nine o'clock the judge ascended the platform, and after the transaction of some routine business the case of the State vs. Victor Waldhorst was called for trial. There was, at first, considerable skirmishing between the two lawyers, in which Mr. Bedford showed himself a skillful tactician, who gave his adversary great trouble, contesting every inch of debatable ground. Voluble of tongue though he was, and prolific of shrewd quibbles and technicalities, Victor's confidence in his defender was not such as to give him comfort or assurance.

In vain he listened for some emphatic avowal of his innocence, some unequivocal expression of confidence in the cause of his client from the lips of his counsel: he heard but words and phrases devoid of meaning to him. Quite different was Mr. Yancey's style. When the preliminaries had at last been settled, the jury selected and sworn, "and a true verdict to render, according to the law and evidence," the State's attorney rose to explain the nature of the charge against the defendant, and the issue they were called on to try.

He concluded his opening address to the jury by reminding them of the solemn obligation resting upon them, cautioning them to let neither compassion for the youth and inexperience of the prisoner at the bar, nor bias or prejudice of any kind against him, interfere with the conscientious discharge of their duty.

Whatever effect his words might have produced on the judge or jury, they fell with crushing power on the prisoner, whose eyes were riveted, as if by a magic charm, on the eloquent lips that spoke his doom. For the first time, now, did he comprehend the full import of the crime that he had committed. With fatal perspicuity the prosecuting officer pointed out fact after fact and circumstance after circumstance, until poor Victor doubted his innocence. It ceased to be a question, to his apprehension, of acquittal or conviction; the extent and nature of the punishment was now alone the subject of deep anxiety to him. His feelings were wrought up to a pitch disabling him from forming a clear judgment of what was going on about him.

Ralph Payton was the first witness produced by the prosecution. His testimony was successfully warded off by Mr. Bedford, depending, as it did, almost entirely on hearsay. When the State's attorney, in very evident disgust, dismissed him, without his having testified to a single relevant fact, the counsel for the defendant cheerfully rubbed his hands and put a variety of questions concerning matters as to which Mr. Payton was compelled to answer that he knew nothing. An

audible titter rewarded the attorney's poor joke, as he dismissed the witness, about "a fine specimen of an American Know-Nothing."

The next witness, Orlando Jones, profited by the discomfiture of his predecessor, and confined his statements to what was within his own personal knowledge. But since this knowledge was confined to what had transpired in the grammar class, he added but little to the strength of the case for the prosecution.

After him, Bob Rountree was called on the stand. The trouble with the preceding witnesses had been their swiftness in making damaging statements against the defendant: Bob Rountree, on the contrary, made it extremely difficult for the prosecution to get him to make any statement at all. He protested with great zeal and vehemence, that the defendant was his comrade and friend, and that he knew nothing whatever to his discredit. Not until he had been sorely pressed, and in answer to leading questions permitted by the judge on account of his very evident unwillingness, did he confess with ostentatious hesitation, that his friend Victor, had, on one occasion, "in the goodness of his heart," admitted to him, that in a free country there ought to be no slaves. And after further coaxing and pressing he added, that he also had said, that it was the duty of every patriot to assist the slaves in — he had forgotten now, whether in *their liberation*, or, perhaps it was only that, — *protecting them in their rights*. And he was sure, quite sure, that his friend Victor had meant no harm by that. In vain did the State's attorney press upon him the importance of remembering the exact words; in vain did he remind him of his solemn duty to permit neither the bonds of friendship, nor the sentiment of affection, to prevent him from speaking the whole truth as a sworn witness. Bob Rountree stuck to it, that he knew nothing more. Only when the disgusted State's attorney was about to desist from further effort he remembered and admitted, in a voice trembling with repressed feeling, that Victor had once, — only once — told him that he had

made it hot for the overseer, and that the negroes would be no longer tyrannized by him. After this confession, extorted from him palpably against his will, Bob Rountree hung his head, and made no further revelation. The State's attorney passed him over to Mr. Bedford for cross-examination.

To this gentleman's surprise and unfeigned disgust, Leslie bade him, in an energetic whisper, to abstain from putting a single question to Bob Rountree. "What," he replied, "let this insolent little hypocrite off without a scathing raking over the coals? Why, his testimony has prepared the jury to believe anything that may be said against the defendant to his damage. We would be completely at the mercy of the jury." Leslie insisted on his view. After much protesting and shaking of his head, Mr. Bedford finally consented to adopt the course demanded by him, on condition that he should justify this course to his father, while he washed his hands of the consequences. "We ought to expose the double-faced hypocrisy of the little villian," he said, in conclusion; "he has done us more injury, than if he had sworn to the most criminating acts."

"Of course," Leslie assented. "But that is no reason why we should give him the opportunity to intensify the effect of his evidence, as he will surely do if you let him. Spare your ammunition for the next witness."

This was, as Leslie had surmised, the overseer Jeffreys. He proved, as was also foreseen, the most formidable witness against Victor, his testimony telling with fatal force by reason of the mistrust which the statements of Victor's colleague were calculated to arouse in the minds of the jurors. Jeffreys prefaced his testimony by sketching the condition of things at May Meadows before Victor's coming there. Xerxes he described as a sullen, rebelliously inclined, discontented negro, who could be kept in subjection by the utmost severity only. The Octoroon Lueretia, he said, was a docile, obedient wench, much attached to her master's family, until the Dutchman appeared on the scene, when she completely changed, became

insolent and unmanageable, and openly defied his, the overseer's, authority. After this introduction his testimony as to what he had witnessed in the negro quarters, in the night time, told with powerful effect against the accused. It hardly needed the expression by the spiteful witness,—so vehemently objected to by Mr. Bedford and so promptly ruled out by the judge—of his inference, that there must have existed, and still exist, a conspiracy between the negroes and the Dutchman, which must demoralize the slave population, and prove dangerous to the peace and safety of the whole community.

Victor was not surprised by the perversions and exaggerations of his revengeful enemy. He had expected nothing else. Mr. Bedford shot angry glances at the audacious witness; even Leslie May was horrified by the boldness and persistence with which the discharged overseer pursued his scheme for vengeance. The judge, jury and audience listened with breathless interest to the criminating revelations. Even a more experienced judge of human nature than Victor, might have been awed by the expressions visible upon the faces of those about him—compassion, sympathy, apprehension, gratified malice—all according to the good or ill-will borne for the young prisoner. Leslie alone regarded the witness with a calm smile portending him no good.

But the scheme of this witness included a purpose beyond the conviction of the hated foreigner. In the full flush of his triumph over the latter, he now pushed on in pursuit of higher game. He must strike a blow at his equally hated former master. With this view he related how Colonel May had openly sided with the sneaking abolitionist, and thus destroyed all discipline among the slaves; it was in vain that Payton and Jones shook their heads in disapproval; in vain that Mr. Yancey contracted his brows into a threatening scowl,—the spiteful Jeffreys was not to be moved from his purpose of annihilating the democratic candidate for Congress. He proceeded to show up his heretical stand on the slavery question,

when the State's attorney, who had waited in vain for Mr. Bedford to interpose objection to the irrelevant testimony given by the witness, himself commanded him to desist. "We do not propose to listen to the private grievances between Colonel May and this man; they have nothing whatever to do with the case on trial, and —."

He was interrupted by Jeffreys, who did not mean to be balked of his revenge. "But it's part o' me testimony I'm givin,' " he exclaimed. "I can't give in me testimony, 'thout I say what b'longs to't —."

Jeffreys was in his turn interrupted by the judge, who, with a threatening frown, commanded him to be silent. The objection of the State's attorney was sustained; and as he had no further questions to ask of the witness, the latter was turned over to the defendant's counsel for cross-examination.

Now the moment had arrived when Mr. Bedford saw himself called on to sustain, — if possible, to eclipse, — his reputation. It was necessary to destroy the evidence given by this man, in order to save, — not so much the defendant on trial, as the democratic candidate for Congress from ignominious defeat. A cowardly assault had been made on him behind his back by an assassin that struck in the dark; he must be vindicated in so thorough a manner, as to cover his enemies with confusion. And Mr. Bedford was the man to justify the confidence reposed in him. He covered himself with glory, as his colleagues at the bar subsequently assured him, in the memorable examination that now followed.

Before entering on the main issues of the case, he led the witness through an exhaustive biography of himself, putting his questions with an air of such easy good nature as to completely disarm the witness of any suspicion that there was an attempt to discredit him. Mr. Jeffreys became quite communicative and confiding, congratulating himself that he had so impressed the defendant's counsel as to secure at his hands more considerate treatment than either Jones or Payton had received. Without intending, or indeed knowing, he

drew a pleasant picture of the life at May Meadows, described the field hands as industrious and contented, the domestic servants as happy and devoted to the family. When, however, he came to speak of Victor's visits to the place and of the orders given by Colonel May in reference to the affair at the negro cabin, he relapsed into his former bitterness of tone. It was then that the lawyer began to show his skill. First he encouraged and cajoled; then sneered and vexed the witness with insinuations and irritating suggestions, and finally goading him with exasperating taunts into furious wrath, in which he gave vent to a torrent of invectives against the defendant and Colonel May, betraying his intense hatred and passion.

From this point on there were frequent consultations between Leslie and the counsel. The witness took alarm. His answers were given with greater deliberation, and he sometimes hesitated before replying to a question put to him. Some of these questions were, indeed, startling and utterly unlooked for; but the cross-examination went relentlessly on. The lawyer knew no pity nor mercy, but with determined pertinacity pursued his inquiries, coercing answers to the strangest, most unexpected questions. One by one the real facts began to appear from his unwilling replies: His bootless advances to the pretty Octoroon girl, — his intense jealousy of the young foreigner, — the quarrel between him and Colonel May, because the latter would not permit the flogging of the young girl, — finally his ignominious dismissal from the Colonel's service, — all came out with utmost minuteness of detail. Even the conversation of the conspirators at the barbecue was dragged to light. Neither obstinate lying, nor cunning evasion, neither prevarication nor subterfuges availed the cornered witness. With inexorable persistence, assailing him from all directions of approach, came the questions, taking him often by utter surprise. There was something awful in the power exerted by the relentless lawyer. The tenor of his questions proved him to be so thoroughly familiar with matters

which could be known to no one but the witness' confederates, that for a moment the suspicion flashed across his mind that he had been betrayed. Great beads of perspiration gathered upon his forehead; he hardly dared wipe them off, for fear of calling attention to his agitation. His eyes wandered uneasily about the room, until he finally fixed them, with fierce anger, upon Leslie who regarded him with a calm smile of triumphant superiority. It was he, then, that had "put this an' that together," — from what *indicia* was of course a mystery to him — and was posting the lawyer to put those terrible questions! But apprehension for his own safety soon gained the ascendancy in his mind over every other consideration. The scowling faces about him boded him no good. He was in mortal dread that he might have made statements bringing himself in conflict with the criminal laws.

This moment, in which impotent rage and abject terror distorted the face of the principal witness for the State, Leslie deemed the proper one to impress upon the judge and jury, by refraining from further questioning. He had some difficulty in prevailing on Mr. Bedford to desist from the practice he so keenly enjoyed; he finally yielded to Leslie's urgent demand, only because he conceived Leslie to be his real client and did not wish to antagonize him. The prosecuting attorney hesitated: he was undecided whether to put further questions or not, as it seemed a hopeless task to attempt to bolster up his badly damaged witness. Before he came to a conclusion, there was a commotion at the door, and some one was seen, presently, to elbow his way through the densely crowded court-room. It was Colonel May, who passed forward until he had reached the counsel table. The perfect silence prevailing at this moment throughout the room was evidence of the eager curiosity with which the public watched the movements of this man, evidently expecting some startling development to follow his appearance. Victor, for his part, looked upon him as his guardian angel. His face brightened into an expression of hope and renewed confidence: whatever might



“ I trust that your Honor may excuse my unceremonious intrusion.”

happen now, — of this he was sure, that he would not suffer injustice.

“I trust that your Honor may excuse my unceremonious intrusion here,” the Colonel said, addressing the judge in a respectful manner; “but I deemed it my duty to offer my testimony in the interest of truth and justice. I pray your Honor, therefore, if it be not too late, to permit me to appear as a witness in the case of my friend, Mr. Waldhorst.”

“It is by no means too late,” spoke the judge, in his most amiable manner, “whether you wish to testify for or against the accused, for the prosecution has not yet rested. But if I am not mistaken in supposing your testimony to be intended for his benefit,” he added smiling significantly, “and if I understand the meaning of the black cloud which I discerned a moment ago on the usually placid countenance of Brother Yancey, there seems to be no necessity for testimony in that direction. At any rate, you will confer with the lawyers upon the subject.”

The State’s attorney shook hands with the Colonel, and after exchanging a few words in whispers, he addressed the court. “Your Honor has interpreted the expression of my face correctly,” he said. “It was my intention, even before the appearance of Colonel May, to ask permission of your Honor to enter my *nolle prosequi* in this case —”

Before he could add another word, Mr. Bedford sprang to his feet, protesting in a loud voice against such a disposition. “We are entitled, if your Honor please,” he urged strenuously, “to a verdict from the jury. It is a sacred right under the constitution, that no man shall be put twice in jeopardy —”

“Spare your breath.” Mr. Yancey interrupted him, and then continued, without taking further note of Mr. Bedford’s protest, “I cannot close my eyes to the palpable proof developed in this case, that a most shocking crime has been committed here in the sacred name of justice. One of our time-honored institutions, the very fountain of justice and

palladium of our civil rights, has been prostituted to the miserable purposes of political trickery and private malice. I beg to remind the grand jurors themselves, to remember, that their oaths bind them to present a true bill against all persons known, or with reasonable cause suspected, to have violated the law, though the culprit be one of their own number. In the cause of truth, however, and for the purpose of completely vindicating the victim of this foul conspiracy, I suggest that the testimony of one witness, at least, be heard for the defense. I allude to that of our illustrious fellow-citizen, Colonel May.''

The lustre of Victor's eyes, more eloquently than any other of his features, gave token of the revulsion of feeling experienced by him. He felt like kneeling down and worshipping the man whose dignified words were grateful alike to his ears and heart. For they restored to liberty and honor, — his faith in truth and justice, — adding new proof of the greatness and glory of the land of his adoption. Yes! No grander State existed; no people could be freer; nowhere was justice more firmly enthroned, more proudly triumphant, than in this glorious land of perfect equality before the supreme arbiter of all — the law!

Neither Jeffreys nor Bob Rountree remained to hear the testimony of Colonel May. At its conclusion there was tumultuous applause, which the combined efforts of the judge and sheriff were unavailing to suppress. The jurors unanimously acquitted Victor without leaving their seats, and Victor was literally carried away on the hands of the excited multitude. Colonel May, too, achieved a great triumph. After the adjournment of court, there were enthusiastic hurrahs for the democratic candidate for Congress, and loud and repeated shouts demanded from him a speech. That he complied with the request, successfully haranguing the crowd from the judge's platform; that Mr. Bedford, the triumphant counsel for the defendant, as well as Mr. Yancey, the circuit attorney; that judge and jury remained to participate in the meeting, now

turned into a political gathering, was as much a mystery to Victor, as the fact that Leslie exhibited neither exultation nor delight at the satisfactory termination of the trial. But when the latter, professing to be tired of the political humbug, left the court house, Victor readily followed.

Out in the Square he pressed Victor's hand. "We did well, you and I, did we not?" he said. "Do you see, now, that I was right in telling you, that there was not the least danger for you? Bah! I counted on the stupidity of these sneaking villains, and you see now how correctly I judged them."

"Leslie May," said Victor, retaining Leslie's hands in both his own, "I know not, how I deserve this exceeding kindness at your hands; but forget it—I shall never—never!"

"Bah!" Leslie exclaimed. "I was in for fun, and it was a grand success." And his merry laughter rang over the Square.

"You, and your father," Victor continued. "I shall never be able to repay the debt of gratitude which I owe to both of you."

"Why, what else could we do, but fight for our chance in the election?" Leslie exclaimed, still laughing. "Don't for a moment imagine, that either I or the governor acted from motives of the good Samaritan sort in this matter. Did it not occur to you, that we were all the while fighting our own battle? And do you not see, how the governor is scoring several tricks in his game against General Waddle?"

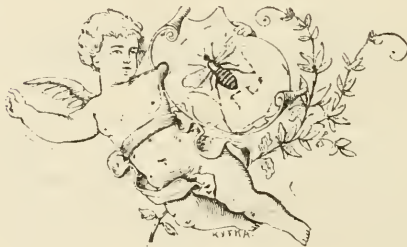
Victor dropped his eyes. "Yes," he said in a low voice, as if ashamed of the confession he was making, "I did at one time fear, that you and the lawyer—well, that you did not consider my case as of the greatest importance. But I see, to my shame, how unjust my fears were in that respect."

"Do not misunderstand me," exclaimed Leslie. "You were never in any real danger yourself; or do you think it possible, that either the governor or myself would have sacrificed you? To be sure, when hour after hour passed, without the governor putting in an appearance, I did feel a little

squeamish ; and when Bob Rountree lied so masterfully, I was for a while nonplussed. But you saw, did you not? — that we would have come out all right, even if the governor had not appeared in the nick of time? ”

“ Certainly! ” Victor exclaimed with a touch of genuine emotion. “ The State’s attorney is a noble man, who would not permit injustice to be perpetrated in the name of the law. ”

“ Not, at least, ” observed Leslie, with a playful smile, “ if thereby the democratic candidate for Congress should come to grief. ”



THE GENESIS OF PUBLIC OPINION.

MYNHEER VAN BRAAKEN had, with what grace he succeeded in assuming, permitted his head clerk, Mr. Miller, to attend the trial at the court house; and since both of his apprentices were present there without reference to his consent, it had fallen to his lot to serve the customers of the Dutch Store in person. These were not many; for the fewest of the visitors to Brookfield on that day kept away from the court house during that memorable trial. But next morning he demanded from Victor a minute account of the whole affair. Again and again he rubbed his hands in high glee, and regarded his fortunate apprentice who had so signally succeeded in attracting public attention to himself, and incidentally to the Dutch Store, with evident satisfaction and spasmodic twitching of his eye-lid. Now and then Mr. Miller threw in a word, when Victor's modesty betrayed him into the omission of a particularly interesting feature of the proceedings, and thereby increased the good humor of the chief. In the course of Victor's narration a number of idlers found their way into the store, and stood listening. Of these, each had a word to say himself, for every one of them was proud of having been an eye-witness to the famous trial; and it was a remarkable circumstance, that every one, to the last man of them, had foreseen and predicted the triumphant acquittal of the young man. The most enthusiastic of these *ex post facto* prophets was Bob Rountree. With ostentatious boastfulness he pointed out his own signal victory over the State's attorney, and bitterly complained of the persistent attempts made to entrap him into the statement of something that might be construed to his friend's disadvantage. Em-

phatic was his assertion of Victor's innocence of any of the groundless charges against him. He was out of all patience with the perjured villain, Jeffreys, who was alone at the bottom of the whole infamous prosecution — probably because he wanted to revenge himself for having lost a good situation. As if Victor could have possibly had anything to do with *that!*

In connection with the name of Jeffreys several opinions were suggested touching the probability of an indictment against him for perjury and misdemeanor in the office of grand juror. That the State's attorney had openly demanded this, was deemed by some a sure indication that it would speedily transpire. Others doubted whether the grand jury would find a bill against one of their own number. "A crow won't scratch out another crow's eyes!" suggested one.

"Yes, crows!" Mynheer repeated, with a look at Bob Rountree, which, whether intended or accidental, sent the hot blood into the apprentice's cheeks. "And how do crows get on the grand jury? The flinging of this stone was meant to kill more than one bird. It was a stab at the Dutch Store. Is not Mr. Barnes the foreman of the grand jury?"

"He is no longer!" exclaimed a bystander, who had just arrived from the court house. "I myself heard the judge excuse him from further service."

"Aha!" cried the Dutch merchant, energetically rubbing his hands. "The crow! Indeed, a crow won't scratch out another crow's eyes!"

"But that is no reason why he should withdraw from the grand jury," Mr. Miller remarked. "I rather guess, that he is ashamed of the company he finds himself in. Jeffreys is smart enough not to be in the way of the sheriff, if that officer should have a writ for him."

"You may be right," the Mynheer responded, his eyes twitching nervously. "Mr. Barnes has cause to be ashamed of himself. And we have a rule in our country, which probably holds good in America, never to hang a man before you catch him. — So, you think, the slave-driver is out of the way?"

“Quite certain,” Bob Rountree asserted, confidentially. “Jeffreys is the man to save his hide, if there’s danger about; and I reckon that he is perfectly well aware that the climate of Brookfield, just now, is rather unhealthy for him. The perjured villain!”

“Now, what mought be *gore* objection ag’in Jeffreys, young man?” asked one of the bystanders, regarding Bob with a show of simple curiosity.

“Has he not sworn a false oath?” retaliated Bob, with superb indignation. “Has he not sworn that my father, the sheriff, — and I should like to know who is the man that for a moment doubts the integrity of my father! — took a bribe to pack the grand jury with friends of his —”

“And with enemies of the Dutch Store,” the Mynheer interjected.

“And with enemies of the Dutch Store.” Bob accepted the suggestion, blushing but evincing not the smallest embarrassment, “and intimated, that I had helped him — *I!*”

It was remarkable, that the zeal with which the filially minded son espoused the cause of his absent father, did not meet with enthusiastic applause on the part of the honest backwoodsmen. Probably the presence of the Dutch merchant, who had not yet expressed his views, prevented an unrestrained demonstration of approval of the youngster’s chivalrous conduct. At any rate, there was significant silence, broken, finally, by the same voice that had been heard before.

“Ya-as,” he assented, “he did intimate that purty strong. ’Pears to me, howsomever, ’at ’e testified to that ’ere p’int ag’in ’is will. ’e wriggled an’ squirmed like as if ’e’d been stretched on a rack. That ’ere lawyer Bedford’s a boss hand to put the thumbscrews on a contrary witness, an’ make ’im confess *nilly willy*.”

“But ’t warn’t Bedford ’at made ’im squeal,” remarked another. “Fact is, ’at all the hard questions ’at made ’im sweat was put in the lawyer’s head by that ’ere young May.”

“ From which I reckon,” observed the former speaker, “ ’at Leslie May knows more ’n’ the lawyer does ’bout that ’ere scrape. An’ I kind’er guess, ’at ’e knows more’n’s comfortable fur them ’at ’s had their finger in the pie. An’ I shouldn’t be a mite astonished, if there’s bills found ag’in more ’n one on ’em, ’fore this ’ere scrape ’s seen to the end.”

More than one pair of eyes rested on the son who had so valiantly defended his father’s integrity, and the latter felt called on to make answer to the last remark, as if addressed to him personally. “ What do I know about it! ” he exclaimed, with great show of indignation. “ I only know, that Jeffreys lied about everything he said. He lied about Victor; and he lied about me.”

Bob seemed to feel that the one sound eye of his chief rested upon him, for he cast his eyes down, and thereafter participated very sparingly in the further conversation. But the theme was too inviting to the gossip loving idlers congregated in the store, and Bob’s ingenuity in parrying the curiosity of eager interlocutors was put to a severe test. Victor had become silent. His thoughts were busy over the painful riddle, what it was that could have induced his young colleague to join hands with Jeffreys in the attempt to ruin him. Could it be that his employer was right, — that this animosity arose from sheer hatred of foreigners and ill-will against unwelcome competition?

The entrance into the store of young May himself produced a lull in the conversation. But before a minute had passed, some one asked him point blank, what he thought of yesterday’s trial. This was but the precursor to a torrent of questions. With admirable tact the young man replied so as not to offend the sovereign voters, and yet without disclosing a single fact not already known to them, or giving the slightest clue to the source of his knowledge.

“ I come to you with a request,” he said to Mynheer, as soon as he had gracefully shaken off his inquisitive interlocutors, “ which, I hope you will not refuse me. I wish you to

spare me our young friend, the lion of the day, for an hour's walk, as I have some matters that I would like to talk over with him." And without waiting for a reply, he addressed Victor: "You are ready to come with me, are you not?"

Of course, Victor gladly put on his straw hat, and after a gracious nod of assent from his employer, took the arm of his friend and left the store with him, to the very evident disappointment of the gossips, and eliciting a scowl from the remaining apprentice.

"First of all, let me heartily thank you, in the name of my father, for the signal service you have done him," said Leslie, as soon as they had gained the open air and were beyond ear-shot of the loungers in the store. "I dare say that you are hardly aware of the extent to which you have helped him in the election, and how much his prospects have improved since yesterday's affair at the court house. Why, it was a perfect ovation to him that resulted from your acquittal! The unmasking of that villain, Jeffreys, set the public wild, and gained their favor naturally, as if the governor, and not you, had been the hero. Although you and I know better, yet he will get all the credit for, and the profit of, this thing. You do not grudge him the laurels he is stealing from you, do you?"

Victor threw a glance of such radiant admiration and deep gratitude at his companion, that it proclaimed more eloquently than words what black ingratitude he would deem such a thought. "Grudge him, I?" he stammered. "What have I done in this matter, that you should for a moment think of me in connection with your father's triumph? To *you*, Leslie, to you alone, does he owe his success, if you call that success, which is but the spontaneous recognition on the part of the people of his rectitude."

His voice trembled as he spoke. "But tell me, Leslie," he continued, after a short pause, "how was it possible for you to detect and tear to pieces the tissue of lies sworn to by Jeffreys? What did you know of the conspiracy — for it must

have been a regular conspiracy between them — and why did you never say anything to me about it? ”

“ Well, you see, my boy,” said Leslie, very complacently, “ the fiat has gone forth from the family powers that be, that I am to be a lawyer, to gain renown and shed luster upon the family, at the bar. You, though unknown to yourself, happened to be my first client. I could not wish for a more grateful one. That Payton and Jones have not much love for you, you may have surmised from your experience with them at the grammar school; and I know it, perhaps, better than you do. Nor is it a secret to you, that Bob Rountree is in danger of succumbing to jaundice, out of sheer envy of your popularity. What a row there has been between that scoundrel Jeffreys and the governor, you know equally well. So, you understand, it required no superhuman brilliance of intellect, but only a moderate share of very common sense to guess what the bond of sympathy was that brought these four worthies together. And when they got into a corner at a public festival, and whispered among themselves in secret, — when one of them, whose father is sheriff, and selects the grand jury, undertakes to predict what indictments may be expected from them, even before they have been summoned — then, you see, I would be a poor stick for a lawyer indeed, if I failed to smell so big a rat. Don't you think so? ”

“ I can only admire your keen sagacity! ” Victor exclaimed.

“ So you think I need not be ashamed of my first attempt at playing lawyer? ”

“ How can you ask such a question! Do you not think that I know, how far superior you are to Mr. Bedford as a lawyer? If it had not been for your prompting, he would never have gotten the better of Jeffreys — ”

“ No, by Jove! ” Leslie interrupted. “ And do you know, that I take greater credit to myself for having spoilt your precious colleague's cunning scheme of ruining you by his hypocritical professions of sympathy for you? If Bedford had given him the chance, by undertaking to cross-examine him,

the little scoundrel would have given the most incriminating evidence, doubly damaging because he would have given it the appearance of being extorted from him by the counsel for the defense."

"I don't believe that Mr. Yancey himself, or any lawyer in the State, will equal your fame, when once you begin the practice in earnest. Ah, what a grand and noble thing it is, to vindicate the law, to tear off the mask of treacherous villainy, to punish the guilty and protect the innocent, — to become the valiant champion of Truth and Justice! How I envy you this glory, but wish you success, all the same, from the bottom of my heart!"

Leslie regarded his companion in wondering surprise at the enthusiasm displayed. "Why," he said, after a brief pause. "you talk as if you thought the profession of the law to be one of the grandest avocations of man. If that were my conviction, I would, in your place, drop the counter-hopper at once, and become a disciple of Blackstone."

"Oh, if that were possible!" Victor exclaimed eagerly. "It would be the happiness of my life; but," he added with a sad smile of resignation, "where should the means come from to enable me to study law? And how could I dare enter on a course of study presupposing a liberal education, such as I never enjoyed?"

"You have an exaggerated notion of the learning necessary to a lawyer," said Leslie. "A little Latin, of course, would come handy. It is by no means indispensable, though. With your patience, and your love for the driest kind of studies — for did you not undertake to study grammar without a master? — you will acquire a better knowledge of law in a year or two, than I have now, with all my University education. If you are really in earnest about it, you will catch up with and beat me in a very short time."

Leslie's words profoundly impressed Victor. The two young men walked on for a while in silence. They had taken the road leading to May Meadows, and had now reached a pleasant

grove of trees affording grateful shelter against the scorching sun, when Victor was startled from his reverie by a voice breaking abruptly upon his ear.

“Whither bound, gentlemen both?”

Looking up, he saw before him the gaunt, lean figure of Mr. Huffard, the editor and proprietor of the *Ozark Argus*, — a gentleman, for whom Victor entertained the greatest respect, as being the leader and mouthpiece of public opinion and the oracle of the Democratic party of Vernal County. Mr. Huffard was not a beautiful Adonis; but from his rather long, sallow face, framed in by bushy brown whiskers and sporting a large, thin-lipped mouth surmounted by a prominent nose, a pair of clear brown eyes beamed forth the utmost good nature, their merry twinkle often heightening the effect of facetious drolleries that he loved to utter with gravest mien.

“If May Meadows be your destination,” he continued, after amiably shaking hands with both the young men, “I beg to make one of your company, — that is, of course, if I don’t make a crowd thereby. I have some business with Colonel May, touching his campaign; but this fortunate falling in with you, young gentlemen, may enable me to kill two birds with one stone. For I need some details and particulars to complete my report of the phenomenal trial of yesterday. The *Ozark Argus*,” he continued, addressing himself specially to Victor, “will claim the merit of first heralding to the world this highly important event. Yes, sirree! A highly important event! I venture to predict, that this remarkable trial will open the eyes of our brethren in Yankeeland to the true status of public opinion in the South. For our State is reckoned among the Southern States, although, geographically considered, we belong to the great West, — and our Eastern brethren are systematically stirred up against us on that account. Our slaves, though better off than the white slaves of the Eastern factories, are held up to the world as the victims of cruelty and tyranny. We are accused, by the hypo-



“ Whither bound, gentlemen both? ”

critical abolitionists, as savages, suppressing free speech and manufacturing public opinion in the interest of our slaveholders. We are branded as barbarians, clogging the onward march of civilization, and constituting a foul spot on the fair escutcheon of Liberty. Now the outcome of your trial will prove to every fair-minded person, that the reverse of all this is true of our State. It will throw a flood of light on the tolerant views of our population. It will incontestably demonstrate the incorruptible sense of justice prevailing in our courts, and controlling our public men; and it will show the humanity and mildness with which we treat our slaves.''

Victor listened, not without interest, to the rhapsodies of the garrulous editor, while Leslie smiled at the rehearsal of what he evidently meant for a leader in his next issue of the *Ozark Argus*.

The editor, after exhausting the political aspect of the case, then commented on the persons engaged in it, and now developed a most astonishing curiosity touching the past history of Victor, his plans and prospects; and particularly inquired about his opinions and views concerning American politics. Led on by a few suggestive remarks by Leslie, Victor gave a comprehensive statement of the prominent events of his life, and soon found himself defending, to his own astonishment, the political, social and civil institutions of the land of his adoption, including the legal status of the slaves, which, a short time ago, he looked on as a foul blot on the country. Mr. Huffard liked his genuinely democratic principles, and Leslie jocosely prophesied for him a successful career as a democratic politician, who was born for greater things than to figure as an insignificant counter-hopper.

While engaged in such conversation, they reached May Meadows, where they were pleasantly received by the lady of the house, but learned to Victor's keen regret, that Colonel May had departed from home a short time before their arrival. The editor received this information with equanimity, although

he had thus been disappointed of the chief purpose of his ostensible errand. Not so Victor. He not only regretted the absence of the Colonel, but the restlessness with which he looked about him, and the wistful glances he directed toward the open door and window, plainly betrayed that he missed the presence of some one else also. To add to his disappointment, the editor promptly declined the invitation extended to both of them to remain for dinner; and since neither Mrs. May nor Leslie extended a special invitation to himself, he was compelled to comply, — reluctantly enough — with the urgent request of the loquacious editor, to accompany him back to town. His friend Leslie contented himself, somewhat to Victor's surprise, with a polite expression of regret at the departure of *both* the gentlemen: and so he found himself, a few minutes after his arrival, exchanging the pleasant, cool atmosphere of the elegant May mansion for the oppressive glare of the July sun without.

He was a poor listener, and but slow in his responses to the numerous questions propounded by his talkative companion, and suddenly ceased to answer altogether, when a musical voice resounded through the garden. That was Nellie's room whence the voice was heard, and he promptly stopped to listen. There, at the window of Nellie's room, he saw a graceful female figure. But the eyes that beamed upon him from a face of wondrous beauty, and slowly sank before his eager gaze, were not the clear, gray, mirthful eyes he loved so well, but of gazelle-like softness in their dreamy expression. The sudden flush of his cheeks died out, and he bethought himself of the necessity of disarming any suspicion that his abstraction might have aroused on the part of Mr. Huffard, by a closer attention to his questions.

* * *

The next issue of the *Ozark Argus*, which appeared on the Saturday following, gave Victor the key to Leslie's purpose in taking him out for that walk, as well as to the meaning of that

accidental meeting with the inquisitive editor. The political side of the "Organ for Art, Science and Literature" shone now in the zenith of its power and glory. As the Democratic party proclaimed the gospel of Liberty, so its self-appointed watchman on the battlement of the party had all its hundred eyes wide open to what was going on, and bravely sounded the tocsin calling the warriors to their tents, and marshaling them in battle against political heresies and traitors. The burden of its latest trumpet-blasts was Victor's famous trial. At the head of the paper appeared a double-headed leader, introduced by sensational head-lines in glaring capitals, in which Mr. Huffard undertook to give voice to public sentiment on this important event. As an introduction to the facts developed in the trial, there was a biographical sketch of Victor Waldhorst's previous life, with special emphasis on his exploit in saving the life of the daughter of the democratic candidate for Congress. That this gentleman, moved by the generous and noble sentiment of gratitude, exerted himself to rescue the young man from the peril of becoming the victim of a diabolical conspiracy on the part of his political opponents, discovered in the nick of time by the watchful energy of the young lady's brother—the talented son of Colonel May—that by the combined exertions of father and son a most dastardly scheme was successfully baffled, was, the editor observed, but natural, and no more than was to be expected from the highly honorable and capable gentleman, who, in vindicating the cause of innocence and justice, demonstrated, also, that Honesty, Fairness and Love of Liberty were Democratic Virtues, leaving low trickery and vile treachery to be sought for among the opponents of this glorious party. Then followed, in equally pompous phrases, an exposition of the national-political bearing of the affair, much as Mr. Huffard had foreshadowed in his conversation with Victor.

It was, perhaps, not strange, that the young man permitted himself, in the flush of his triumph and the exultation induced

by the lionizing that fell to his lot, to be all too easily convinced of the groundlessness and injustice of his prejudice against a community that tolerated slavery as one of its cherished institutions, and to conceive an exalted opinion of the magnanimity and liberality of its people. The utterance of public opinion was so emphatically on his side, — the side of Right and Justice, as Victor proudly thought — that it was difficult to doubt the honesty of its expression.



XIII.

SOVEREIGNS IN PRIMORDIAL QUALE.

THE Democratic party might safely count on a decided majority in Vernal County. In the town of Brookfield, however, and that part of the adjacent country which was included in its electoral precinct, the political parties were very evenly balanced; the natural consequence of which was, that discussions of the principles dividing them, as well as concerning the prospects for success of their respective candidates, were both numerous and animated, growing in vehemence as the election day drew nearer. Victor took a lively interest in these discussions, a due share of which were carried on in the Dutch Store, and soon learned enough of the current phrases employed by the disputants to enable him to participate in the debates. He felt himself drawn into the vortex of political strife with irresistible force; for to the purely personal motive inspiring him with the desire to see that party victorious that had selected as their standard-bearer his patron, Colonel May, was superadded the firm conviction, that upon the triumph of democratic principles depended the welfare of the nation. Inflamed by the eloquence of Colonel May's speeches, he eagerly drank in the doctrines asserted weekly by the *Ozark Argus*, and more logically maintained in the political pamphlets with which his democratic friends freely supplied him. He was still in that happy period of life, when faith in the attainability of a cherished ideal is yet undimmed by the skepticism, which is but too often the bitter fruit of experience; he entertained the fond conviction, that the dogmata of the Democratic party contained the catholic basis of Freedom indispensable to the liberty and prosperity

of the country. What wonder, then, that he looked upon the adversaries of this glorious party as enemies of true liberty, — that he deemed the conscious leaders of the whigs to be traitors to the cause of the people, and firmly believed it to be the duty of every patriot to contribute his best efforts to open the eyes of their deluded followers?

Earnestly did Victor devote himself to the faithful performance of this sacred duty, — so earnestly, that he came to be looked on as a staunch champion of their cause by his party friends, and that the opposition considered him a youthful enthusiast, who would one day when his judgment matured, learn better; — so earnestly that his zeal, sometimes, to the disgust of his employer, carried him away to the extent of neglecting his duties to the customers at the store.

On the first Monday of the month of August the two parties arrayed themselves, throughout the State, for the decisive battle. And in Brookfield the rival mercantile establishments prepared for an arduous day's work. At an early hour, the doors and windows were opened for ventilation during the process of dusting and sweeping, so as to be ready to serve the multitude of customers expected. For it was the custom of voters, who came to town on election day for the exercise of their sovereign prerogative, to improve the occasion to barter for and purchase what store-goods were wanted at home. Even in the liquor shop (styled grocery by its frequenters, — probably as a euphonism for groggery) down by the Boonville Road, a fresh supply of whiskey had been laid in, for there, too, an increased demand was anticipated, based upon the experience of former years, when patriotic candidates exercised a generous hospitality in regaling their friends, and the whippers-in of both parties repaired thither to encourage their adherents, infuse new spirit into the flagging and luke-warm, and gain new converts by lavish shaking of hands, cajoling speech and free drinks all round.

The court house, however, formed the center of attraction on election day. Hither streamed the sovereigns from all

points of the compass to make known their sovereign pleasure at the polls. Before the sun had gilded the horizon, the judges of election appeared with their clerks, each of whom carried a gigantic poll-book with columns for the candidates and lines ruled for the names of the voters. These books were deposited upon a table standing directly in front of one of the windows, through which the process of voting was effected. No one was admitted into this room but the judges and clerks; but on the outside, opposite to the window, stood candidates and their friends, to keep watchful eye on what was going on. As soon as the first rays of the sun became visible, an officer appeared to swear in the judges and clerks, and then the sheriff made proclamation that the election for (naming the offices that were to be filled) had been legally inaugurated.

During the early morning hours the throng of customers in the stores was not so great as was expected to be the case later in the day, and Victor readily obtained permission to satisfy his curiosity by witnessing the proceedings at the ballot-box. The word ballot-box, it should be remembered, being used in a figurative sense; for in these early days men were supposed to be willing to have it known for whom they voted, so that it was the fashion of the voters to call out the names of the men of their choice *viva voce*, and there were no literal ballots, nor ballot-boxes. Victor was very glad to meet his friend Leslie in front of the court house, and at once asked him to explain the process by which elections were accomplished.

“Nothing more simple!” said Leslie. “But wait a moment. I see your particular friend Ralph Payton trotting toward this place. He has recently reached his majority and is about to cast his maiden vote. We will have a practical illustration of the whole thing directly.”

Young Payton seemed deeply impressed with the responsibility resting on his shoulders as a citizen of the Republic, about to decide its political future. He tied his horse to one of the many hitching posts provided for such occasions, and stepped pompously toward the group of men assembled in

front of the window, acknowledging Leslie's and Victor's salutation with a hearty nod.

"You see," whispered Leslie to his friend, "he is almost as proud in giving his first vote, as he was on the memorable occasion of his maiden speech at the barbecue. I wonder whether he will carry his spite against us to the extent of voting for the opposition man; he and his whole family have always claimed to be democrats."

"I have no fear as to that," said his friend. "It is only I whom he hates."

As if to confirm these words Payton now stepped forward and expressed his hope to Leslie — completely ignoring the presence of Victor — that Colonel May would be elected by a sweeping majority. "I am most happy," he added with pomposity, "that it is my privilege to cast my first vote for so eminent a gentleman, and one so entirely worthy of the honor."

"I thank you, Ralph Payton," said Leslie, cordially shaking hands with Payton. "And I am sure that my father is proud of the high honor you confer upon him." Then, casting a rapid glance at Victor, he continued with a smile: "Mr. Waldhorst here is anxious to be initiated into the mystery by which American freemen make known their will. I am sure that he will be thankful to you, if you will permit him to witness the recording of your vote. Will you gratify his desire?"

"Since the act of voting is a public one," said Ralph Payton, not deigning to cast even a look at Victor, "I cannot hinder him from looking on." With these words he stepped in front of the window and spoke his name in a loud voice.

"Ralph Payton!" one of the judges repeated, and the clerks entered the name on the poll books. "Your age?"

"One-and-twenty years and over!" was the reply.

"Residence?"

"Clear Spring Township; Vernal County."

"Citizen?"

“ Natural born citizen of the United States, and also citizen of this State.”

“ Then, Ralph Payton, for whom do you vote as your representative in the Congress of the United States? ”

“ I vote for Leonard May! ” the young citizen proclaimed with a proud consciousness that Victor envied him.

The judge repeated the question in respect of every office that was to be voted for, and when Payton had answered the last of these questions, he stepped aside to make room for other voters.

Victor had watched the proceedings with great interest. “ How simple! ” he exclaimed, when it was all over.

“ Our young friend has discovered a profound truth,” spoke Mr. Huffard, who had just approached, extending one hand toward Leslie, the other to Payton, while his eyes rested on Victor. “ The grandest and most beautiful things are the most simple. And what can be grander or more beautiful, than the power of an American citizen, exercising his sovereignty in so simple and efficient a manner? — But how goes the election? ” he continued, turning to Leslie; “ and why is not your father here to watch and protect his interest? ”

“ He left last night for Bolivar, where his presence is deemed to be of greater importance than here,” Leslie replied. “ He is foolish enough to believe, that I am sufficiently able to keep things right side up at home.” Then, noting that Payton had sauntered off to join a group of men engaged in lively discussion, he continued in a subdued voice, “ Between ourselves, I really believe the governor is right. From the circumstance that even Payton voted for him, I infer, that he will poll the full party vote here in Brookfield, with a fair share of support from the whigs. Old Waddle looks savage enough, which augurs well for our side.”

“ Your father knew what he was about when he confided his interest to your keeping,” said the editor, slapping the young man’s shoulders with an admiring smile. “ You dealt a stun-

ning blow against the old fox by getting that trial over before the election. That piece of engineering does you credit, whether as a politician, or as a lawyer. But I never doubted Ralph Payton's loyalty to the party. The Paytons are descended from an old Virginia family, with whom desertion of party was always looked on as treacherous. To be sure, he strayed wildly in his absurd speech about foreigners and foreign influence, on the Fourth of July; it puzzles me to account for his vagaries on that occasion. He is a young man, however, and has time before him to learn a great deal."

"You may be right, Mr. Huffard," said Leslie, "as well in regard to his party fealty, as also in surmising that he may have much to learn. As to his hatred of foreigners, I suspect that it does not extend very far. It is purely personal, and springs from an experience he passed through at the grammar class — . But look! There is old Jones and his hopeful cub of a son. Doesn't the old man look as if he had already done a good day's work over at Burden's doggery? They are coming to vote, it seems. Now, I'll stake a five-dollar bill of the State Bank against a picayune, that they — or is Orlando too young to have a vote? — that the old man, at least, will vote against my father."

Leslie's surmise was correct. If his offer of a wager had been accepted, he would have been a richer man by the picayune, for the two Joneses passed them with sullen faces, and the father voted, with great ostentation, for the whig Waddle, while the rest of the candidates were selected by him from the democratic ticket. Orlando, who had meanwhile carried on a lively conversation with Ralph Payton, in low voice, but accompanied by animated gesticulation, then stepped up to the window and gave his name. When the usual question as to age was put, Leslie regarded him with an eye of keen scrutiny. The answer came hesitatingly, and in a low voice. "Twenty-one —"

"Hold!" exclaimed Leslie, noticing the blush that mounted to Orlando's face. He approached young Jones with the

obvious intention of interfering with his vote. But before he reached him, the old man stepped between them.

“Stand off, Leslie May!” he exclaimed in a loud threatening voice. “Me boy’s jist as good a right yere, as you, or any o’ yer kith and kin, if ye do think yer got the vote o’ Brookfield in yer pocket. Me boy, as did ’is father before ’im, ’s goin’ to throw the weight o’ ’is influence ag’in a purse-proud dimigogue, an’ a renegade ’at’s sold ’imself body an’ soul to a trucklin’ furr’ner. Go ahead, Orlando.”

“I don’t believe the young man is of age,” said Leslie quietly.

“But I know ’e is!” Jones shouted with great vehemence. “An’ I guess I ought ter know, bein’s I’m ’is father!”

“I would believe your son in preference to yourself,” Leslie replied, “even after the specimen I saw of his caliber in testifying, a few days ago. If he thinks that he has a right to vote, let him swear to it.”

Instead of replying to Leslie, Jones now turned to the judges of election. “Do we live in a free country, or don’t we?” he exclaimed with pompous declamation. “Does the law protect a free American citizen, or don’t it? Has a voter any rights, or not? Or are we vassals an’ slaves o’ this ’ere furr’n influence ’at wants to dictate to a free American who sh’ll be ’lowed to vote an’ who shan’t? I demand the protection o’ the law, an’ I demand it o’ you, an’ I sh’ll hold you responsible.”

“The law is to be administered without fear, favor or affection!” said the officiating judge. “Who is it that challenges this man’s right to vote?”

“I!” answered Leslie, “I doubt that he is twenty-one years old.”

“In such case the law provides, that the challenged party shall prove his right by an oath on the Holy Bible,” the judge announced. “Are you ready to swear to your age young man?”

Orlando changed color, and threw a precatory glance in the

direction of his father. Meeting with no sympathy in this quarter, the young man assumed an air of injured innocence and spoke up, in a voice of defiant swagger, "I am not going to stand it, to be treated like a lying scoundrel! If they won't let me vote without swearing, I'm not going to vote at all."

His loud voice attracted attention among the by-standers. A little crowd gathered, among whom Mr. Waddle, the whig candidate for Congress, stood conspicuous. Jones the elder at once addressed him in excited tones.

"Mr. Waddle, things be a-comin' to a purty pass, when an American citizen can't be 'lowed to vote, if 'e means to vote fur you!"

"Oh, it is not as bad as that, is it?" Mr. Waddle said, looking encouragingly at Mr. Jones. "I know the judges to be honest, worthy men; surely, they will allow no one to be deprived of his constitutional rights. Tell me, what has happened?"

"You are perfectly right, Mr. Waddle," Leslie May put in, before Jones had an opportunity to reply. "Our friend Jones is excited, because I have challenged his son's right to vote. I will leave it to you, Mr. Waddle: Is it the duty of the judges to take the oath of a man whose vote is challenged?"

Mr. Waddle, a rather tall, though somewhat slender man, with gray hair and whiskers and smoothly shaven chin, seized the hand of Leslie, frankly extended to him, and gave it a hearty shake. "Ah," he said, smiling significantly, "the son of my opponent seems to be pretty sure of his case, since he leaves it to myself to decide. I might well decline the proffered honor, on the score of being directly interested in the question to be decided; but you are a sly fox: you put me on my honor to decide, if at all possible, in favor of my highly esteemed rival. And so you doubt the majority of the young man? May I inquire, upon what you base your doubt?"

"Look at him a little more closely; perhaps the reason will occur to you as readily as it does to me," Leslie smilingly replied.

Orlando Jones was evidently ill at ease. He still stood in front of the window, with sullen mien and downcast eyes, when Waddle turned toward him.

“Well,” he said, “I see a very good-looking young man before me; and I am proud to learn that he intends to cast his vote for me; I really do not see why he should not be twenty-one years old. What do you say yourself, my young friend? You surely ought to know your own age?”

“I say, that I am not going to have my word doubted in this infamous way!” Orlando exclaimed in a tone of bravado and defiance. “I have already said, that if they won’t let me vote without swearing, I am not going to vote at all.”

“I can well understand how you feel about this matter, young man,” said Waddle, in a voice of fatherly admonition. “But you are not altogether in the right. The electoral franchise is not only the glorious privilege of a freeman, but also a sacred duty. A true American knows his rights; and knowing dare maintain them.”

The crowd of by-standers had been considerably augmented by this time; the curiosity of the sovereigns was aroused to a high pitch, to learn the outcome of the interesting dispute. No one listened more earnestly than Victor, into whose ear Leslie whispered: “The sly old coon is going to draw it a little too fine, this time. He means to impress the crowd with a notion of his high sense of honor and impartiality, without losing Orlando’s vote. But you will see him sit down between two chairs directly.”

“Come, young man, don’t let the rest of the voters wait all day for their turn,” the judge now urged. “Tell us, whether you are going to swear or not, and make room for others.”

“Then why don’t you take ’is vote?” old Jones exclaimed. “He stands there all the while fur ye to take ’is vote.”

“Exactly!” Waddle said. “If no one proves him to be under age, it is his privilege — I may say his duty — to cast his vote.”

The judge of election looked at the candidate in evident surprise. "I don't so understand the law," he said, hesitatingly, — embarrassed, evidently, by differing from such high authority as the whig candidate for Congress. "As I take it, it's for the voter whose right is challenged to prove it by his oath on the Bible. I don't pretend to be learned in the law, as you are, General; but I'm bound to act on my understanding of it."

While the judge consulted with his colleagues on the point, the dispute was taken up by the crowd outside. Some agreed with the judge that had spoken, others asserted that it was the young man's right to vote without being sworn. There was perceptible unanimity of opinion among the democrats against, and among the whigs in favor of the young man's right. The judges themselves divided on the question; and since there were two democrats and but one whig amongst them, the view of the presiding judge prevailed, and Orlando was ruled to either take the oath or leave the polls. To the disgust of his father and the chagrin of General Waddle, the young man chose the latter alternative, stepping aside with downcast eyes and a sullen face. This ended the dispute officially; but only one-half of the sovereigns outside were convinced of the justice of the decision — the democrats lauding the wisdom of the majority of the judges, while the whigs sympathized with the elder Jones, who wrathfully prophesied the early downfall of the Republic, and railed against the cowardly truckling to foreign influence.

Victor was highly excited by what he had seen and heard. He was so absorbed in the contemplation of the novel and interesting scenes about him that he forgot all else, — forgot about the densely crowded store, forgot how necessary was his presence there on this day above all others. As the sun mounted toward the zenith, the Square, particularly about the court house, filled with ever-increasing flocks of people, many of whom gave evidence by their lively gesticulation and hilarious conversation, of having already performed the pilgrimage

to the Mecca on the Boonville Road. The sober dignity that had characterized the opening of the election day and produced so solemn an effect on Victor, was gradually changing into boisterousness, strongly reminding Victor of the closing scenes at the barbecue after Van Braaken's whiskey had begun to do its work. Leslie had left him, to look after his father's interests at the groggery, and Mr. Waddle improved the opportunity of his absence from the polls to rally his own forces, and impress upon them the necessity of united and determined effort to avert defeat to the Whig party. He was soon surrounded by a number of devoted followers. Victor was shocked and mortified by their boasting assertions of perfect success of their party generally, but especially of the moral certainty of the election of their candidate for Congress.

"Ef it hadn't been fur that consarned ass of an overseer," he heard one of them say, "we'd 'a' swept the county clean!"

"Why, didn't he just show up the rottenness o' the democrats?" was demanded by another.

"You're foolin' yeself thar'!" was the emphatic reply. "'e jist showed up 'is own rottenness. Colonel May's made more out'n that d—d trial 'n the best dozen o' stump speeches 'e ever made. Why, didn't I hear old Burden say, — 'n' 'e's as stiff a whig as ever trod sole leather — 'at 'e was goin' to vote fur 'im? The d—d old dish-rag!"

"Ya-as," exclaimed another, "'n Boyd! Didn't Squire Boyd say, sez 'e, 'at 'e wasn't goin' to vote the whig ticket any more, not 'thout the whigs was goin' to indict the grand jury?"

"Nonsense!" exclaimed General Waddle in a tone of confident assurance; "don't you see, that for every whig that votes for Colonel May on account of that fuss with his overseer, two democrats will vote against him? There are two sides to this thing. Some people may think that the grand jury overshot the mark by indicting a foolish boy; but there are more who heartily approve their watchfulness, and feel it to

be their duty to come to the defense of this time-honored institution. This is the feeling of all substantial, well-disposed citizens. Be assured, my friends, that the honest majority of the people will not stand by a man who resents the attempt of his own servant to defend our firesides against servile insurrection by ignominious dismissal from his service."

"Do you know, General, why the Colonel discharged his overseer?" inquired Mr. Huffard, who had meanwhile approached the speaker. "It seems that you have not read the report of the trial published in the *Argus*."

"You must excuse me, Mr. Huffard," the General retaliated, "if I find better employment for my time than to study your, no doubt highly interesting paper. I get my views from more reliable sources."

"Probably from the immaculate Jeffreys himself!" sneered the editor. "What a pity, that your 'reliable' witness left the country for his country's good."

"There be other witness," Jones the elder now spoke up. "We're not 'bleeged to put up with your say-so."

"Exactly," Mr. Huffard assented. "There, for instance, is the young man himself, who was tried. Or," he added with a significant glance at General Waddle, "who furnished the pretext for a trial. Shall we hear what he has to say about the case?"

"I don't see why I should take the testimony of a lad who, so far as I know, is not old enough to vote, and whose testimony was not admissible even at the trial."

"An' who's an outlandish furr'ner!" added Jones, "'at understands 'bout as much of our instiotootions as a jackass does of algebray!"

"Stiek to the point," said the editor, without noticing Jones' remark. "We are not in court just now, and here the testimony of Mr. Waldhorst weighs as heavy as that of any of the witnesses who were examined at that remarkable trial. And there," he added, pointing to a group of men approaching the court house from the direction of the Boonville road,

“ comes one whose competency and veracity even you, General Waddle, will not think of questioning.”

In the midst of the group pointed out, Victor observed Leslie in the company of Yahkop, the teamster, who was clad in his Sunday best and strutted along with the air of a puffed up turkey gobbler. Victor smiled, as he recalled Yahkop's boast, that he would not only vote for Colonel May, but also “ lick ” every one of his friends who would not do so likewise. Yahkop seemed fully determined to redeem his promise.

The editor requested Leslie to correct the erroneous impressions that might exist in respect of the affair with the overseer. But the young politician adopted a different line of tactics.

“ Oh, let us hear no more about that,” he said, with a smile and a significant glance at his father's opponent. “ We've had enough of it in court and on the stump. Let us rather attend to the business of the day. I have brought some citizens with me, who wish to do their duty to the country. Make way at the window, there! ”

Yahkop had probably been instructed as to what was expected of him at the polls; for he stepped proudly forward and gave his name as “ Tshakop Fershter, mit a tshay in der front.”

The announcement caused some merriment among the bystanders; Mr. Jones, still wrothy over the discomfiture of his son, and whose pugnacity had been fortified by frequent visits that morning at the rum shop on the Boonville road, alone saw cause for offense in the pompous swagger put on by the clownish teamster. “ What! ” he cried excitedly, “ D'ye mean to let this lout have a vote, when you refused it to my son — a native born American — 'at's been twice as long in the country as this 'ere Hessian! ”

These words kindled the wrath of the teamster. “ Tat ish an high lie! ” he exclaimed. “ I gums from Bahden — you know vere ish Bahden? Und I be a burger from Amerikah — undershtand? Und I wotes fur mine frined, der Kurnel May — undershtand you? — ebery times! ”

It is hardly probable that the irate teamster was aware of the peculiar significance attached to the word *Hessian* in America, and particularly among the backwoodsmen. But this term, usually coupled with the predicate "blind," served in his native land as a contemptuous jeer and nickname, and in this sense, in which Yabkop necessarily understood it, it conveyed a galling insult to him, and his pugnacity was heightened, no doubt, by the generous potations of whiskey, in which he had indulged in honor of the day, until Leslie succeeded in coaxing him away from the rum shop. But while the spirits imbibed had effectually overcome the habitual phlegma of his nature, they in no wise added to his vocabulary of English, nor aided the perspicuity of his delivery. The jargon that resulted, accentuated by violent, if not expressive, gesticulation, touched the risibility of all who heard or saw him, and gave rise to cheering and laughter.

"You an American citizen?" Jones asked with a sneer of such withering contempt as ought to have abashed a more sensitive person than the one he was addressing. "Why, you can't even talk American! Any baby can see 'at you're nothin' but a d—d *Hessian*."

Yabkop, upon whom the word "*Hessian*" produced the same effect as a red rag upon an enraged bull, turned upon his adversary with obviously hostile intent; but Leslie and Mr. Huffard both held on to him with strong arms, and finally succeeded in persuading him, that it was his first duty to secure his vote for Colonel May, according to his promise. To the question put to him by the judge of election, whether he was a citizen, he gave an angry, most emphatic affirmation. But before the voting proceeded, Mr. Jones again interfered, this time by a peremptory challenge of his vote.

"What is the ground of your challenge?" the judge inquired.

"Why, he's a furr'ner!" cried Jones, triumphantly. "Anybody 'at's hear'in 'im jabber can know 'at 'e's no American citizen."

“Equality before the law is at the root of justice!” proclaimed the judge sententiously. “It has already been decided that a voter, whose right is challenged, must qualify himself by an oath on the Holy Bible. Are you ready to prove your citizenship by an oath on the Holy Bible?”

“Ebery times!” growled Yahkop, with a withering glance of defiance and hatred at Jones. “Git your Bibles!”

The judge was about to administer the oath. Huffard and Leslie looked smiling. The crowd was highly amused by Yahkop’s grimaces and droll speech, and there was lively cheering and laughter. Waddle saw with chagrin, that things looked unfavorable for his cause; something must be done to turn the tide of public sentiment. He resolved to take a bold step.

“Hold!” he said, in a peremptory voice. “You are mistaken, Judge. The law demands the best proof always. Now, in this case, the best proof of this gentleman’s right to vote is not his oath, but a certified copy of his naturalization decree. You have heard him say, that he was born in Baden, which is, of course, a foreign country. He cannot, therefore, be allowed to vote, unless he produces his naturalization papers.”

“Aha!” crowed Jones. “D’ye hear that? A Hessian hireling can’t swear ’imself into the right to vote! America belongs to the Americans yet.”

The already deep scarlet of Yahkop’s weather-tanned face took on a deeper shade. But he was determined to let nothing interfere with the fulfillment of his promise to vote for Colonel May, and bravely choked down his passion.

The judge was embarrassed. To be compelled to overrule, for the second time to-day, so eminent a lawyer as General Waddle was known to be, staggered him. Yet he had done his best; he had even felt relief in being able to show his impartiality by ruling, this second time, in favor, as he thought, of Waddle’s side. He turned to Huffard and Leslie with the question, “What do you think, gentlemen, about this matter?”

“ I think as you do,” the editor answered. “ What is sauce for the goose ought to be sauce for the gander. What do you say, Leslie May? ”

“ It is my opinion,” said Leslie, “ that our friend Yakhop don't care the snap of his finger for these legal quibbles. I dare say, that he will not object to relieve the tender conscience of the whig candidate for Congress, and take a load off the mind of our patriotic friend Jones, by showing the judge his naturalization papers. Am I right, Yakhop? ”

“ Ebery times! ” growled the teamster, diving with his right hand into the spacious breast pocket of his Sunday coat, and producing thence a carefully wrapped up paper, which he handed to the judge, with the question “ Shwear I now? ”

General Waddle had taken the paper from the judge's hands and examined it. He now answered, instead of the judge, “ it is not necessary. These papers conclusively prove your right to vote. ”

This unforeseen result of Jones' challenge was hailed by boisterous laughter and cheering by the populace. “ Hurrah for the Dutehman! ” “ Bully for the Hessian! ” was shouted, while the judge proceeded to take Yakhop's vote. He roared out the name of Colonel May with such hearty good will, that it was heard above the noise of the crowd, and increased their good humor.

But now, having redeemed his promise, Yakhop felt no further interest in the fate of either of the political parties, but turned square round in search of his adversary, bent on wiping out the stigma put on his fair name by that foul epithet “ Hessian. ” Just as the judge asked him to name his choice for the State senate, he caught sight of Jones, as he was edging his way out of the crowd in the direction of the Boonville road, and shouted: “ Mishter Tshones! Mishter Tshones! ” at the top of his stentorian voice. This was by most of the by-standers misunderstood as the name of the candidate to be voted for, and caused new merriment over the Dutehman's funny mistake. But Yakhop was minded to

honor "Mishter Tshones" in a different fashion. "You we'ht an little und gum und she'hk hands mit der Hess!" he shouted, breaking away from Leslie and Huffard, who both endeavored to hold him back, and forced his way through the thickest of the crowd toward his adversary.

Before Jones, taken entirely unawares by the prompt action of the infuriated teamster, could ward it off, he had received a weighty blow from Yahkop's powerful fist. But he was not slow to return it. In the twinkling of an eye the crowd had formed a ring around the pugilists, and all were eager to witness the sport and to see fair play.

For a while it seemed as if the undisciplined strength of the burly German's arms would be more than neutralized by the superior skill of the American champion, who was a boxer of no mean experience. He easily parried the blows aimed at him in blind rage, with one arm, while the fist of the other did fearful execution on Yahkop's unprotected physiognomy. The onlookers took eager interest in the combat; even the judges of election and their clerks stretched their necks and poked their heads out of the window to lose none of the exciting sport. For a long time both of the combatants held their own: skill, routine on the one side, fairly balanced by sheer power of muscle and weather-hardened toughness on the other. Opinions differed as to what the final outcome would be; wagers were offered and accepted, and the backers of each cheered lustily over the slightest advantage gained by either. Victor looked on with the liveliest interest; he noticed with a sense of exultation that he could not quite suppress, that Yahkop's iron muscle and superior strength were beginning to tell on his opponent, who was naturally a weaker man, and whose constitution had been undermined by excessive alcoholic indulgence. Yahkop finally succeeded in throwing him to the ground; and then it was not long before Jones cried "'nough!" and a deafening shout proclaimed the Dutchman victor.

The word "'nough" vividly recalled to Victor's mind the

scene in the class-room, when it had required the gentle touch of Nellie's hand to stay his arm. As though he still felt that electric thrill, a hot blush mounted to his face as he saw Yakhop continue to pound his vanquished, now helpless adversary. Rushing up to his friend, he earnestly called on him to desist. Some of the by-standers, ignorant of the import of the words which Victor had spoken in German, and misinterpreting the purpose of his movement, seized him rudely by the arm; and when he struggled to free himself from their grasp, one of them exclaimed, "For shame! To rush upon a man that's down, two to one!" at the same time dealing him a blow in the face that knocked Victor senseless.

Leslie and the editor picked him up, while others pulled the infuriated teamster away from his enemy, now thoroughly demoralized. When Victor recovered consciousness, he was being led away from the crowd by his two friends. His nose bled profusely; one of his eyes was swollen so as to almost close it. Some men were leading Yakhop toward Van Braaken's store, and the two groups reached it almost simultaneously. Victor was appalled by the frightful appearance of his friend's face. He was bleeding from mouth and nose. The blood had saturated his garments. His features had been bruised into an unrecognizable mass. He himself had received but a single blow; but he felt that it had been sufficient to disfigure him. They found the store nearly empty of customers, for most of them had rushed out to witness the fight and were now following Yakhop and Victor back again — these two constituting just now the center of attraction.

Mynheer Van Braaken stood behind the counter at his post, surveying his apprentice with a look that sent dismay to his heart; for he saw in it less of anger, than of contempt, and Victor's conscience told him how richly he deserved it.

"We bring the wounded from the field of battle," said the editor, jocosely. "They deserve well of their country, for which they have fought and bled."

“And fallen,” added Leslie. “The dust on their garments bears witness. The country owes them a debt of gratitude.”

“Then let the country pay its debts,” retorted Mynheer, the lid of his left eye twitching spasmodically. “For this young man may need it. I guess he thinks more of his country anyhow than is good for him, or me. I guess he will make a better politician than a storekeeper. I guess he has learned too much for a storekeeper.”

“Fictohr ish all right!” Yahkop proclaimed dogmatically. “Und he learn blenty for der packwoots. Und ven he git vip, I don’t ken know; und ven an tam fool say ‘Hess,’ und he lick him, Fictohr ish all right, ebery times.”

“That will do, Yahkop,” said Van Braaken. “You can go; and if your condition allows, tend to your horses. We will have a talk later. And Victor may go with you, or wherever he likes. We have no use for such a looking chap in a decent place, as the Dutch Store is. Even a politician might be ashamed to show himself in his plight.”

Victor hung his head in deep dejection. He was not pained so much by the harsh, ungracious words of his chief, as by the depressing consciousness that his anger was just and natural.

But Yahkop had not lost faith in him. “Hang not der headt!” he said in his rough way, as the two left the store together. “Ven he say ‘Hess,’ you lick ’im, ebery times. Und der old man lick ’im too, ven he say ‘Hess,’ und git ’is odder eye knoeckt out.”

There was no comfort for Victor in this consoling prospect. Yahkop continued his tirade in mixed English and German against the rascally “Tshones” in vain.

They had not proceeded far, when Leslie and Mr. Huffard overtook them and respectively invited Victor to May Meadows and the printing office to arrange his toilet. He gratefully accepted the latter offer, for he shuddered at the thought of being seen at May Meadows in his present condition.

XIV.

A NEW DEPARTURE.

VICTOR, when they reached the printing office, was glad to find it deserted by its inmates. The working force of the *Ozark Argus* consisting for the time being of a pressman, who also did duty as a compositor, foreman and proof-reader, and a small boy, who personated the printer's devil and had gone off to assist at the election. Mr. Huffard, after filling the wash-basin with water and placing a towel and comb at his disposition, bid him make himself at home and take his own time in performing his ablutions. To put him entirely at his ease, the discreet editor then left the office, saying that he must see how things were going on at the polls. Victor felt thankful for the considerate kindness of his friend in leaving him alone. He set about removing, so far as he could, the traces of his misadventure from face and garments, troubled, meanwhile, by thoughts of his future; for if Mynheer Van Braaken were to discharge him from his service, what would become of him? He felt that his employer would be fully justified in having nothing more to do with him.

Out on the Square the noise made by the populace, now numbering not a few intoxicated men among them, continued. Victor wondered, sometimes, when he heard their lusty cheering for some favored candidate, whether there could really be any doubt of the triumph of Truth — by which he meant the success of the Democratic party — and the election, by an overwhelming majority, of his friend, Colonel May, to the Congress of the United States. Then his thoughts wandered off to the events which had brought him in contact with this man of wonderful magnetism, — with Leslie, and with — Nellie May. He wondered, whether, if he lost his place in Van Braaken's store,

these friends would disappear from his horizon? A deep longing came over him, the earnest aspiration to prove himself worthy of their friendship, to do some grand and noble deed compelling the admiration of men. How, or what, he knew not; so much only he began to suspect, that there was but little hope for him to achieve distinction as a country store-keeper.

On looking about in the printing office, his eyes fell upon the imposing stone in the middle of the room, on which lay the dead form of the last number of the *Ozark Argus* ready for the distribution of its types into the printer's cases. He whiled away the time by spelling out the words presented inversely in the metal. Noticing a composing stick on one of the cases, partly filled with type, and on the upper case in front of it a printed paper, with a guide on one of its articles marked with a red pencil, it interested him to find that the words in the composing stick corresponded with those of the article to which the guide pointed. Here was a discovery! The veil that had shrouded the mystic art of printing was rent asunder; the secret of the compositor's stick lay open to his gaze — by putting the types into that stick, he could make them spell the words of the copy before him, or anything he pleased.

He could not, of course, resist the temptation to put his discovery to the practical test. But simple as the matter looked, he found it a tedious task to pick out the proper letters, each one of which he found it necessary to examine before placing it. He wondered why no one had thought to label the compartments into which the types were sorted, so as to save the loss of time consumed in finding the particular types wanted. In the course of time, however, he remembered the places where to find letters most in use, and began to make better headway in his play at composing. So interested did he become in his novel amusement, that he forgot all else about him, and was astonished when Mr. Huffard returned, to find that the day was almost spent.

“ Well, well ! ” said the editor, smiling pleasantly. “ What

mischief are you up to now? I fear that you have been making sad havoc among the types."

Victor proudly showed the result of his work. A broad grin spread over the editor's face as he inspected the achievement of the amateur printer. "Why, you are a genius!" he exclaimed. "This is very creditable showing off for a tyro. When once you have learned to distinguish a q from a b, and a p from a d, and how to place the types right side up, you may begin to pose for a printer's devil."

Victor blushed vividly. But he eagerly inquired of his friend, whether he thought it possible that he should ever become a good printer.

"Of course you could!" the editor responded promptly. He looked at the lad for a second or two, and then added: "You possess every qualification for an excellent printer, and I have no doubt that you will achieve great success if you take to the business. But why do you ask the question? Are you afraid, that old Van will give you your walking papers? Are you looking for a new situation?"

Victor thus suddenly confronted with the thought which he had hardly formulated in his own mind, was half frightened by it. He answered evasively. But a few questions put by the shrewd editor elicited the whole truth. Not only that Victor actually feared to be discharged for his shameful conduct, but also, that he secretly hoped so, and that the boy's mind was intent upon becoming a printer. The prospect of having the young man in his own office was not displeasing to him. He was sure that he could utilize him in more ways than by his simple work as a printer. But he was really a kind man, and believed that Victor's capacities would find a wider scope to assert themselves in than the avocation of a merchant. Besides, he had no idea that Van Braaken would willingly part with the young man. He therefore rather discouraged Victor's notion of becoming a printer, advising him to think well over the matter before taking a decisive step.

The setting of the sun marked the close of the election.

Victor, on stepping out into the Square, was met by Leslie, who informed him that the judges of election and the clerks would soon begin to count the votes, and invited him to be present with himself to witness the operation. Although most of the voters that had come from a distance had already left for home, there was still quite a crowd surrounding the court house, impatiently awaiting the return of the officers, who had looked up the poll books and gone to partake of refreshments after the fatiguing labors of the day. It was not long before the sheriff, followed by the judges and clerks, appeared and proceeded to unlock the door of the room in which the counting was to take place. The candidates that happened to be on hand, as well as a number of the most prominent citizens — not less than ten of each of the political parties, as the law prescribed — entered also. Leslie May, representing his father, was of course one of them. Victor found no difficulty in gaining admission with him.

His eagerness to learn the verdict of the people on the party issues, and particularly as to the fate of his patron — in respect to whom his anxiety exceeded, is possible, that of Leslie himself — made the leisurely preparations for the work to follow a sore trial of his patience. At last the clerks were seated, each with one of the books before him in which the voters' names had been recorded, the judges at another table, also with books before them, in which to enter the number of votes cast for each candidate; and everything was ready. To make sure of a correct count, each vote was called out by one of the clerks and verified by the other; the judges repeated the names of the candidates voted for, and entered them each in his own book. Victor was deeply impressed with the precautions taken to secure a faithful record of the will of the people.

The vote for the congressional candidates was counted first. Leslie jotted down the votes, as called out, on a slip of paper; Victor kept an accurate tally without the aid of a written memorandum. His face visibly brightened as the clerks announced, and the judges repeated, in monotonous, but to

Victor highly musical iteration: "For Congress, Leonard May!" scarcely relieved, now and then, by a run of two or three votes for the opposing candidate. Victor's exultant enthusiasm made it impossible for him to remain quiet; he rushed up to Leslie, even before the judges had cast up the total vote, and impulsively embraced him. It was an unusual thing for Victor to do; for however enthusiastic his nature, he was by no means demonstrative. "Colonel May is the wisest, best and noblest of men," he exclaimed, "and the voters know it! How could they help electing him? They honored themselves in honoring him."

How could Leslie remain cold in view of the unprecedented popularity of his father, evidenced by the heavy majority polled for him by the voters of his own precinct? But he only said: "The governor's head is level; he played his cards for all they were worth!"

The official announcement by the judges was: "For Congress, Colonel Leonard May, 193; General John Waddle, 37."

After a deafening round of cheers at this proclamation, in which Victor joined with all his heart, the count proceeded. Mr. Huffard had made his way into the room, and Victor noticed that he and Leslie engaged in earnest conversation. His interest in the counting had now much abated. Still, he was somewhat curious to compare the Colonel's vote with that of the other candidates on his ticket. He hardly knew whether, as a patriotic democrat, to regret that the others fell far behind their leader, or, as an ardent admirer of Colonel May, to rejoice over this result. There was, on the average, a small majority for the democrats.

Victor was about to leave the room, as most of the others were now doing, when Leslie hastily approached him "to shake hands once more, before parting for the night," he said. "And I want you," he added, "to promise to call at May Meadows, to-morrow morning, before going to the store. I hope the governor will have some news for us that it will please you to hear." Victor was but too happy to promise.

He found the family assembled at breakfast when he reached May Meadows next morning. He brought a heavy heart with him; the pleasant walk and lovely summer morning had not dispelled the gloom produced on his mind by reflecting on his conduct of the day before. His gloomy thoughts, however, vanished before the genial, cheerful welcome accorded him at the Colonel's mansion. There must indeed have been pleasant news; for an atmosphere of bright sunshine pervaded the room when he entered. Every countenance was illumined by a pleasant smile; even the pathetic face of Lucretia, who waited at table, wore an unusually contented expression, and brightened up when she beheld the early visitor. Nellie, first to address him, jumped up from her chair, and, seizing his hands with both of hers, exclaimed, "Here is Victor, — *the* victor! I am so glad to see you, Mr. Waldhorst, for papa says you helped him win the election."

"Good morning, my young friend!" said the Colonel, also rising to shake hands with Victor. "Nellie is right. I did say — and I mean it — that if I am elected, no small share of the responsibility for the result will fall on your shoulders. I am very glad to see you here this morning, so that I may shake hands with you on the probability of my success. According to the information which I have been able to pick up on my way home last night, the chances are very promising."

Mrs. May, too, was unusually friendly in her welcome, insisting that the guest should join them at table, notwithstanding his protestations of having already breakfasted. At a nod from her mistress, Lucretia laid a plate and placed a chair for him, and he gladly accepted the cordial hospitality. Conversation became lively and general; each one had something to say about the canvass through which the Colonel had just passed, and the changes in their mode of life which his election would involve. Nellie clamored for the removal of the whole family to Washington City when her father went there to take his seat in Congress — a proposition which the

Colonel declared to be ridiculous. But Victor noticed, — not without dismay at the thought of the separation which Nellie's scheme would involve for him, that not only Leslie, but also Mrs. May, seemed to look on it with favor.

Of course, the mishaps to both himself and his friend, the teamster Yahkop, at the polls, did not escape discussion. Leslie gave a lively account of the droll speeches of the irate voter, and of his ungovernable wrath on being called a Hessian, so that even Victor could not help joining Nellie's merriment over the recital. But he grew sober when the recollection of his own situation in consequence of yesterday's events again confronted him with the problem of his immediate future. The Colonel, noticing his sudden depression, said, with his pleasant smile and in his kind voice, "Are you thinking of Mynheer's blunt speech of yesterday? Leslie tells me, that he handled you rather roughly, and perhaps undeservedly so."

"Not undeservedly," was Victor's honest reply. "It will be but justice, if he dismiss me at once."

"You need fear nothing of the kind," the Colonel assured him. "He will readily pardon your zeal in my cause. Besides, I happen to know, that he would on no account spare you willingly from his business. He thinks too highly of the value of your services."

"As to the value of my services," Victor replied, "he has told me repeatedly that I lack very much of being fitted for a merchant."

Leslie and Nellie looked at each other with a significant smile, but said nothing.

"And what is your own opinion in this respect?" the Colonel queried.

"I think he is right," said Victor.

A smile now played about the lips of Colonel May also, but he quickly suppressed it, and continued: "Now, Mr. Waldhorst, I want you to understand, that the little unpleasantness which you believe to exist between Mynheer Van Braaken and

yourself, need not trouble you. Not another word will be said to you on the subject. But how would it suit you to take up another vocation? How would you like to engage in the printing business?"

Victor gave a furtive glance at Leslie, whose face, however, remained perfectly impassive. "I think I would like it very much," he answered eagerly.

"Mr. Huffard, as Leslie tells me," the Colonel continued, "is convinced that you will make an excellent printer. And I am sure that you will make your mark as an editor. Your thirst for knowledge, your eagerness for politics, your enthusiastic championship of what you deem right and just, will find a much wider field for development in a printing office, than behind the counter of a country store."

"I? An editor?" the young man gasped. But he could not conceal his delight at the Colonel's words.

"You need not assume the chief editorship of a leading journal just yet," said the Colonel. "There will be much for you to learn; and some things, no doubt you will have to unlearn. But don't let that deter you, if you feel that you would rather be a printer than a merchant."

"Indeed, I should like very much to become a printer!" was Victor's almost involuntary reply.

"Then we will consider it settled that you are to join the working staff of the *Ozark Argus*. Mr. Huffard says that he will be glad to receive you. Some day perhaps you will be called on to serve in a different capacity: for a large proportion of our public men have risen from the ranks of the printers. I am convinced, that in one way or another you will distinguish yourself."

"But I thought that you had set your heart on becoming a lawyer!" said Leslie, smiling curiously, and interrupting Victor's stammering efforts to express his thanks. "Have you thought better of that?"

"Oh, you know that is out of the question!" Victor replied, "and you know the reason why."

“He is afraid,” said Leslie, addressing his father, “that he has not learned enough Latin. As if one who mastered the English grammar in a course of ten days could not just as easily pick up Latin enough to understand Story’s pedantic quotations from the civil law, and the maxims scattered through the text books and judges’ opinions, chiefly to create the impression that there is something in the law known to them, which common people should not know! I had a talk with Yancey last night, and he says, that the time spent in our colleges in the study of Latin could be much more profitably employed in the study of approved text writers. Yancey thinks that Victor could study in his office, and is willing to give him the use of his books.”

This was great news for Victor. He looked from one of the gentlemen to the other with eager, questioning eyes, hardly daring to believe in the reality of the good fortune that promised to put him in the way of gratifying his secret, most cherished ambition.

The Colonel regarded him with a quizzical smile. “Do you believe yourself competent,” he said, “to devote an hour or two every day to the acquisition of a smattering of Latin, and in the course of time to the devouring of ponderous law books, in addition to the tasks that will be imposed on you as a printer’s devil?”

“I would surely try,” was the answer, given in a low voice, while a crimson glow spread over his eager features.

“Then, I know, you will surely succeed,” the Colonel went on. “You know that ‘where there’s a will there’s a way,’ or, as the Latin maxim has it, ‘*Labor omnia vincit.*’ If you are really in earnest, as I have no doubt that you are, your chance is fully as good, indeed better, than Leslie’s, with all his university training, to become a successful, if not distinguished, lawyer. And in your political aspirations, if you have any, the profession of the law, again, will prove a highly useful stepping stone.”

“Why, just think,” Nellie spoke up, “what fun it would

be to have Mr. Waldhorst in partnership with Leslie! What an odd team they would make!"

Mrs. May seemed not to take so kindly to the idea of a business connection between her son and Victor. "But do you think," she said, "that our young friend possesses sufficient — what shall I call it — assurance or boldness —"

"Call it cheek, mama, or brass, if that's what you mean," suggested Leslie.

— "to become a successful lawyer?" she continued, not heeding Leslie's interruption. "Mr. Waldhorst is so — gentle, so —"

"So diffident and bashful!" Leslie again put in. "Yes, he will have to get over that amiable foible of his, if he ever expects to rescue a horse-thief from the clutches of a backwoods jury."

"Yes," Mrs. May continued, smiling graciously, "I may say it without wishing to disparage the merits of our friend, that in my opinion his modesty will sadly interfere with his success as an advocate."

"Truly, he that bloweth not his own horn, his horn shall not be blown!" said Leslie with a mischievous twinkle of the eye.

"Never fear as to that!" said roguish Nellie. "If brother Leslie is in the firm, there will be brass and cheek enough for both, and to spare. Mr. Waldhorst will do the work, and Leslie the tooting; and it will be just splendid!"

"And if we should lack for business," the brother retaliated, "Sissy will help us out with that tell-tale tongue of hers. She has already helped us to one pretty extensive lawsuit by stirring up her silly admirers against each other; with a little practice she will soon be able to furnish more business than we can attend to. I suppose, Nell, that we will have to give you an interest in the firm."

"That will do, children!" said the Colonel, putting an end to their good-humored banter.

When he, true to his promise, accompanied Victor to the

store, Victor was agreeably surprised to notice the utter absence of anything like displeasure or ill-feeling on the part of the merchant, who seemed to regard Victor's plans for the future, involving his withdrawal from the Dutch Store, as quite a matter of course. They talked the subject over in the most amicable mood, Victor himself saying but little. When they had discussed the whole matter as to Victor's immediate plans, the Colonel said something about his studying law, whereat the merchant grew unusually lively. "Yes, yes," he said, nodding vigorously, and with a nervous twitching of his weak eye-lid. "I always knew there was something in the boy. He is going to make a man some day. But he has much to learn, yet," winking slyly at the Colonel, with a grimace that was meant for a smile — "he has a great lesson to learn. He is smart enough to be a lawyer, and he knows enough to be a politician. But it will be bad for his clients if he tells the jury all he knows about them. And he will never be elected when he runs for office if he tells the voters what he thinks of them. And he is going to do all that, if he don't learn how not to tell the truth sometimes."

* * *

Victor applied himself diligently to the discharge of his duties in the new sphere of his activity. Simple enough they were, at first, though irksome, at times, requiring the performance of the merest drudgery. He acquitted himself to the perfect satisfaction of Mr. Huffard, who congratulated himself on the acquisition of so apt an apprentice. Plenty of leisure was at his disposal, which he conscientiously utilized by earnestly devoting himself to the mastering of the Latin grammar, an old copy of which Leslie had placed at his disposal. This gentleman even conquered his aversion to the dry details of the study, from which he himself had but recently been absolved, so far as to help his young friend over its initial difficulties. But this assistance ceased when, early in the month following, Leslie returned to Harvard University. Nellie, too, was taken back to Columbia, the Colonel himself

escorting her thither, to continue her course at the Young Ladies' Seminary. A lonely time ensued for Victor, upon whom the absence of his young friends weighed heavily. His visits to May Meadows that had been to him bright gleams of sunshine in the somber monotony of life, now ceased almost entirely save that the Colonel, after his return from Columbia, now and then insisted on taking him home for a Sunday dinner, or an afternoon drive. These occasions served only to emphasize the absence of the young people; — he sadly missed the vivacious sallies of Nellie, and Leslie's good-natured sarcasms.

The conversation of the Colonel was not without its charm, however, and Victor soon learned to listen with a new and quite different interest. For the congressman-elect often discussed before him the political program he was chalking out for himself and the party he represented; and the young man, proud of the confidence thus reposed in him, eagerly absorbed the views of his patron and promised to become an enthusiastic champion of whatever policy was thus unfolded before him. Utterly unconscious of himself, Victor in this way became a stout adherent to the States-right-school of the Democratic party. It never occurred to him that his own crude, unsophisticated views of right and justice were of any value to his friend. He accepted the favors shown him by the Colonel, with a grateful heart, and adopted his political principles without question or doubt, — having neither the disposition, nor, indeed, the mental ripeness, to detect their truth or error.

During the first few months after Leslie's return to college Victor found great solace in a voluminous correspondence with his absent friend. For a while the collegian answered promptly, and Victor was led to believe that his gushing effusions gave as much satisfaction to Leslie as the replies did to himself. But soon the answers grew shorter and less regular, and although Leslie excused his want of promptness on the score of absorbing studies, rendering necessary the most assiduous application to insure a diploma at the end of

the year, when he proposed to graduate, yet Victor reluctantly admitted to himself that Leslie's increasing taciturnity must be due rather to his want of inclination to write, than to the lack of opportunity.

In the course of time, Victor was promoted from his devilship in the printing office to the dignity of compositor and pressman. He had made such rapid progress in both branches of the business, that Mr. Huffard found it profitable to take another apprentice in his place and let him do the work of a journeyman. But this advancement was not half so encouraging to him as the acceptance by the editor of an essay written by him on the political issues then before the country. It was a proud day for him when he first saw his own thoughts confront him from the printed sheet of the *Ozark Argus*. A part of his inmost self gone forth from him, beyond his reach, forever, to influence others. For good? He hoped so, — aye, he was sure of it: for truth needs but manifest itself to be triumphant. And was he not adding his testimony to the cause of truth? No doubt of it; for the editor of the Democratic organ of the Southwest had agreed with his views, and the congressman-elect had approved of them. Even Leslie, to whom he had, in the first flush of his joy, sent a copy of the paper containing his article, marked with a red pencil, had written to congratulate him, saying no one but his gifted, aspiring, *honest* young friend could be the author of so noble a defense of Democracy. His success inspired him to further efforts, and it was not long before Mr. Huffard left him to manage a considerable share of the editorial work on the *Argus*, to his own liking. The young recruit to the editorial staff displayed quite an aptitude in getting up interesting items of news, and penning them in pleasing style, as well as in the writing of political leading articles. He seemed in a fair way to realize Colonel May's prediction that he would make an excellent editor.

About this time the formation of a new political party, having for its object the disfranchising of Catholics and natu-

ralized citizens, strongly enlisted Victor's opposition. Being himself a "foreigner," it was but natural that he should keenly feel the narrowness of the maxim, that "America belongs to the Americans;" and the stand taken by the great majority of the democrats against the new doctrine served to increase, if possible, his veneration for the party, whose tenets demanded equality of rights for all American citizens, of whatever religious creed, or nativity. The little town of Brookfield, to be sure, afforded but small vantage ground for the American party. Besides Orlando Jones and his father, whose personal experience inclined them to side with the new doctrine, and Mr. Barnes and a few of his friends, who had not forgotten the inconvenient competition of the Dutch merchant, there were hardly any converts. Even Ralph Payton, notwithstanding the eloquent protest he had launched against the foreigners in his maiden speech at the barbecue, was not ready to join a party, whose leading object was plainly to disorganize the Democracy.

Nor was there much promise of success for the American party in any part of the State, save in one or two of its larger cities; or, indeed, in any of the Western States. But in the exchange papers, to peruse which was now a part of Victor's duty, he found enthusiastic accounts of its rapid spread in the East, and particularly in the Middle States. He was troubled to perceive that the tidal wave assumed such mighty proportions as to threaten at no distant day to engulf the entire nation. True, the Democracy everywhere stood firmly by their colors; but the new party was drawing to its support the discontented elements of all other political organizations. The whigs, who had hitherto presented an unbroken line of battle against the democrats, were evidently demoralized by their signal defeat at the last election, and their party was plainly in the process of disintegration. Great numbers of them, not willing to ally themselves with the other new party, whose opposition to Democracy sprang from their abhorrence of slavery, acted in concert with the Know-Nothings,

and secured for them victory in many State elections. It was but natural, therefore, that Victor looked forward to the final issue of the struggle, involving his own rights as a citizen, with apprehensive anxiety, and that he put forward his best arguments in defense of Democracy, in the articles which appeared from his pen in the *Ozark Argus*.

In writing these articles he soon made the discovery, which greatly startled him, that his strongest motive in their composition was a personal one. He asked himself, what would be his attitude toward the party, if he were a native born American? The answer, which he could not conceal from himself, gave him much trouble and perplexity. It was but right and wise, that Americans should rule America. It was but just and proper that the American nation should resist all foreign influence, naturally directed against our republican institutions, in all lawful ways. And what duty could be more sacred and binding, than that of preserving and upholding the Union and constitution of the United States?

Meanwhile time passed and Victor diligently discharged his duties in the printing office, and studied Latin. On one occasion he asked the assistance of Mr. Yancey to unravel for him a knotty point. The lawyer met him with much kindness, and after giving him the desired information, entered into a general conversation which drifted into politics, involving the prospects of the American party. Victor soon betrayed his perplexity in respect of the principles which he thought so true, that they could not be conscientiously opposed.

"Let me understand to what principles you refer," said Mr. Yancey quietly.

"Loyalty to the Union; jealousy against foreign influence; preservation of republican institutions," answered Victor.

"Does any one propose to annul any of these?" queried Mr. Yancey further.

"Not directly, perhaps," said Victor, after pondering awhile. "But then, you know, the abolitionists think slavery a greater evil than the disruption of the Union. And some

of them have actually denounced the constitution as wicked and an abomination. And then — are not some of the foreigners too ignorant to be intrusted with the privilege of the ballot?”

“Why, yes,” the lawyer replied, a scarcely perceptible smile lighting up his features. “Some of the fanatics have gone the length of denouncing the constitution as a compact with the devil, and the Union a league with hell, or something of that sort. I quote from memory. But have you not noticed that many of the recruits to the Know-Nothing party come from these same abolitionists? Such is, at least, a fair inference from the fact, that their first successes were achieved in the States most strongly infested by them. And does it occur to you, that their ‘jealousy of foreign influence’ is due chiefly to the circumstance that the great majority of German and Irish emigrants persistently vote the Democratic ticket?”

“Is not that,” suggested Victor, though hesitatingly, “a corroboration of the assertion, that they are too ignorant to have an opinion of their own, and therefore become pliant tools in the hands of designing demagogues?”

“It proves, at any rate,” said the other, “that they have faith in Democratic principles, which the opponents of the Democratic party have not. There is greater significance in this than is apparent on the surface. If it be true, as you and I are certainly convinced, that the Democratic party represent the true theory of our government, then this so-called American party is not only un-democratic, but emphatically un-American. Universal freedom is the cardinal principle of the American government, as it is the cardinal tenet of the Democratic party. Hence the emigrant, seeking refuge from oppression, — whether industrial, social, or political — in this land of promise, naturally identifies himself with the party which has inscribed the promise of this freedom on its banner. But what is the principle — if it be not an abuse of the word to apply it to this organization, whose sole cohesive force con-

sists of its opposition to Democracy — by which they propose to rule America? How are they going to ‘resist foreign influence,’ and ‘protect and uphold the constitution and the Union?’ On their own showing they mean to abolish freedom of religion, the equality of man before the law, the elective franchise for freemen. Catholics are to be denied the rights of citizenship, emigrants to be branded as political outcasts, the right of suffrage to be exercised according to the fiat of a secret association. What would be the value of a Union ‘preserved,’ of a constitution ‘protected’ in such fashion?”

How easy it was to convince Victor of what he was so eager to believe! Mr. Yancey’s words impressed themselves deeply on his mind and memory. The light in which Mr. Yancey had put the argument against Know-Nothingism relieved him entirely of the scruples with which his tender conscience had oppressed him. His articles in the *Ozark Argus* henceforth were noticeably bolder and more incisive, and he had the satisfaction to see most of them copied and strongly commended by the exchange papers that came to his hands.



XV.

AWAKENING FROM LOVE'S YOUNG DREAM.

THROUGHOUT all the long winter that followed, — a winter unequaled in duration and severity by any within the memory of the oldest inhabitant — Victor had looked forward with yearning heart. Not that time passed heavily with him. What with his duties at the case and press ; with now and then an hour or two devoted to the penning of local items for the “Chronicle of the Southwest,” and the pursuit of his studies under the guidance of Mr. Yancey, he was kept busy enough. Nor was it alone the coming of Spring, — that season so full of promise and delight to the young and hopeful — that he so eagerly awaited. Life seemed pleasant enough to the aspiring young man, who had convinced himself that he was preparing for a life of usefulness and activity, — not void, either, of a lurking hope, that success, perhaps, was in store for him. How happy it would make him, if he should justify the good opinion of his friends — of Colonel May, of Leslie —. Might not Nellie, then, forget that he was of graceless and ungainly person? It was this hope, which had taken hold of him far more firmly than he was aware, that occupied his thoughts and wove pleasant fancies into his waking dreams. The inclemency of the season had no terror for him. However fiercely the tempest howled without, the dingy little office, from which the *Ozark Argus* took its weekly flights into the surrounding country, afforded cosy shelter to the young man who was busy with himself — and looked forward.

Spring came at last, as Spring will always come, when winter is over, — tardily, this time, but all the more joyfully welcomed by old and young ; for all had grown weary of

winter's protracted tyranny. Springtime and May — delightful to Victor as to every one; still he looked forward.

For Spring would be followed by Summer, and Summer — early, in the season — would bring Leslie home from the university, laden with honors, no doubt; for had not Leslie written to him that he meant to achieve *summa cum laude*, and was there anything that Leslie could not achieve, if he wished to? And — well, yes! he thought of that, too — the early Summer would end Nellie's term at the Young Ladies Seminary at Columbia. So he looked forward.

But hope's fruition rarely equals the joy of anticipation. Nor was Victor's case an exception, when the time came to which he had looked forward. For when, in the bright and sunny month of June, with its fresh green foliage and delightful breezes, Leslie returned, he brought with him, among other trophies culled during his Harvard campaign, a mustache, — not heavy, nor bristling, nor yet of jetty hue; but visible to Victor's naked eye and palpable to the touch — at least Victor so inferred from the frequency with which his friend's thumb and forefinger fondled it.

Now there was nothing startling in the fact of his friend's sporting a mustache, except, perhaps, that mustaches and beards were not in fashion in those days, in the backwoods. But the young student had, together with the mustache, assumed an expression of face that did not fully correspond to the image that Victor treasured in his memory, and so the joy experienced on his friend's return was dimmed by a shadow, — a vague disappointment; almost, as if a beloved friend, from whom he had parted nearly a year before, had not really come back, but was about to go away from him forever.

Nellie, too, returned soon after. She, to be sure, wore no mustache, however greatly she admired that of her brother, and thereby set an example to the young ladies of Brookfield, who thenceforth unanimously found the tuft of hair on Leslie's upper lip just too charming for anything. But she had become taller in stature, and her figure had gained

wonderfully in grace of outline. She, too, presented a contrast, though a most delightful one, to the image which he had been cherishing in his inmost heart.

But her smile was as sweet as ever, and the cordiality with which she greeted him on his first visit to May Meadows after her return, made it easy for him to make friends with the fascinating young lady that had come back in place of the sprightly young school-girl of last Summer. It was through the influence of Nellie, who had in reality changed more than Leslie, that Victor soon regained his old footing with both. And yet there was a drop of bitterness in the sweet draught of bliss, — a keen pang of genuine pain that disturbed, now and then, the delight which he found in the intercourse with the inmates of May Meadows. As coming events cast their shadows before, so the dread of the Colonel's departure for Washington threw a shadow on Victor's sunny path. Nellie had succeeded in persuading her parents to adopt her scheme of removing with the whole family to the Capitol, for one season at least. The plan was frequently discussed in his presence, for the young people took great delight in dwelling upon the pleasure anticipated from their admission to Washington society, and Victor vaguely felt that the separation from his young friends would prove more thorough than a temporary cessation of personal intercourse.

But his dread of what the future had in store for him was not the only, nor indeed his most formidable trouble. It was clearly wrong and unreasonable in him to regard it as a trouble at all, that the young men in and around Brookfield should share his admiration of Nellie May and heavily tax the hospitality of May Meadows by the assiduity of their attentions to her. No one knew better than Victor, how ungenerous it was to the young lady, to grudge her the triumphs which she enjoyed, evidently enough, with great relish. He was ashamed of the feeling, too; yet he could not conquer it, and it made him downright miserable to notice the frequency of Ralph Payton's visits, and the very evident pleasure he took in

Nellie's society. Nellie herself was equally friendly to all her callers; she treated even Orlando Jones, whose father had taken so decided a part against her own father at the election, with friendly courtesy.

As the time approached, when preparations had to be made for the departure of the May family, it was determined that a great party should be given in honor of the occasion. It was to take place in the mansion of the congressman-elect. The wealthiest and most influential inhabitants of Brookfield were to be there as guests, not excluding, however, the humbler, and even humblest, classes. Expectation was on tip-toe; the gathering was talked of long beforehand as an event in the history of the town, second only — if second at all — to the great barbecue of last year. Of course, the Chronicle of the Southwest could not afford to ignore this stirring topic of news, and Victor received orders from Mr. Huffard to try himself at writing a "stunning puff" for the member of Congress in connection with the "grand soirée," — which the editor-in-chief directed his assistant to spell "swaree" — to be given his constituents on the eve of his departure for Washington.

The getting up of the "puff" was easy enough for the enthusiastic admirer of Colonel May; the only danger was, indeed, that it would assume proportions entirely too "stunning" to go into print. But the backwoodsmen were not fastidious in their taste, as Mr. Huffard knew, and so he allowed his assistant's enthusiasm full sway. The "swaree," however, proved a difficult matter for him to handle. He had no clear notion of the meaning of the word, nor had he ever been present at any of the social gatherings at which young people of both sexes amuse themselves after a day spent in helping the host shuck corn, raise a log cabin quilt coverlet, or do some such work requiring many hands, and offering opportunity, under specious pretense, for social intercourse in the evening. A broad grin overspread the editor's face as Victor confessed his perplexity; but he relieved his assistant's doubts by dashing off a few lines himself, descriptive of the frolic to be expected, and

appended it to Victor's glowing panegyric. Thus it happened, that the party to be given at May Meadows was heralded to the world with a bombast hardly inferior to that which, a year or so before, had ushered in the great barbecue.

To Nellie the event promised illimitable enjoyment — "fun" was her expression for it. She meant to have all the fun there was in it. She meant to show what could be done in the way of giving a party by one of the first families of Virginia. Leslie, too, looked with some expectation for the frolic to come off. His mustache had grown somewhat during the Summer, and assumed a tinge distinctly contrasting with his fine complexion. So he coveted the opportunity of trying its effect on the susceptible rural belles, before pursuing more difficult game at Washington. Victor was of course among the invited. He would have greatly preferred a quiet evening with Nellie and Leslie to the finest party in the world, and absolutely east about for an excuse to remain away. It might have been better for his subsequent peace of mind if he had succeeded in finding a pretext for absence from the dreaded ordeal; but his conscience forbade a direct untruth, and he found no plausible pretext for a refusal to come.

It was a beautiful evening toward the end of October, when Victor accompanied by his chief set out upon the well-known path leading to May Meadows. Mr. Huffard was in one of his talkative moods, entertaining, or thinking that he entertained, Victor — (for this young man was nervously thinking of the party) — with reminiscences of similar affairs through which he had gone in his youth. But his anecdotes failed to enliven Victor's spirits; they rather depressed him, for in every one of them the hero turned out superior to his surroundings, achieving his triumphs by dint of ready wit, or wonderful presence of mind — qualities, in which Victor felt his inferiority but too keenly. The story of the scarecrow haunted his memory like a nightmare.

Both he and the editor were received kindly enough, however. The Colonel, as he shook hands in courtly, yet cordial

manner, expressed the great pleasure it gave him to see the "gentlemen of the press," in whose pleasure it lay "to make or mar" the reputations of public men. Nellie was all smiles and whispered to the young man her hope, that he would amuse himself well enough to insert a favorable notice of the party in the *Argus*. Both Colonel and Mrs. May showed their Southern blood by the quiet tact displayed as host and hostess, in putting their guests at ease. A considerable number of these had already arrived. Among them Ralph Payton and other members of the last year's grammar class. The rival merchants of Brookfield were there — Mynheer Van Braaken deeming it wise to come, in the interest of the Dutch Store, while Mr. Barnes was anxious to propitiate the member of Congress for the district, although he had not voted for him. As yet the sexes seemed afraid of each other; the young men held themselves strictly aloof from the ladies, — talking in little groups among themselves, and showing, by the readiness with which they laughed, loud and boisterously, over each puny attempt at witticism, how thoroughly self-possessed they were, and how immensely they enjoyed themselves. Not to be behind them in the display of sociability, the girls on their part giggled among themselves.

Leslie, noticing the constraint that kept the young people apart, determined to break the ice for them. An old-fashioned "play-song" he knew to be as efficient to bring together a room full of people anxious to be sociable, as the Polonaise in opening a ball. He beckoned to Ralph Payton, requesting him to choose a partner and lead off. Nothing loth, the young man stepped up to Miss May and begged her, with a graceful bow, to honor him, while Leslie did the same with Miss Matlack. The quartette promenaded through the room singing, to a popular melody, words, which Victor understood about as follows:

" We are marching on to Baltimore,
Two behind, and two before;
Let our band be never parted.

But when you see a soldier true,
 And a faithful lassie too,
 Then open the ring
 And let another in
 That you think will prove true-hearted."

The promenaders were just passing Victor when they sang the last words, and he was puzzled on receiving a curtsy from Miss Matlack; Miss Shannon, who had received a similar compliment from Leslie, approached from the other side of the room and took Victor by the hand. Then he understood that he was the "soldier true" of whom they had been singing, and that Miss Shannon must be the lassie allotted to be faithful to him. So he bravely marched along in the procession with his fair partner, swelling the chorus of voices that were now again

 " — marching on to Baltimore,"

until they had "taken another in;" after which the singing and marching continued, until as many as wished to participate had taken up the march to Baltimore.

Victor having never seen anything of the kind before, was for a while quite interested. It amused him to see how anxious some of the outsiders seemed, to be elected into the patriotic band. But as the procession grew in numbers, and the same words were repeated without variation, the interest slackened, and he wondered how long the thing was going to last in this way. A question to this effect brought from his fair partner an exultant smile. "Oh — don't you know?" she whispered eagerly, "why, all the fun is going to come in the wind-up. You will see."

And he did see. Upon a signal from Payton the procession came to a halt, the song ceased, and he led Miss May into the middle of the room, the others joining hands and forming a circle around the couple in the center. Leslie then led off with a new song to a different air, somewhat in this fashion:

 " King William was King James's son,
 Upon a royal race they run ;

Upon his breast he wore a star
 That shone near and that shone far.
 Down on the carpet you must kneel
 As sure as grass grows on the field — ”

Ralph Payton gracefully complied with this injunction, and it gave Victor a genuine pang of distress to notice the charming tableau presented by the couple in this attitude — Nellie standing erect, radiant in her loveliness, looking down upon her gallant adorer with a roguish smile; Ralph in elegant pose, holding the tips of her fingers in his right hand, gazing with rapt admiration into her beautiful face. The song continued:

“ Salute your bride and kiss her sweet — ”

Suiting the action to the words Ralph leaped up, encircled the lovely maiden with his arm, and culled from her tempting lips the reward for his chivalry.

This filled Victor's cup of misery. It cost him a powerful effort to conceal his emotion, and it was absolutely impossible for him to answer in words the tittering remark of his partner, “ Didn't they do it nicely? ” His heart beat in almost audible throbs as she said, “ I wonder who is going to be her real choice? ”

The song went on: —

“ Now you may rise upon your feet — ”

whereupon Ralph, with courtly bow, answered by an equally graceful curtsy from her, left the circle. Still the song went on; Nellie, meanwhile, mustering the faces of those composing the ring:

“ If he's not here to take your part,
 Go choose another with all your heart;
 Go choose in the East, go choose in the West,
 Go choose the one that you love best! ”

Victor was intensely excited. She was now to “ choose the one that she loves best.” *Whom will she choose?* Nellie's

eyes, in sweeping over the circle, caught the intensely eager gaze of Victor, and a bright smile illumined her face. But only for a moment. Then her eyes turned from him, searching for some one else. As the words were reached :

“ Go choose the one that you love best ”

she nodded, smiled sweetly, — not on Victor. He was petrified with dismay to see Orlando Jones step into the ring, kneel to her, and be kissed by her! Orlando Jones — his bitter enemy from the grammar class, — his traducer, he, whom Nellie, a little more than a year ago, had called a low, mean fellow, and now, to *kiss him!* He never forgot the bitterness of that moment. But for the soreness of his heart his wounded vanity might have been soothed by the malice of Miss Shannon's remark, “ isn't it just too ridiculous to see Mr. Jones stand up with Nellie May, after Ralph Payton? ” Even Nellie's encouraging smile and the assurance whispered into his ear as she passed out of the circle to resume her duties as hostess, that his time to choose and be chosen would soon come, failed to lighten the burden at his heart. What cared he to be chosen by any but the one maiden in all the world, or to choose, when she was not to be chosen?

The song went on as if nothing had happened to blot out the sunshine of his life. One by one the youths and lasses were invited into the coveted circle, and dismissed from it, until his own turn came; he went through the motions as he had seen others do, chosen by whom he cared not; choosing, he hardly knew whom; kissing with an indifference hardly just to his fair partners.

The introductory play-song and its winding up had occupied a considerable portion of the evening, and Leslie had fully accomplished his purpose. The conversation was general and very lively long before its completion. The older guests had grouped themselves according to their inclinations and talked about politics, crops, the marvelous development of Brookfield, and whatever other topics that lay nearest their interests,

while the younger ones disussed affairs most interesting to *them*, much as young people do everywhere, finding ever new fascination in the old, old story. Nellie flitted about among her guests like a lovely butterfly, laughing and chatting now with one group, now with another, always merry, always graceful, the favorite of young and old, having won the approval of even the young lady guests by her tact in choosing the least popular young swains to be favored with her kiss, whereby she had so deeply wounded poor Victor. But she had determined with equal tact on compensating *him* in her own way, later in the evening. Refreshments were not wanting: Lemonade for the ladies; for the men, — patronized not exclusively by the elder ones — the staple beverage of the country, whiskey. For those who liked it, the Colonel had provided wine, relished, however, by but few. What with the exhilarating effects of the whiskey, the wine, and the cheering influence of pleasant and social intercourse, the assemblage was soon in the best possible spirits.

Games of various kinds were introduced and participated in with enthusiastic enjoyment. In one of them it fell to the lot of Leslie to name the penance by which a forfeit was to be redeemed. Although his eyes were bandaged, he correctly surmised the pawn to belong to Victor, and, having noticed the young man's depression, determined to give him an opportunity to show off in his own line, and put himself in a better light before the company. So he decreed that the owner of the pawn must instantly pronounce a funeral sermon on the demise of the Whig party. Victor was greatly embarrassed. But he must not show the white feather. Summoning all his courage, he stepped forward and claimed the pawn. "I will give you a few words of lament instead of the sermon," he said, when the applause had subsided, with which the company had received the announcement of the sentence against the owner of the forfeit; "such as a patriotic whig might be supposed to indulge in after the defeat of his party. I shall call it

THE LAY OF A GONE COON.

Old Tip is dead
 And the coons are fled
 To a country all unknown, Sir!
 Our cider's spilt
 And the cabins we built
 Are up to the moon all blown, Sir!
 And Tyler, too,
 Has proved untrue
 Since the coons away did go, Sir!
 And so we moan
 Forlorn and lone
 Like a widow without a beau, Sir!
 Here's Harry, who
 Oft tried to woo
 The people in his way, Sir!
 But his ways don't take,
 And 'tis a mistake
 To trust this kind of Clay, Sir!
 Even God-like Dan
 Is not the man
 That can us now avail, Sir!
 So we must weep
 Our misery deep
 And up Salt River sail, Sir! "

The beginning of the declamation, spoken in a low, uncertain voice, amid the buzz of conversation carried on outside of the circle of those participating in the game, was lost to most of the company; but before he had concluded, the utmost silence prevailed, and when he was through there was a general clamor for a repetition, in which General Waddle the defeated whig candidate for Congress, joined. So Victor, although he had honestly redeemed his forfeit, was by general acclamation sentenced to pay the penalty a second time.

Restored to a degree of confidence by the flattering request, he succeeded in reciting the little lampoon in a steadier voice emphasizing the tone of dejection and philosophical resignation he meant to express, and thus greatly heightening the effect upon the company. The applause was spontaneous and cordial; more so from the older than from the younger folks, for every line contained some allusion to the well-remembered "hard cider and log cabin" campaign, in which the "coons," as the whigs were derisively called, had gained so brilliant a victory, and been so bitterly disappointed of its fruits in consequence of the death of the president and defection of the vice-president.

"A very creditable performance," was the verdict of General Waddle. "If the situation depicted were only true, I would call it a most excellent performance. As it is, we must give our Democratic young friend credit for a lively imagination, and a marvelous proficiency in improvisation."

Victor blushed with pleasure, and his eyes sought out Nellie, who beamed upon him an approval that he prized more highly than even the encomiums from her father, and all the rest of the company together. But his honesty would not permit him to appropriate laurels not strictly his due. "It is not an improvisation," he said. "I had thought it out before."

"What!" exclaimed Mr. Huffard, his brows contracting with comical indignation, "and kept it treacherously to yourself? Don't you know, that your brain, and all its political and poetical productions belong to the *Argus*? To think that it should have been despoiled of its legitimate dues in this surreptitious manner! You'll bear watching, young man!"

"We will have it in the *Argus* in proper time," cried Leslie, well pleased by his success in bringing Victor out of his dumps. "But just now we will make a song of it. It will go excellently well to the tune of "Sitting on a Rail." So let us have the words once more, Victor, and the whole company, whigs and all, will join in the chorus."

The song was a social success. Every person present was familiar with the tune to which "The Lay of a Gone Coon," was sung with a hearty good will.

But the grand feature of the May Meadows party was still *in petto* of Nellie and Leslie. It was nothing less than a mock-marriage, with all the pomp and circumstance of a real one, — a bride, bridesmaids, groom, groomsmen, parson, ceremony, reception, festive wedding supper, and dancing for those whose conscience did not forbid the delightful pastime. The idea had originated with Nellie, who would of course personate the bride, and she had extensively provided herself with the necessary ornaments and trappings appropriate to the occasion — bridal robe, veil, wreath, rings and all. Although Leslie had, at first, been reluctant to enter into the scheme, he, when his impetuous sister had coaxed him into it, seconded her plans with energy, and had undertaken to acquaint the company at the proper time with the proposed entertainment, as well as to attend to such other matters of detail as would more properly be attended to by him. It fell to his lot to select the ladies and gentlemen who were to act as bridesmaids and groomsmen, and also to inform the groom himself of the high distinction that was to be conferred upon him. The brother and sister had kept the whole thing a profound secret until the time for action came, — partly because it would enhance the enjoyment of the affair if sprung upon the company as a surprise, and partly because they wished to avoid the gossip that might busy itself with the relations between Nellie and the gentleman chosen as groom.

During a somewhat protracted absence of Nellie from the room, the cause of which Victor sought in vain to imagine, Leslie surprised him by a whispered invitation to follow him into a side room, where he completely took away his breath by the inquiry, how he would like it to become Nellie's husband? A crimson flood suffused the young man's cheeks and forehead, followed swiftly by a deathly pallor.

"Nellie's *husband!*" he stammered, stunned by the bare

mention of that as a possibility, which he had in his inmost heart, in rare moments only, dared to picture to himself as supreme, but utterly unattainable, bliss. "What — what do you mean?"

"Just what I say," Leslie, replied, smiling mischievously. "Nellie wants to get married to-night, and has hit upon you for a partner. Have you any objection?"

"I? Marry *Miss Nellie*?" Victor slowly repeated, gazing into her brother's face in helpless bewilderment. "You do not — you cannot — mean it?"

"Why not?" replied Leslie, with a tantalizing smile, keenly enjoying Victor's dazed astonishment. Then, as if taking pity on his painful perplexity, he added: "Not for good, you know, but just in fun. We wish to entertain our guests with the spectacle of a wedding, and Nellie believes it will give you pleasure to stand up with her for the mock ceremony. It is all play, you know: but I dare say that many of the boys will envy you the fun you will have."

"Oh!" sighed Victor, catching his breath, as if relieved from a heavy burden. "Just for fun!" Then he added, the color coming back into his face more deeply than before, "Miss Nellie wishes to marry — me — in *fun*!"

"Yes," Leslie rejoined, "I am sure it will be capital sport to you and Nellie, — and to the whole company — to go through the whole rigmarole of a marriage ceremony, — the parson standing before you, joining your hands and preaching to you about the duties of married life, and all that. By the by, I mean to have Huffard act the parson. Won't he put all the mock gravity and sanctimonious unction required for the solemnity of the occasion into his part? I think I hear him enjoin you to 'love, honor *and obey*' sister Nellie! Beware, Victor, how you promise, or she will make you her abject slave for the rest of your life."

Again the color faded from Victor's face, — hardly, however, because he feared the doom of slavery at Nellie's hands — for he said, with an imploring look into Leslie's eyes, genuine

agony audible even in his whispered words: "I am sorry, Mr. May, that Miss May wishes to marry — *in fun*."

"Sorry, Victor? Why?"

Victor made no answer to this question, but continued, after a brief pause, during which his eyes had slowly dropped, as if unable to bear the astonished gaze of his friend: "I thank you, and I thank your sister, from the bottom of my heart, for your very great kindness. It was, indeed, *very* kind of you — of both of you — to think of me in — in this way. But I — I cannot stand up with Miss May — *in fun!*"

"What do you mean? What on earth can be your objection?" Leslie exclaimed, his astonishment fast turning into anger. "You have always professed such chivalrous devotion to my sister, that we thought that this thing would be a gratification to you. And now you say that you can't do it? Nellie will be even more surprised than I am!"

"Oh, do not be angry, Mr. May!" implored Victor. "It would make me but too happy to do anything for you and Miss May — anything compatible with honor and duty —"

"Compatible with *honor* and *duty!*" Leslie repeated in a tone of withering sarcasm, his brows contracting to a sinister scowl that absolutely frightened Victor, who had never seen his friend in such a mood. "And pray, Mr. Waldhorst, do you consider it incompatible with honor and duty to stand up with Miss May?"

"To make sport of so sacred a thing!" said Victor, in a whisper hardly audible. "It would be committing sacrilege, to repeat, before a whole room full of people, who would giggle and laugh, words of the most sacred import, in wanton mockery."

He had hardly finished these words when the door opened and Nellie, wreathed in smiles, and in Victor's eyes unspeakably beautiful in the bridal robe of snowy whiteness, entered and, walking straight up to Leslie, asked him whether he had gotten through with all the arrangements; but without waiting for an answer, she turned to Victor, who stood spellbound in

the presence of such ravishing beauty, and asked him with a gracious smile: "How do you like your bride, Mr. Waldhorst?"

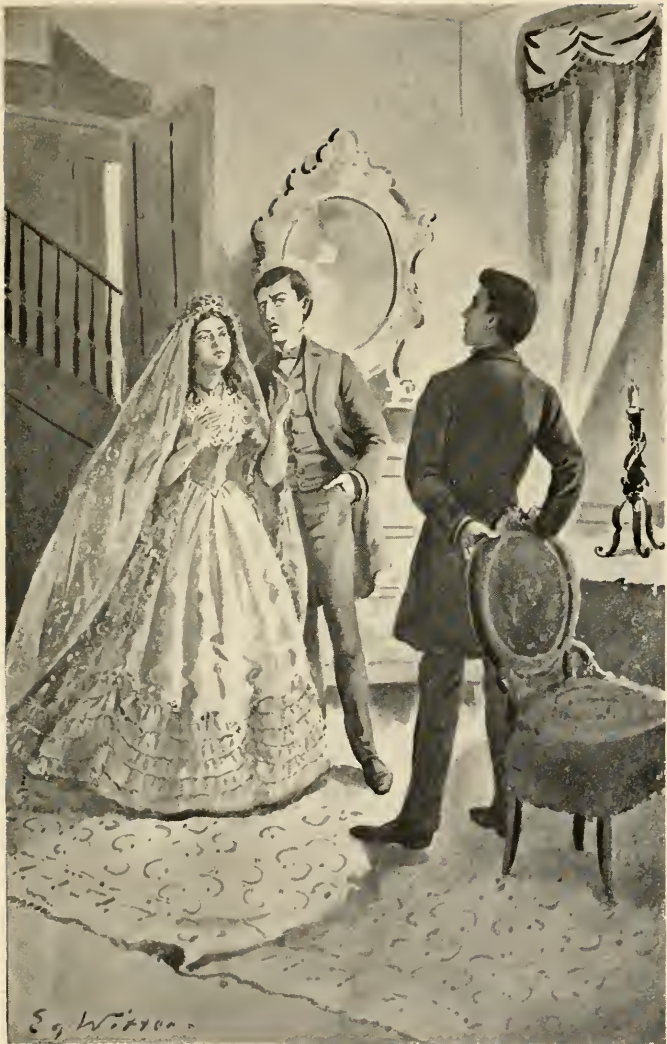
Victor made no answer. The beads of perspiration gathering on his forehead gave token of the anguish that racked his soul.

Nellie sobered up. "Why, what is the matter, Mr. Waldhorst?" she asked. "I expected a different welcome to this, from my devoted cavalier, when he is about to receive his reward for his faithful constancy."

"Faithful fiddlesticks!" Leslie spoke up. "Behold a sanctimonious Puritan, who finds it 'incompatible with honor and duty' to marry my sister, even in fun! He evidently thinks you a forward minx, to ask him to marry you, and sternly gives you the mitten. Serves us right, though, for our folly in not taking into account the fastidious taste of your — outlandish beau."

The girl turned as white as her bridal robe. "Is this so, Mr. Waldhorst?" she inquired in low accents, regarding Victor with pathetic appeal for contradiction. But as Victor hung his head without replying in words, the blood rushed back in a mighty flood, dyeing her neck, cheeks and forehead with lovely crimson; and she flashed upon him such a look of angry indignation and fierce scorn, as might have caused a bolder man than Victor to quail. Turning to her brother, she bade him at once summon Mr. Payton, adding that he, at least, would not disgrace her by a shameful repulse.

When Leslie had left the room, after assuring his sister that everything would be ready in a minute or two, Victor essayed to beg forgiveness of the haughty beauty. His voice sounded hollow, even to his own ear; but he managed, by a mighty effort, to stammer out a few words. Instead of answering him, she said, in a voice that froze the young man's blood, "I have a great favor to ask of you. If you possess a spark of manhood, you will not refuse it. I beg of you, that you will not boast of the triumph you have gained over me this night."



“Faithful fiddlesticks!” Leslie spoke up.

“ You wrong me, Miss Nellie! Oh, how you misunderstand me! ” The words were wrung from Victor in very torture, and were his only reply to Nellie's cruel speech.

“ My name is Eleonora; and strangers call me by the name my father bears, ” she said, haughtily.

The entrance of Ralph Payton, at this moment, smiling in eager expectation, relieved Victor from the necessity of replying, and made it impossible to seek to explain himself more fully. He felt himself dismissed.

In leaving the room he caught what appeared to him a glance of malicious triumph from Payton, and noticed the unusual paleness of Nellie's face, as she smiled upon the latter. He noticed also that she had not quite relaxed her haughty bearing.

* * *

It is not important to dwell upon the further events transpiring at the party. So much may be recorded, that the mock marriage was gone through with, almost literally in accordance with the program laid down by the brother and sister, save that Nellie was led to the improvised altar with a grace and elegance that Victor could not have displayed. The reception after the ceremony, at which the bride was kissed by all the gentlemen present, as was the fashion at real weddings, — the sumptuous supper, served in a style befitting the hospitality of the May family — the dance, to the music of two negro fiddlers, at which the bridal couple led off in a waltz, and had all the floor to themselves, round dances being comparatively unknown at Brookfield, — all came off to the great edification of the assemblage, who voted the May party a grand success and noted the feature of the mock-marriage for imitation on future occasions.

When the guests had departed, Nellie sat wearily upon a lounge, reflecting, with a far-off look in her eyes, on the occurrences of the night. Leslie broke in upon her reverie with the question: “ Well, Sissy, and what do you think of our party? I rather flatter myself that it was *comme il faut*.

The palm of success is unquestionably due to you, for I fancy that that mock-marriage astonished the natives and will become an institution at all their frolics hereafter."

Nellie was wrapped in deep thought. Without looking at her brother she said: "I wish, that we had not set the example."

"What?" exclaimed Leslie, regarding his sister with unfeigned astonishment. "Why, I almost believe that that silly boy has infected you with his Puritanical squeamishness. He deserves a cowhiding for his shameful insult to you."

"Victor is a romantic dunce," said the girl, deliberately, "and he has thoroughly spoilt for me the enjoyment of the evening, to which I had looked forward so eagerly. But his punishment has been far more severe than his offense. I dare say that he will not soon forget the cut I gave him."

"And serve him right!" Leslie interrupted her. "It makes my blood boil even now to think of his insolence and ingratitude, after the petting he has received in this house. Don't let the thought of him disturb your enjoyment of the triumph in the success of our — let me say your — stroke of genius."

"Was it quite the thing, Leslie, for me to make a spectacle of myself, for the amusement and gratification of vulgar loobies?" Nellie asked, her manner indicating that her words implied an assertion rather than a question.

"For mercy's sake, Nellie, don't become a sentimental fool, like this German dreamer! You will make yourself the laughing stock of the whole town. Talking about loobies, — think what a painful experience you escaped in not having to go through the ceremony with *him*."

"Yes, Leslie. And it was Victor that saved me from that ordeal. Don't you think that he showed himself more of a gentleman —"

"Than?" demanded Leslie, as Nellie hesitated.

"Than I showed myself a lady?" said Nellie, smiling dubiously.

“Bosh! Get off to bed!” said Leslie. “You are worn out and sleepy. To-morrow you will be yourself again, and be proud of the triumphs you have scored to-night.”

“I hope I will,” was Nellie’s response, as she languidly bid her brother good-night.

Whatever effect the party at May Meadows may have had on the young people having attended it, it certainly proved a turning point in the life of the printer’s apprentice. The May family departed for Washington a few days afterwards, and so Victor was deprived of the melancholy pleasure of bidding farewell to his young friends. For it occurred to him that under the circumstances it would be for him a humiliation to visit May Meadows. So he saw nothing more of either Leslie or Nellie. Colonel May himself was as cordial as ever when, on the morning of the departure, he came to the printing office to say good-bye to Huffard and Victor, playfully requesting the latter to remember him kindly, and leniently criticise his official conduct in Congress. It was, of course, out of the question, he knew, for the young lady to call on him; but he had secretly hoped that Leslie would shake hands with him before leaving, and perhaps say that Nellie wished him good-bye. It stung him to the quick, therefore, to see the carriages start for the metropolis, where the family were to take boat for Pittsburg, without his having received so much as a word or a glance from either.

Perhaps it was well for Victor that things took this turn. For even his infatuation did not prevent him from seeing, — though so thoroughly biased in their favor — the cruel injustice of their conduct. His mettle was, for once, aroused. Pride came to his aid in battling with his feeling of bitter disappointment. He had acted rightly. They were in the wrong. But however soothing to his dignity, the spirit of resentment and retaliation engendered by the contemplation of their injustice, was not so potent as to heal the ache in the innermost recesses of his heart. Deep down, there was woe more bitter than the wounds caused by the harsh treatment he had received, — an

agony all the more poignant because he was hardly aware of its true cause. Nellie herself had dimmed the lustre of the halo created about her person by his poetic imagination. She had, with cruel hand, sullied his divinely beautiful ideal of womanhood, — most cruel, because none other than her own hand could besmire his worshiped idol.

But the rude awakening from his romantic dreams, so far from crushing out his ambitious aspirations, served as a new impetus to school himself for a life of usefulness in the service of humanity — of freedom, as ideally embodied in the principles underlying the American government, — of Democracy, as the party whose goal was the realization of his ideal. Firm in this conviction, he devoted himself to the task of becoming a true democrat, and threw himself with all his might upon the discharge of the duties immediately before him.

During the next few years he thoroughly mastered the details of the printing business, so far as the limited resources of a country office permitted. Nor did he neglect the diligent study of the law under the guidance of Mr. Yancey, making such progress therein as elicited admiration and sincere commendation from this gentleman. He took occasion, indeed, to suggest to Victor to seek a wider field for the display of his talent than Brookfield afforded, — a piece of advice that impressed the young man, because it so perfectly accorded with his own inclination.

Colonel May had been twice re-elected to Congress, owing much of his success, at home at least, to the loyal, vigorous support received from the *Ozark Argus*, the leading articles of which emanated mostly from Victor's pen. He spent several months during the recess of Congress, at home; but the family had not returned. They spent the most of the time when Congress was not in session in traveling, both in Europe and in the United States, accompanied, sometimes, by Leslie, who, as Victor had learned from the Colonel, was now about to settle in the metropolis for the practice of the law. The attach-

ment of the young man for his early patron suffered no diminution; indeed, their intercourse was, considering the difference in their ages and position in life, remarkably intimate, and the interchange of letters between them lively. But while Victor preserved the most ardent sentiments of gratitude and admiration for his benefactor, their communications related mostly to political affairs, and the magnet that had once drawn him so powerfully to May Meadows, was no longer there. Nellie and Leslie gone, what was there to attract Victor?

Letters about this time received from his sister, breathing a love and affection very grateful to his hungry heart, awakened a feeling akin to homesickness which, in connection with advice received from Mr. Yancey, ripened in his mind the resolution, to turn his back upon the town of Brookfield, and to seek in the great city, a field of activity at once more congenial to his tastes and more promising to his ambition.

He left the town, one lovely day of Spring, in company of his old companion, Yahkop, regretted by none so much as by Mr. Huffard, who, however, joined his former chief, Mynheer Van Braaken, in prophesying for him a bright future, in a sphere affording scope for his ambition.



PART SECOND:

DEMOCRACY DIVIDED AGAINST ITSELF.

XVI.

GAMBRINUS UNDER A CLOUD.

THE politics of the country, as viewed by politicians of the ordinary calibre, were in a muddle. Self-constituted rulers of primaries and ward-meeting orators had lost their reckoning. For the straws that indicated the public mind were blown, by fitful gusts of political winds, in unexpected and incalculable directions. Fickleness was a mild term to apply to the mood in which the political weather-vane boxed the compass in erratic jumps. Croakers there were, who saw portentous clouds arise in the political horizon, auguring foul weather to follow. But they shared the fate of curse-stricken Cassandra, whose prophesies of evil fell upon listless ears. Hopeful, easy going patriots of the stay-at-home class dreamed not of danger; for had not many clouds come and gone in the horizon, leaving the ship of State serenely sailing its wonted course, favored by the fairest weather? Sore-heads there always had been; misunderstood, unappreciated statesmen, disappointed demagogues, purse-poor patriots with unappeased hunger for office, — who of course must presage utter ruin to a misguided, unappreciative country. For what good is in a commonwealth that is deaf to their wisdom, unresponsive to their appeals, inexcusably blind to their claims for office? They have croaked before; they will go on croaking, unless their mouths are stopped with official pap. Still, even hopefully inclined politicians were

puzzled to make out their course, or to predict the direction into which the political wind would eventually settle.

One of the symptoms of the time, unaccountable to many, was the meteor-like brilliancy with which the new light of Know-Nothingism dazzled the people. Some, to be sure, saw in it the legitimate fruition of the disorganizing effect produced by the final collapse of the Whig party. Triumphant Democracy, no longer held together by pressure from without, gave signs of falling to pieces of its own weight. The active principles of its vitality, no longer directed against the veteran enemy with whom it had measured swords so often, began to attack its own vitals. It had outgrown the proportions of a party, being no longer a *part* only of the whole; and must now disintegrate into new parties. Then had come the tempting opportunity for crafty politicians to foist off upon the community their counterfeit patriotism. Ardent love for the constitution and devotion to the Union, paraded along with an array of cabalistic catch-words, shrouded in mysterious symbolism, dazzled and dazed the voters, who believed that the purity of the ballot can be preserved by the use of secret signs and passwords, and rascals kept out of a patriotic party by arming its honest followers with a Shibboleth and a secret grip. Thus reasoned they who thought to ascribe the phenomenal success of the Know-Nothing party to the ordinary law of cause and effect; and marveled not thereat.

There was another factor, too, to be reckoned with in summing up the political situation. Among those who were not caught by the hocus-pocus of Know-Nothingism, and who could not sanction its proscriptive policy, were many who had identified themselves with that band of persistent enthusiasts, whose earnest zeal in the cause of freedom had won for them the nick-name of "Freedom Shriekers," because they marched, just then, to the battle-cry of "Free-Soil, Free Speech, Free Labor, Free Men!" Their opponents, who agreed in nothing so well as in making common cause against these enthusiasts, conducted the warfare against them largely

with the weapons of mockery and ridicule. But neither sportive raillery, nor keen satire, nor venomous shafts of sarcasm, deterred the zealots from their purpose. They seemed to thrive under this system of opposition, which they chose to point out as persecution and denial of sacred right. However ridiculous might be their pretensions, it behooved wise politicians to take them into account in figuring on the probabilities of future elections. Let triumphant Democracy, in particular, summon Israel to its tents; for the battle is not always to the strong, nor the race to the swift.

Victor Waldhorst had returned to the metropolis. He found, that there the party that he had so faithfully combatted in the columns of the *Ozark Argus*, had it all their own way. The city had yielded at almost the first onslaught, surrendering unconditionally to the victorious Know-Nothings. They had captured the office of the chief executive, a decisive majority in both branches of its legislative councils, as well as the judiciary (in the shape of the police judge, then styled Recorder). New brooms proverbially sweep clean, and so there was, of course, a decidedly clean sweep from office of the petty placemen, who held appointments more or less fat, as compensation for the services rendered as partisans of the now dethroned party potentates. Loud were the wails that went up from the victims of the municipal new broom, and bitter the imprecations heaped upon the heads of the new administration, amid impotent gnashing of teeth. But after the usual storm of indignation and Cassandra prophecies of turned out office-holders things went on very much as before. There was plenty of remunerative work for those unfortunates that had to be weaned from the official fleshpots, if they desired to earn the bread they ate, even though they belonged to the class of Dutch, Irish or Catholics proscribed by the party of patriots in power. And even those who possessed the passwords and grips of the Mystic Order, — at least such of them as had not been admitted to the Holy of Holies, — had no bread to eat not spiced by the sweat of their brow. Rum

shops and beer houses still did a thriving business, though now beginning to arrogate to themselves the more euphonious appellation of "saloons." On Sundays, the spacious beer gardens, located mostly in the suburbs, though not scarce in the city proper, were well patronized by socially disposed citizens of Teutonic descent, seeking there, with their wives and children, recreation in the open air, and enjoying the national beverage with pretzels and Limburg cheese, listening the while to soothing or inspiring strains of music discoursed by well trained bands.

Ah, those beer gardens! That desecration of the Holy Sabbath Day by music from brass and stringed instruments! What a flagrant violation of the law of the land! For was there not an ordinance of the city prohibiting the keeping open of any place for the sale of intoxicating drinks on the first day of the week, commonly called Sunday? Did not the statute of the State declare such to be a misdemeanor, indictable by the grand jury and punishable by fine not exceeding fifty dollars? Surely, this was a signal instance of the lawlessness of the foreign population, and of the rottenness of the old parties that had winked at and connived with the evil doers, thus encouraging open defiance of law and order.

Here, then, was a task worthy of the municipal broom. The law must be vindicated. The American party must weed out these heathenish customs and protect the country against dangerous foreign influence. And the American party shrank not from its self-imposed task: it was equal to the emergency, — the fiat went forth: The beer garden must go!

A glorious time ensued for the lawyers. Sheriff, marshal, clerks of the criminal courts and prosecuting officers grew fat, metaphorically speaking, on the plentiful harvest of fees inuring to them out of the crusade against beer gardens. True bills for the violation of the Sunday law monopolized the attention of the grand jury; their trials engaged the time of the criminal courts to the extent of crowding cases against murderers, thieves and other common malefactors.

The junior member of one of the law firms retained to defend the proprietor of an extensive beer garden under indictment, was a young man who had recently settled in the city for the practice of the law. An old practitioner entered into partnership with him in the hope of an advantageous increase of business. The case in hand fell to the management of the junior partner. It involved not a single question of law that had not already been decided by the Supreme Court adversely to their client, so that the only possibility of a favorable issue lay in the highly improbable chance of breaking down the testimony of the prosecution. The client had been fairly informed of the hopelessness of his chances, and the implicit confidence placed by him in the integrity of his lawyers put them on their mettle. The young man determined to bring his utmost ability to bear in the achievement of an acquittal of his client if within the reach of human exertion. With the view of posting himself on the details involved in the trial, and to familiarize himself with the manner in which business was conducted in these places, he determined to visit the establishment of his client, and study the character and habits of its patrons.

Leslie May — for such was the name of the junior partner of the firm of Simms & May, — reached the pleasant grounds known as Vaux Hall Park on a bright, sunny Sunday afternoon in the month of July. It was accessible not only to pedestrians, but was, on fine Sundays, equally the resort of pleasure seekers who came on horseback, in buggies, barouches and carriages of higher pretensions; and most of all in those omnibuses of illimitable capacity, in which there is always room for one more passenger. Mr. May found the cool shade and green foliage of the park exceedingly refreshing after his hot walk in the scorching July sun, and sat down to one of the many tables provided for the accommodation of the guests, wiping the perspiration from his streaming forehead. He ordered the waiter, who promptly approached, in shirt-sleeves and apron of immaculate white, to bring him a glass of

the "ice-cold lemonade," of which guests were reminded by little signs hung up on the trunks of the trees. "Don't forget to put plenty of ice in it!" he called out in a loud voice, as the waiter hurried away.

The young lawyer looked around. The spacious grounds were not yet half filled with guests, although a continuous stream of perspiring humanity poured in from the dusty roads outside, through gates at opposite sides. Leslie noticed that there were almost as many ladies and children among the comers as men, and they came mostly in groups, or at least in couples. They seated themselves at a convenient distance from the music stand, where an orchestra of twelve musicians were already tuning their instruments. The table next his own was but a few feet off, and Leslie noticed that the single occupant of the bench before it was regarding him with evident interest.

"It is a warm day," said the stranger, as soon as their eyes met.

"I have found it to be so in reaching this place," Leslie answered.

"You did come by foot, sir?" the other continued.

"Exactly so," said Leslie, amused by the curiosity of his interlocutor. "And I found it quite a hot walk."

"*Pardon!*" said the neighbor, pronouncing the last syllable with a strong emphasis. "I see you are very much warmed. And I did hear you command cold lemonade. With plenty ice in it. You wish to drink ice-cold lemonade, when you are very much warmed?"

"Why, yes," said Leslie May, smiling. "That is just what I crave. I want cooling off, and a glass of iced lemonade is, I think, about the thing."

"*Pardon!*" the stranger repeated, rolling the r sufficiently to betray that he was not speaking in his mother tongue. "Have you already owned a horse? Yes? And when you drive him fast on a warm day, like it is this day, and when he is very much warmed, like you are warmed, just now, gave

you him cold water to drink, first? No? Then, why will you be more considerate with your horse, as you will be with yourself?"

The earnestness of the stranger's manner precluded the idea of officious meddling, and highly amused the young lawyer. Before he made answer the waiter appeared, bearing on a tray a large glass with a straw in it. As Leslie was paying the waiter, the stranger continued:

"You must not drink that stuff, so warm as you are! If you will honor me, drink with me a glass beer. It is excellent to-day. It is of Ubrig's choice brew. Or drink with me a glass wine, if you like better. Then if you are cooled, I will drink with you lemonade, and it will not make you sick. If you drink that stuff now, it will be, for you, poison."

"Do you think that drinking wine will cool me off?" Leslie inquired with a smile.

"It will warm for you the stomach," the other replied gravely, "and make the blood to circulate, and cold water will afterward not hurt you. Shall I order a bottle wine, or prefer you beer?"

"I will leave that entirely to your choice, since you take such interest in my health," Leslie replied. "But may I inquire, what induces you to favor me with your, no doubt excellent, advice?"

"Right, young man!" the old gentleman spoke up, apologetically. "My name is Auf dem Busch; and I am a merchant. — Waiter! A bottle Rudesheimer! — I have no motive, but wish not to see a young man to ruin his constitution, when he is heated, like you are."

"My name is Leslie May!" the lawyer explained. "I am very thankful to you for your kindness; though I must say, that I have never experienced any injurious effects from drinking lemonade, while I have seen bad results from the use of more ardent drinks."

Mr. Auf dem Busch shook hands with Leslie on learning his name, and proceeded to enlighten the latter on the evils of in-



“ Do you know, Mr. May, that you are hardly
a stranger to me? ”

temperance, in any shape, — even in the drinking of cold lemonade. A lively conversation ensued between the two as they quaffed their wine, which Leslie found to be of excellent quality. He readily fell in with the humor of his newly found friend; and adroitly turned the conversation on the subject of the enforcement of the Sunday-law, with the view of picking up any information that he might utilize in the coming trial.

The interchange of opinions between them was so interesting to both that they paid but little attention to the really excellent music discoursed by the band, nor heeded the arrival of the numerous guests that began to collect at the tables around them. Not even a party of ladies and gentlemen, until these had approached quite near, and Leslie heard his name called out by a voice betraying joyful surprise. On looking up, Victor Waldhorst stood before him, offering both hands in cordial welcome. Leslie himself was both pleased and surprised to meet his Brookfield crony so unexpectedly; but the delight of the latter was unbounded. After heartily shaking hands, — finding it difficult to repress a strong impulse to embrace his friend Leslie then and there — he turned with beaming face to the old gentleman with whom Leslie had been conversing and said: “*Uncle Auf dem Busch*, permit me to introduce to you my dearest friend, Leslie May, who, as well as his excellent father, has been a real benefactor to me.” Then, turning to a lady of rather stout build and comely appearance, he added, “and this, Leslie, is my aunt, Mrs. *Auf dem Busch*; and this” — turning to a young lady, who blushed on being referred to — “is my sister Pauline.”

Leslie had courteously bowed to Mrs. *Auf dem Busch*; but when Miss Pauline was introduced to him, he rose with easy grace, and offered his hand, which was cordially clasped by the young lady. “Do you know, Mr. May,” she said, smiling pleasantly, “that you are hardly a stranger to me? My brother has spoken so often of you, and is so enthusiastic in your praise, that I feel as if I had known you for a long time.”

“I fear that the fond partiality of your brother has endowed

me with virtues and hero-like qualities whose absence you will, on nearer acquaintance, but too speedily discover," said the young man, looking well pleased, nevertheless, and scarcely betraying the modesty he professed. "I only hope that in your kindness you will look leniently on the great disparity between your brother's idealized hero and my commonplace self."

The company, in taking seats, distributed themselves so as to occupy both tables, and Leslie adroitly placed himself beside Victor's sister. There was another gentleman in the party, whom Victor introduced as his cousin, Woldemar Auf dem Busch, and who, in consequence of Leslie's maneuvering, found himself at the same table with his father and mother, leaving the young lady seated between her brother and the young lawyer, — an arrangement, which was not, apparently, to the taste of the young man last introduced; for an unmistakable frown darkened his face, — unnoticed by the others, but acknowledged by Leslie with a scarcely perceptible smile. Whether this frown excited Leslie's mischievous propensity to tease, or whether he was prompted by an amiable desire to please the sister of his friend, who had received him so graciously, certain it is that he brought his conversational powers into full play, and succeeded in charming not only the young lady, who proved an attentive listener, but also, and particularly, the old gentleman. Victor, who was eager to hear about Nellie, inquired after the family of Colonel May; but Leslie put him off with the promise to satisfy his curiosity to the fullest extent as soon as occasion offered for a talk between themselves, proceeding meanwhile to entertain his hearers with a sprightly account of his experiences of Washington life, as well as of his travels. The close attention which was paid to everything he said must have gratified his vanity; and the few questions addressed to him by the elder Auf dem Busch enabled him to divine and dwell upon the topics most interesting to his auditors. Several more bottles of Rudesheimer were disposed of by the company, and it is to

be feared that the young lawyer sadly forgot the main purpose of his visit to Vaux Hall Park, whatever progress he made in gaining the good will of his new acquaintances.

The sun was declining in the west, and a cool breeze fanned the heated faces of the guests at the Park, now glowing, mostly, with a fervor not due to the external temperature alone. The band had left the platform on which they had performed during the afternoon, and were now striking up dance melodies in a large pavilion devoted to the worshippers of Terpsichore. Many of the guests were leaving, and Mrs. Auf dem Busch reminded her husband that it was time to think of going home. The young lady promptly arose on hearing the suggestion, and Leslie, following her example, expressed his regret that the extremely pleasant time he was enjoying should end so soon. "Surely, Miss Waldhorst," looking coaxingly into the fair, fresh face of the young girl, — "you may stay just long enough to honor me with your hand for a turn in that exquisite waltz they are playing? Listen — It is Strauss' 'Beautiful Blue Danube!' Can you resist the allurements of those inspiring strains?"

Pauline looked at him for a second in mild wonderment. The slightest touch of a smile brightened her rosy lips and found reflection in her brown eyes, as she threw a glance toward the gentleman at the other table, meeting a frown of pronounced disapproval on the face of the younger Auf dem Busch, not unnoticed by Leslie: "You must excuse me, Mr. May," she said, "do you think it would be quite the proper thing to do?"

"Why not?" Leslie rejoined eagerly. "See how all those young people are enjoying themselves! You are not averse to dancing, are you?"

"On the contrary, I am very fond of it!" said Pauline, her sparkling eyes giving emphasis to her words. "But — it is too late. We must be going home."

"I am sure that Mrs. Auf dem Busch, and you, Mr. Auf dem Busch," said Leslie, turning to the elder members of the

party with the most winning smile of entreaty, "will gladly postpone your departure for a few moments to give me the pleasure of a dance with Miss Waldhorst, if she does not object."

"But she does object!" exclaimed the old gentleman bluntly. "Said she not, it is not proper? She has right. Mark you the dancers on the dance-floor. See you any there besides servant-maids and work-folks? Dancing on Sunday, in a public park, is for them right. They shall enjoy so much as they can on Sunday; because they have only one Sunday in the week. If you will dance, or if Pauline will dance, you shall dance every day in the week, on a day more fitting as Sunday, and in a place for you more fit as a park."

Leslie yielded gracefully, although it puzzled him to account for his discomfiture. Did the young lady really consider it bad taste to dance on Sunday? Now he thought of it, her behavior had been perfectly consistent with such refinement. The recollection of Victor's conduct toward Nellie on the occasion of that last party at Brookfield flashed through his mind. But the old gentleman — did *he* consider his family too good to mix with "servant-maids" and "work-folks?" Then why were they in the park at all? Or had the frown on young Auf dem Busch's face anything to do with the girl's refusal? Perhaps so. At least his suspicions in that direction gained consistency when she, as he was about to escort her to the gate, where the carriage was waiting for the party, somewhat hastily accepted her cousin's arm, who officiously helped her to her seat and thus cut off further opportunity for conversation.

"I will take your place in the carriage," the old gentleman said to Victor; "for you will like it to have more conversation with your friend. And forget not," he added, as he climbed into the carriage, "Professor Rauhenfels comes after-to-morrow. Miss not to come."

Victor was but too glad to see them leave, and Leslie, whether glad or not, bowed his adieux as they drove off, and took Victor's arm.

“Let us go back to the garden,” he said; “we can talk there as well as anywhere else, and I have taken a fancy to that ‘Rüdesheimer’ your uncle introduced us to. And now, before you ply me with the thousand and one questions that are on the tip of your tongue, let me put you through your catechism. Tell me, first of all, how you got away from Brookfield, and what you are doing here.”

Victor felt the old fascination in Leslie’s company. The last harsh speech he had spoken before their parting was forgiven, if not forgotten. However great the change which the experience of years had wrought in both young men, — change never more pronounced than in the period of adolescence through which they had both passed — it had not diminished the glowing, devoted friendship between them, at least on Victor’s part. As of old, the slightest wish of his friend was to him as a peremptory command. And so, though his heart fairly ached to hear about the other members of the May family, he willingly complied with the request to speak of himself first.

There was not so much to tell. He modestly alluded to the desolation he felt after the departure of the Mays from Brookfield; of the progress he made in learning his trade, and of his studies; of his conviction, that there was so much more to learn than could be taught him at Brookfield; and wound up by stating that he had finally concluded to return to the metropolis, where he had found congenial employment as editor of a German newspaper. “And now tell me, Leslie,” he begged, when he had finished his little narration, “where have you been during all the time I have not seen you? — I learned from your father that you had traveled much of the time, and was delighted with the account you gave us this afternoon of some of your interesting experiences. But I want to hear about yourself and about your mother, and —”

“About Nellie,” Leslie interrupted him, “yes, I know. I am going to tell you all about all of them presently. But you have not told me half I want to know about yourself. Who

is this uncle of yours; and how do you stand with him? Do you live at his house?"

"No," was the answer. "Nor is he my uncle. Our relationship is very distant. But he was a friend of my father, and after the death of my parents took care of my sister Pauline. He was very kind to her, treating her in every respect as if she were his own daughter, although he has a number of children of his own."

"Of whom this cousin of yours, this Woldemar, is one?"

"Exactly. He is the oldest of them, and both Mrs. and Mr. Auf dem Busch are very proud of him —"

"I should think so," said Leslie, not waiting for the finishing of the sentence. "But tell me, Victor, are *you* proud of him, too?"

"I? Why should *I* be proud of him? I have no proprietorship in him; and our relationship is so distant, that neither of us lays stress upon it, though Uncle Auf dem Busch wishes us to call one another cousin."

"I see," said Leslie musing. Then he continued: "But do you like him?"

"Of course I like him!" Victor answered promptly. "He is a manly fellow; a little proud, which I think he has a right to be —"

"And not a little imperious!" Leslie again interrupted.

"Why, yes, he is rather imperious," Victor smilingly admitted. "But what makes you think so? I believe he has hardly spoken a dozen words in your hearing."

"And a little jealous?"

"Jealous! What do you mean? Jealous of what?"

"Of your sister's admirers, for instance. She has many, has she not?"

"I have never seen anything like jealousy on his part," said Victor. "But —"

"Well?"

"I think he is kind to my sister; yes, I am sure, he is very kind to her."

“Oh, no doubt of that,” said Leslie, not without a slight sneer. “And that is not what you started to say. But never mind. Tell me about the paper you are editing. What is its political creed?”

“How can you ask me that!” the young man exclaimed, almost reproachfully. “You know my politics as well as I do, seeing that I am but your father’s disciple.”

“Yes, certainly. But I did not ask you about *your* politics, but about the creed of the paper you are editing.”

“Do you believe me capable of advocating anything but my convictions?”

“No!” Leslie admitted frankly. “And I might have known better than to ask the question. I have heard say, that an editor trims his sails, sometimes, so as to please not only the proprietor, but also his readers.”

“Such an editor is to be despised. I could not, if I would, take charge of a paper on such conditions.”

“And would not, if you could!” Leslie exclaimed cordially. “Forgive me, if my question suggested a doubt, which I did not entertain.—I suppose that you take a decided stand against this warfare on Sunday beer gardens?”

A deep blush spread over Victor’s face. “I—I must confess,” he said, somewhat dejected, “that in this particular the articles in my paper do not exactly reflect my conviction. I cannot conceal to myself, that it is wrong to openly defy the law, even if the law is an obnoxious one—”

“Therein you differ from some of your countrymen,” Leslie interrupted. “I heard one of them argue,—no less a person, than the proprietor of this establishment, who is a client of mine—that it is a sacred duty to combat wrong in whatever shape we meet it, though it assume the shape of a law—”

“Yes, I know;” Victor broke in. “That is the higher law doctrine, which neither you nor I believe in. But it is not in good taste, for one class of citizens to array themselves against another class—presumably the majority, else it would

not be the law — as my German speaking fellow-citizens are doing in this matter of the Sunday laws.”

“Do not forget the Irish!” put in the young lawyer. “They are in full accord with you Germans on this question.”

“Nor am I sure that the law is not in the main a wise one,” Victor continued, looking intently at the glass before him, half filled with the golden juice from the Rhein. “Is there not a fascination about this delicious beverage which some people find it impossible to resist — entirely too many, as you may satisfy yourself by looking around you — and who abandon themselves to its influence to an extent depriving them temporarily of the full use of reason?”

“Bah!” rejoined Leslie contemptuously, “I dare say, that hardly one in twenty of the guests here rise above the level of their beloved lager beer — ‘Uhrig’s choice brew,’ as your uncle named it — and those that do are surely none the worse for the inspiration and quickening of their wits imbibed with this glorious nectar!” Then, emptying his glass with great gusto, he added: “Ah! There is a drink truly fit for the gods! Your uncle is an excellent judge of wine, Victor; there is no denying that.”

“So he is,” said Victor, “and of beer, too. Perhaps these men around us get as much enjoyment out of their beer, as you or I do out of this excellent wine. And I fear that the consequences, when nature exacts the penalty for the violation of her immutable laws, will be much the same in either case.”

“Katzenjammer?” suggested Leslie, with such a droll smile, and so grotesque a pronunciation, that Victor could not suppress a burst of laughter.

“Where did you pick up that word, and what do you know about it?” he asked.

“When I was at Heidelberg,” Leslie explained, “I was naturally curious to see the sights of the great university, making use of my sheepskin from Harvard to get an introduction. Well, I succeeded to the length of obtaining an invitation to one of their drinking bouts in honor of Alma

Mater, which they call Commers, and where they ‘rubbed the Salamander,’ avowedly in honor of their distinguished American visitor, with such hearty good will, that a plentiful crop of ‘Katzenjammer’ was the result next morning. An old professor of philology, whose acquaintance I had made at one of the ‘Kneipen’ resorted to by students, and who helped me get away with many a Schoppen of their excellent Neckar wine, cheerfully expounded to me the mysterious misery of this significant word, involving the explanation that it in no wise referred to cats, as an ignorant foreigner might be led to suppose, but really meant something far less æsthetic, — exactly expressive, however, of the humor of the stomach after attending a Commers.”

“But that is the smallest part of the evil brought on by excessive indulgence — ”

“Do spare me!” Leslie interrupted the moralizing editor. “I’ve had a sermon on temperance from your uncle already, and I wish you would tell me about the professor that you are to meet ‘after-to-morrow’ at your uncle’s. Who and what is he?”

“I know very little about him, except that uncle picked him up somewhere in the interior of the State, while he was on a hunting excursion. Uncle says that he is the most learned man he has ever met with, and that his book learning has not spoiled his common sense, for he is an excellent shot and a remarkably successful huntsman, knowing all about the haunts and habits of game. I think he lives alone in a log cabin in the woods, dividing his time between study and shooting game, on which he manages to live. Just at present he is teaching philosophy to a class of students of Hegel, and uncle wishes me to become acquainted with him. He thinks that I will greatly profit by the intercourse.”

“So, so! A philosopher!” said Leslie, with a quizzical look at Victor. “I should like to see him. Couldn’t you manage to introduce me?”

“Nothing easier!” Victor replied eagerly. “Come along

with me to uncle's to meet him. I shall be very glad to have you with me, for, to tell the truth, I expect to be dreadfully bored by him, especially if he gives us some tough hunting yarns, as uncle does, sometimes, or quizzes me on philosophy. Do come with me, if your time permits. I am sure uncle will be very much pleased to have you come. He has evidently taken a great liking to you."

"Consider it settled that I come," said Leslie, rather patronizingly, yet evidently much pleased. "And now I will treat you to a thrilling account of *The Adventures of the May Family Abroad*."

Victor listened eagerly, as Leslie, in his vivacious way, recounted the experiences of their Washington life, and of their travels to the mountains, the seashore and to Europe. Victor judged from Leslie's account that Nellie must have been a reigning belle in Washington, as well as wherever else she graced society with her presence. "She is now at Saratoga with mama," Leslie concluded, "where they expect to remain until the season is over, when the governor will join them and escort them back to the city."

"And so you were not in Washington, last winter, at all?" asked Victor.

"No," Leslie replied. "I was at Cambridge, taking a post-graduate course in the law-school, to brush up for practice, which I have now begun in downright earnest. That reminds me," he added, "that I have a letter from Nellie in my room, which you may like to read. It was written to me from Washington just before I left Boston, and is full of her notion of things, political and otherwise, that happened there last winter."

It was late when the friends parted that night, and Victor accompanied the young lawyer to his room, eager to get Nellie's letter. His impatience to peruse it did not permit him to accept Leslie's pressing invitation to stay longer. But he promised him that he would call to take him along to his uncle's house, where they were to meet Professor Rauhenfels.

XVII.

FROM OUR WASHINGTON CORRESPONDENT.

I WONDER whether you will believe me, dear brother mine, when I tell you that I am honestly — what you lawyers would call *bona fide* — glad that Lent has come? Truly, it is even so. For although stern Society wield her scepter never more tyrannically, exacting unabated assiduity (Heavens! what a string of dictionary words!) in attending parties, suppers (which they mostly call diners here), not to mention at homes, soirees, *conversazioni*, and what not, all to be gone through with *en grande toilette*; yet balls are over for the season, hops are under a ban, and the german is interdicted during Lent. From which it follows, that Society's muchly tried votaries enjoy a qualified respite from daily toil-*et* — relief and rest, if only by way of change in the program, as one finds rest in that delightful new trick of reversing in the waltz — and now and then — just think of the glorious boon! — an evening to be spent at one's own sweet will.

And so, *mon chère frère*, you will rejoice with me at the advent of Lent. For behold! one of the delightful free evenings has come to me that are so grudgingly doled out by stern Society aforesaid, and I am going to devote it to a big brother at Boston, for whose edification I propose to compose a charmingly nonsensical letter, full of delightful gossip. Oh, you may turn up that nose of yours, like a solemn bird of Minerva, as becomes a denizen of the Hub of the Universe, — but don't I know how dearly that wise brother of mine loves gossip, especially if there be no sense in it? And I am not in the mood to restrict myself to the tedious rules of elegant diction and timid propriety, nor even to conform to the

canons of syntax that Professor Caleb Amos tried so hard to rub into us at that famous grammar class. So look out for a cosy chat, with plenty of nonsense, and don't be shocked at a bit of slang, now and then, to hit off what I could not say so well in regulation language.

I have given strict orders to Cressie, (who, let me tell you, has developed into an accomplished lady's maid under the influence of Washington Society) that I am not at home to any one this evening; least of all to the empty-pated gentlemen in glossy broadcloth and immaculate kids, who essay to curry favor with pa by paying court to his lovely daughter. Cressie is very loyal to me. I can trust her, not only as to her honesty, but, what is of more importance, sometimes, her discretion. This, you will understand, is very high praise of a domestic in Washington. So I anticipate a delightfully quiet time; immunity, for once, from the stereotype phrases of polite company, so pleasantly suggestive, once, to the unsophisticated maiden; grown, now, oh! so stale and wearying in their ever recurring iteration and unmeaningness!

— *Appropos* of admirers, can you guess who called on me last week? Let me draw the picture for you: A young man — mark you, a MAX, — by which I mean, in this instance, something more than the eurrent term gentleman imports — of say twenty-five; a little disguised in a faultless evening costume, not omitting the white cravat and stovepipe of intensest gloss; rather tall, with a round, honest face, haughty eyes, and a saucy mustache of russet hue. Do you recognize him? Of course you do. Let me add that he brought with him the aroma of Western Prairies, and that he addressed me in the dear familiar dialect of Virginians emigrated to the Western backwoods, that reminded me so vividly of bygone days in our delightful Western home. Of course he was none other than my sturdy rural beau, whose attentions to me were so sore a trial to poor, bashful Victor Waldhorst. Yes, it was Ralph Payton. You cannot imagine how glad I was to see him. He presented so agreeable a contrast to the regulation society

figures at Washington. Not but that he would hold his own on the score of etiquette in any company; for he is neither ignorant of the forms of good breeding demanded by Society, nor backward in the use of the stereotype phrases she prescribes. But these phrases, when they are uttered by him, sound, somehow, as if they meant something. When he expressed his pleasure at seeing me, I believed him, and the pleasure was mutual and genuine. I was happy in the reminiscences of olden times, and eagerly abandoned myself to their influence. But he soon dashed cold water over my idyllic mood, and spoiled my pleasure by a silly joke. I happened to ask him what business had brought him to Washington, and he answered that the most important part of his business here was—to see his bride! The remark was accompanied by so significant a smile, that it would have been silly in me to ignore its meaning: so I had to smile also, or appear rude. It must have been a sickly attempt for I felt myself blushing violently. His remark was not in good taste, was it, Leslie? I am sure that that silly boy, Victor, who dared even under the influence of his painful bashfulness, to question the propriety of my conduct on the occasion of that mock-marriage, would have possessed more delicacy than to allude to it, under the circumstances. Victor offended me deeply in that affair; but has it ever occurred to you, that his conduct on the occasion was that of a true gentleman, and that he displayed a courage and heroism of which the bolder man was incapable?

Payton's unfortunate allusion thoroughly spoiled the rest of his visit for me. Luckily, there had been no other person near enough to hear or at least to understand the remark, and I showed him so plainly that the subject was distasteful to me, that he will not, probably, allude to it again. Still I did not venture to repeat my question as to his business here, and he did not volunteer the information. Nor has he repeated his visit. I learn from papa that he is still in the city, and has called on him several times. Can he be seeking for office,

do you think, and wants papa's influence with the government?

— In speaking of stereotype Society figures at Washington, I do not mean to be understood as seeing no difference in them. I am aware, of course, that no city in the world boasts such a variety of types and specimens of humanity, probably, as the capital of our nation. One hears the statement so often in conversation, and meets with it so often in print that it has become trite. What I mean is, that Society polishes down those whom it admits within its jealously guarded precincts, freezing out all sharp edges and acute angles of personal characteristics by the uniformity of dress, deportment, even of conversation, which she decrees, and will not permit to be departed from. Now this uniform fits some better than others, and some not at all. Consequently one may discern character and individuality by the way the uniform fits the wearer; and it is a source of amusement to some of us, to guess whether a gentleman introduced to us is a member of Congress, a government officer, or a lobbyist with a big or a little ax to grind, by the way he uses his napkin or eats his soup. I have made some pretty sharp guesses in this way. But one is picked up, sometimes, in forming the estimate of a man's character or standing by the way he conducts himself in Society. A rather annoying, — I may admit to you, *sub rosa*, humiliating — thing happened to me the other night in this direction, which I don't mind telling you — minding that the miles between Washington and Boston protect me equally against your mischievous smiles and your polite sarcasms.

We had all been invited to a *conversazione* at the hotel of the Secretary of War, whose daughter, you remember is an intimate friend of mine. Jennie had often invited me to tea; and as papa was not certain whether he would have time to escort us in the evening, I persuaded mama to go there with me in the afternoon and remain, feeling sure that Mrs. Secretary would be glad enough to have us assist in receiving the guests.

I made in this way a number of new acquaintances. Sena-

tors, Members, Judges, Lawyers and people of all sorts were introduced. I could not possibly remember all the names. Among them were two who had come together, and who hardly separated from each other during the whole evening. I could not help noticing them, for they presented a striking contrast: the one being a small, rotund, dumpy little gentleman, while the other was tall, lean, gawky, — overtopping his companion by a head and a shoulder, — a goodly sized shoulder at that. I had not caught their names, when they were introduced to the hostess; but somehow I had the impression that the tall one was a Methodist preacher. Perhaps it was because he had a long, sallow face, closely shaven; dark eyes, and a great mouth, which gave him a pious look. The length of his arms was wonderful. It seemed to trouble him greatly to know just what to do with them. While I was noticing these things, a gentleman passed in front of us, bearing refreshments upon a tray to a group of ladies, and I could not help imagining what a funny figure our tall visitor would make, steering through the room with such a waiter poised upon his elongated arms. Jennie laughed as I whispered something of the kind into her ear, and left me with the remark — ‘Let us have the picture by all means.’

Before I was fairly aware of her intention, she had crossed over to where the two gentlemen were conversing with Mrs. Secretary and mama. I could not hear what she said to them; but presently the tall one threw a glance in the direction where I stood, then bowed to Jennie and started off toward the buffet. When he returned, he walked slowly, his eyes riveted on the tray he was bearing, holding it out at arm’s length, and grasping it firmly with both hands. He seemed to be painfully apprehensive that the two glasses of water freighting it might slip off and spill their contents on the carpet. Jennie, as well as the short-statured friend, looked on with evident amusement, and many eyes were turned on him, including my own, taking in the fun of the situation. I am afraid that he may have read something of the kind in my face: for when, having

bowed, not ungracefully, to both Jennie and myself, as we each took one of the glasses, he looked at me, his bright eyes twinkling with fun, and a good-natured smile made his big mouth really handsome.

“I am happy,” he said, “in having been permitted to render a slight service to ladies so fair. But I fear it would go hard with me to make my living as a waiter in Washington City. Carrying this load has been rather harder work to me than splitting rails. But,” he added, a flash of irresistible drollery lighting up his face, “waiters rarely receive such precious wages as I am getting.”

I thanked him, as courteously as if he had been the most accomplished cavalier, for the trouble he had put himself to on our account and asked him what he meant by wages.

“Don’t you know?” he asked in return. “Why, that reminds me of a story — no, I mean of a ballad I once read. Are you acquainted with the poems of Schiller?”

I regretted my ignorance.

“Then there is a treat in store for you,” he went on. “Schiller felt, and in his poems knew how to describe in burning colors, the exquisite bliss, as well as the keen torture of human passion. He was, if not a keen observer of, certainly in genuine sympathy with, the virtues and frailties of men and women. You will be delighted and improved by reading the excellent translation by Bulwer. — Unless, indeed,” he added with a questioning bow, “the original is accessible to you? — And when you come across the ballad of *The Glove*, you will know what I mean by wages. Meanwhile ladies, I have been very happy to make your acquaintance.”

Saying which, he bowed himself away, and joined his companion, with whom he had a jolly laugh. And, oh Leslie, they must have laughed at me! For when Jennie asked me how I liked my Methodist preacher as a cavalier, she laughed too; and when I pressed her to tell me the names of the two gentlemen, I was petrified to learn that the short one was the

Senator from Illinois, and the tall one was his late competitor, and the long and short of it is, that they are the two most famous men in the United States just now on account of their brilliant joint debate, a year ago last fall, on the slavery question. It was a shabby trick of Jennie to get me into such a scrape, was it not? I was awfully mad at her, and did not fail to let her know; but that did not mend matters any. And I don't like the Illinois Senator any the better for dragging his rail-splitting opponent into our *conversazione* getting me into a scrape. And oh, Leslie, tell me, what did he mean by that ballad of The Glove?

* * *

— It is several days since I began this tediously long letter to you. I got to thinking about the ballad of The Glove, and whether that gawky rail-splitter meant to deal me as severe a blow as he did his opponent in that joint debate: for really, he had the best of the argument, did he not? Because I remember hearing papa say that he had given the Squatter Sovereignty doctrine a settler for good and all. But I am glad that he was not elected senator. Papa is glad too, I believe. And in thinking over these things, I got sleepy, and put off finishing this letter. The next time I got time, I didn't have time; for hardly had I sat down to read the stuff that I had written, preparatory to a continuation, when Cressie announced a visitor, and brought me the card of Ralph Payton. Of course, I was at home to him; so the letter to you flew unceremoniously into my desk, and Ralph Payton presented himself, gotten up in prime style by barber and hairdresser, and showing good taste in the selection of his tailor. Conversation between us was brisk enough this time. And what do you think it was that brought him to Washington City? He told me of his own accord. He wants to bring out papa as a candidate for the United States Senate! And he came to offer his services in the canvass. Think how I wronged him in supposing that he wanted papa's influence for himself! He is perfectly sure that papa will

succeed with ease. So am I, if papa will consent to make the race. And the thought of seeing him in the Senate chamber, mama and I looking down upon him from the gallery reserved for the families of Senators, listening to his stirring appeals for the rights of the South — it almost fills the measure of my ambition. I was so glad over the news, that I believe I danced, and laughed, and squeezed his hands, and made a fool of myself generally. I think it was just grand in him to come all the way to Washington to offer his help to papa to make him a United States Senator. Don't you?

* * *

There was another interruption, of course, to prevent me from finishing this epistle to you. I am hurrying on to the end now, else I fear you may never get it. Well, as soon as Mr. Payton left that evening, I ran up to mama's room to talk over the great news with her. She took it very coolly, I thought. Perhaps papa has already talked it over with her. Pretty soon papa himself came home, and I of course tackled him upon the subject uppermost in my mind. It is all true, Leslie! At first he was rather backward in owning up, talking about the difficulty of making a canvass all over the State; but finally it all came out, and he admitted that he had fully made up his mind to make the run. And you know, as well as I do, that if papa tries, the thing is as good as settled. In my joy I mentioned to him what Ralph had told me about helping him; whereat he smiled, saying that Mr. Payton evidently knew on which side his bread was buttered, for that his own election to the House of Representatives was dependent on papa's election to the Senate. Just think of it, Leslie! Papa in the Senate, and Ralph Payton in the House, and both from the little town of Brookfield! Won't Brookfield feel proud?

* * *

Just one thing more, before I send off this interminable letter. The senatorial election, so I heard papa say, does not come off until next winter. But I do believe that he is already

preparing for the race. He made a great speech this evening in Congress, in which he just demolished the Know-Nothings, sailed into the black republicans, and regretted that the only honest enemies the democrats ever had, the whigs, were now fighting under false colors and helping the common enemy of whigs and democrats undermine the constitution. The constitution, he said, must be our watchword; its strict interpretation our creed; its preservation our sheet-anchor of hope, and its principles — Freedom and Equality before the Law — the highest aim and motive of political charity. What do you think of such a speech for a campaign document? Of course, every one that has talked to me or in my presence about it, is extravagant in its praise; but then you know, we can't take much stock in what people say to our faces. Papa is going to have ever so many thousand copies of it printed and scattered all over the State. That looks like business, does it not? I wish we were at home, for I do believe I could help papa in some way in this matter. Won't you try and persuade mama to make a visit, at least, to Brookfield, before the election for senator comes off next winter? Papa will have to come anyhow, I suppose, and I feel like doing some electioneering for him.

We are all well. Even Cressie, who wishes she were away from this wicked place. Mama sends her love. Papa hopes you will settle down to the practice of law soon. And nobody is going to be prouder of your success at the bar than

Your loving sister

NELLIE.



XVIII.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF CARVING.



THE firm of Auf dem Busch and Son was well known on Main street. Its senior member, not without shrewd business tact, had made for himself a reputation for honesty, punctuality and strictly upright dealing, which had gone far to secure success. His gains had accumulated slowly, for he was cautious and shy of hazardous speculations; steadily, because he was wary and watchful in taking advantage of turns in the market. And so, when his eldest son had returned from Europe, whither he had been sent to receive a thorough mercantile training, the new firm entered on its career under favorable auspices.

The old gentleman was proud of his son. His joy, however, was not without its drop of bitterness. There was a lack of enthusiasm in the son's nature. He did not seem to appreciate the signal advantages that had fallen to his lot. This first puzzled, then pained the fond father. In the fullness of his joy he had tendered the young man an interest in the firm, — the highest mark of confidence and approbation in his power to bestow; — it had been received with cool politeness, as if the young man thought that in accepting the partnership he was conferring a benefit on his father rather than receiving one. It nettled the old gentleman also, that Woldemar exhibited no slightest emotion on being welcomed, on his return, in a charming new residence, which the merchant had acquired during his absence, and of which no mention had been made in the letters to him, on purpose to give him an agreeable surprise. So, too, he had quietly accepted the addition to the family circle of a grown up young lady, without comment or question. And yet the father was very

proud, of both the new villa in the suburbs, and of the young lady cousin, whom he had adopted into the family, and whom he thought a paragon of beauty and excellence.

Probably the old gentleman was unreasonable in expecting Woldemar to take as much interest in these things as he did himself; at least Woldemar thought so. For Woldemar had been to Europe. He had seen great cities, whose architectural displays would put to blush the modest pretensions of his father's villa. How could one be proud of anything this Western world afforded, after seeing the great palaces, the imposing, artistic structures, the "frozen harmony" as he had heard it called, of cathedrals and domes in the old country?

And as to the young lady — why, he had been smiled upon and made much of by those who were infinitely above Pauline in point of beauty, family and wealth, not to mention refinement and culture. How could he be expected to go into ecstasies over a simple maid like Pauline? Plainly his father did not take into account the superior educational advantages he had enjoyed, nor the polish acquired by social intercourse with people of high culture.

Still, he found Pauline not so bad in her way. True, she had not so many compliments for him as some of the Fräulein in the old country had lavished upon him; and seemed scarcely impressed with the high value of his good opinion. But then she had a pleasant way of looking straight at him out of her clear round eyes when she spoke to him; her mouth was really pretty when she smiled, as she did on small provocation. And one day, when there was company in the parlor, he was quite astonished to find that she could entertain the visitors, in the absence of Mrs. Auf dem Busch, with perfect self-possession, and that they listened to her sprightly conversation with as much pleasure, — almost, — as to his own interesting accounts of foreign experiences.

Pauline herself seemed well pleased with him. Her "Cousin" Woldemar had, before his return from Germany,

been freely talked over in the family. His brilliant future was a theme upon which her "Uncle" Auf dem Busch had loved to dwell. So she had come to look upon her "cousin" as a paragon of excellence, to win whose approbation might be as high a boon as Fortune had in store for any young lady. She was heart-free, knowing of love just what she had learned from books, and as yet her ideal hero had not assumed a clearly defined shape. Bound by the deepest sentiment of gratitude to the family that had received her with open arms when she was cast upon the world a homeless orphan, treated by Uncle Auf dem Busch with all the tenderness and protecting care of a father, she repaid the kindness and love of those in whose midst she had found a happy home with fervent affection. What more natural, then, than that she should deem the evident wish of her benefactor in respect of her relations to Woldemar a new proof of his kindness? Yes; it was an easy and not at all unpleasant task to try and win the love of the excellent young man, if she could; and to marry him, if he wanted her.

Thus there was a tacit understanding in the family, that at some future time there might be a more binding tie between Woldemar and Pauline, than that of the distant relationship now existing. Not expressed in words, however, even by the merchant himself; least of all by the young man. He would not displease his father by showing opposition; but it was surely not necessary to entangle himself by any avowal of intention which might be considered binding. And things went on in this way, pleasantly enough, until the Sunday afternoon, when the appearance of Leslie May in Vaux Hall Garden had aroused Woldemar's displeasure. Pauline, for her part, was not at all displeased. She was rather gratified to meet the idolized friend of her brother, and was at a loss to account for the very evident aversion displayed by Woldemar. But she asked no questions, and, indeed, soon dismissed the subject from her mind.

Victor had informed his uncle of his intention to bring Mr.

May with him to meet Professor Rauhenfels; and on the day appointed for the visit preparations were going on at Busch Bluff — so the merchant had named his pretty villa — for the reception of the guests. Pauline was busy, flitting from parlor to kitchen and dining room, when Woldemar came home, rather earlier than was his wont, announcing that Mr. Auf dem Busch would soon follow with the visitors. The busy young girl welcomed him with her usual smile and pleasant greeting, and he could not help noticing that she looked more than usually charming. His acknowledgment, however, was not more friendly than usual, but rather less so, showing, indeed, an ostentatious disapproval of the cheerfulness with which she tidied the parlor and superintended the cooking. He made it evident that he not only disliked the expected visitors, but also that he felt it to be a personal grievance that Pauline declined to share his aversion. To be sure, she showed no particular interest in that conceited bear, Professor Rauhenfels, who in some unaccountable way fascinated his father; but then, Victor meant to bring, also, that insolent young Southerner, who had so importunately persecuted the young lady with his attentions. What business had he in this house? And what business had she to expect the coming of the guests with such evident eagerness? Surely, she must know, that it was unlady-like to receive the unsolicited attentions of a silly young coxcomb, who was a perfect stranger to her, without protest! The correct young gentleman, who had been to Europe, would not stand it. He must tell her so.

But, whether for weal or ill, the young gentleman was prevented from carrying out his well-meant resolution. Before he had settled on the proper words to say, and on the manner of saying them, he heard the deep bass of Professor Rauhenfels, which he hated, and saw his father approach through the grounds, engaged in lively conversation with the guests he was bringing. Woldemar went to the door and received the company with elaborate politeness, contrasting perceptibly with the cordial hospitality of the owner of the mansion, and

the bright welcome extended to them by the young lady, who had also gone to the door to meet them. They were soon seated in the parlor, where Professor Rauhenfels continued the narration of a marvelous hunting story. Leslie May was seated opposite to him and found, for the first time since his introduction in Mr. Auf dem Busch's store, an opportunity to notice his personal appearance. Paying no attention to the story he was telling, which he supposed to be on a par with the yarns usually spun by amateur sportsmen, he leisurely took a mental inventory of the Professor's prominent traits.

A man, he found him, of rather tall stature, well proportioned, broad shouldered; clad in sovereign contempt of fickle fashion and arbitrary rules of etiquette, almost to the defiance of conventional propriety. His feet were encased in a pair of low shoes, not always closely laced; and as the extremities of his nether garments did not quite reach the top of his shoes, a considerable expanse of sock was visible, now and then, which, in default of garters, sat loosely, in picturesque, if not graceful, undulations. The weather being of the kind to which the denizens of the Western metropolis were accustomed in high summer, a waistcoat was clearly a superfluous luxury: the light jacket of brown holland that he wore, affording sufficient covering. The only portion of his wardrobe making any pretension to amplitude was his shirt collar. Not a sham imitation in paper, — he hated shams in any shape — nor even of snowy linen; but a genuine part of the garment itself, turned over a ribbon doing service as a neck-tie, somewhat in the fashion which painters love to give to the collars of Schiller and Byron, and which, in connection with his jetty hair, worn long, might remind one who had known him of the romancist Ned Buntline. Leslie took in the peculiarities of his dress at a glance. But the expression of his features, — bold and striking though they were — was not so easily read.

A broad, high, somewhat retreating forehead, suggestive of poetic power and force of imagination; a prominent aquiline

nose, indicative of strong will; square jaws and high cheek-bones, giving him, especially when seen in profile, a commanding, eagle-like mien, in no wise softened by the sparkle of his keen, brown-black eyes set far apart. His rather large, mobile mouth might have betokened sensuality, but for the slight downward curve of the corners, which readily assumed the proportions of a sneer, and was capable of imparting to his features the expression of intense scorn, or, when under excitement, of impassioned enthusiasm.

One of the peculiarities about him was the rich, deep bass of his voice, which commanded attention even in ordinary conversation, such as he was engaged in while Leslie observed him. But when the ladies appeared to summon the guests to table, it put the observer to a severe test to maintain his gravity; for as he rose to greet Mrs. Auf dem Busch, his inquiry after her health was couched in falsetto, an octave or two above the usual pitch of his voice, and with an inflection of the tenderest solicitude.

It was also a surprise to Leslie, to see the host motioning the professor to the head of the table. "You shall be surprised," he explained to the other guests, "to see and admire our friend's wonderful skillfulness, which he has in the art of carving. If it be a turkey, or if it be a goose; and much more, if it be a matter of carving a smaller bird. It is not now the time for turkeys; but one of the consignors to our firm has honored me with a prairie chicken or two, and it shall taste to us better, when our friend has so skillfully carved it like he can do."

Leslie, who had promptly offered his arm to Miss Waldhorst, was less amused by this speech than he would probably have been, if his attention had not been attracted by the scowl on young Auf dem Busch's face, as he, Leslie, took his seat by the side of that which Mrs. Auf dem Busch assigned to Pauline, quietly ignoring the evident intention of that lady that her son Woldemar should occupy it. Mrs. Auf dem Busch, whose plans were thus crossed, had not the presence of

mind to call her guest's attention to the mistake he had made, and the old gentleman failed to notice it.

Nevertheless, conversation in no wise flagged. Professor Rauhenfels, deprecating the merchant's compliments to his skill, favored the company with a loquacious dissertation on the art of carving, demonstrating that the chief requisite of a successful carver consisted in the accurate knowledge of the anatomy of the bird.

"Oh, ho!" the younger merchant exclaimed; "give me a fat bird and a sharp knife, and I will guarantee you that I get away with the meat, if I were at all hungry, with or without knowing anatomy."

"Yes," observed Leslie, "or even with a dull knife, or none at all. But then the professor might say, that that was carving with Alexander's sword, which was simply cutting through the knot instead of unraveling it."

"Just so," the professor assented. "The kind of carving the wolf does, when he munches the lamb he has stolen. But mark you, the wolf is not so ignorant of the lamb's anatomy as our young friend here assumes in his hypothesis —"

"When he is through with his meal," Leslie interrupted, "he has probably devoured the whole subject, anatomy and all."

"But the professor will say, that is munching, and not carving," said Victor.

"Exactly;" Rauhenfels replied, somewhat emphatically. "Do you not see that the bird and the knife, as well as the hand that holds it, are but tools, that obey the carver's will?"

"Granted!" Woldemar threw in. "So the wolf also works his will on the lamb. What difference, then, between the two?"

"Only this," said the professor, "the carver — presumably a rational being — exercises his free will, while the wolf blindly obeys his appetite. The one is a master ruling, the other a servant ruled by nature."

"Are we masters, ruling nature?" Victor inquired in surprise.



Prof. Rauhentfels favored the company with a loquacious dissertation
on the art of carving.

“Oh, no,” sneered Woldemar. “You misunderstand. It is only the adept at carving that rises to that dignity.”

“Just so,” said the professor looking sharply at the last speaker for a second, but then addressing himself to Victor. “Nature has given us eyes to see; that much she has done for the wolf also. But she has given us, what she has not given the wolf, reason — that divine attribute in virtue of which man rules the world.”

“Rules the world?” Victor repeated with eagerly questioning eyes. “How can that be, when so many human beings annually perish for the want of simple means of subsistence, or fall victims in other ways to the inexorable laws of nature, which man is utterly impotent to abrogate, or even modify?”

“Right, my friend,” the professor answered, complacently. “The laws of nature are eternal and immutable. What an insignificant accident man would be, were it otherwise! Imagine, if you can, what must follow an instant’s cessation of the law of gravity. Chaos? Not so much as that: for in chaos, in so far as we can conceive it at all, is relation and coherence. But utter nothingness: for the single substantial quality of all matter is gravitation.”

Leslie, with a good-natured smile of incredulity, addressed this question, rather to his fair neighbor: “What then does man’s supreme rule of the world amount to, in view of the supremacy of the law, for instance, of gravitation?”

“Man cannot, of course, ignore the law of nature in any direction,” the professor answered, “any more than he could create it. But he can subordinate it to his purposes. He commands this gigantic monster, gravitation, to do his bidding, and it yields unquestioning obedience. It grinds for him his corn, it holds together his habitations, carries him and his wares across continents, over oceans, and through the air; it points out to him the paths of the heavenly bodies, and measures for him time and space. Which, think you, is the master, and which the servant?”

“I should think, that they took turns about in having things

their own way," Leslie suggested. "When this monster plays snow-balling with mighty avalanches, or shakes down houses and cities during an earthquake, his obedience shines conspicuously by absence. Where, under such circumstances, is man's mastery?"

"Asleep!" Rauhensfels almost shouted. "Don't blame man's stupidity on the faithful servant who simply does what he is bid to do. Let me help you to a fine piece of the breast of this bird. See, — I lay it on your plate, and this monster, gravitation, holds it there for you, like the obedient servant he is. Now you know that he would dash it to the floor with equal readiness, if you ordered him to do so by the way you hold your plate. Would it not, then, be ridiculously unjust to hold him responsible for your awkwardness if you should drop the meat from your plate? And just so if a man puts himself in the pathway of the falling avalanche, or builds top-heavy houses in the regions of earthquakes."

"Then," interposed Leslie, "to guard against avalanches, you expect man to level the mountain, so as to keep the snow-ball out of the monster's power?"

"An easier way would be for him to keep away from the mountains during snowstorms," said Rauhensfels. "But supposing that the occasional recurrence of avalanches were known to threaten extermination of the human race, then were it not willful self-destruction if it failed to level the mountains, — that being the only means of avoiding avalanches? So, you see," he continued, again turning to Victor, "that the question of mastery between man and the forces, or laws, as we have called them, of nature, is quite easily settled. Remembering that man is free — that is to say, that his will is first cause, or self-cause, his superiority over that which is unfree, or cause only as it is effect, is patent."

Victor had listened with deep attention. "Do you then mean to say," he now inquired eagerly, "that man is above the law? Why, that would clothe him with the attributes of divinity!"

“ Well,” the professor replied, his voice assuming its bass pitch, and his eyes beginning to sparkle, “ and is not freedom divine? Is not God freedom? And do you not claim that God-like attribute for yourself? Understand, — I do not mean the potentiality to do or not to do which is all that some people see in will, or liberty. That is will in its capricious, arbitrary form, which man possesses in common with the mule and which is the highest law to the wolf when he devours the lamb. Man possesses a goodly share of this kind of will, or freedom. Vast numbers of men and women never rise higher in the realm of existence. There are slaves, — aye, and more of them than are now held in bondage in this free land of ours — who prove, by their very condition as slaves, their incapacity for freedom, — for free men cannot be made slaves. So there are tyrants, despots, whose claim to the divine attribute stands upon no higher ground. And you are right, my young friend, in doubting the attributes of divinity of either extreme.”

“ Then, I understand, after all, that man is not above the law? ” said Victor interrogatively.

“ But man may antagonize the laws of nature against each other,” exclaimed the professor with some animation, “ and thus make them his servants. He commands Gravitation to float his ships, and Boreas to waft them over the ocean; or, if he desires a more reliable agent, he harnesses Phœbus himself to his chariots, compelling him to propel them with the swiftness of the fleetest bird whither he listeth; he has wrested the thunderbolt from Jupiter’s hand, and sends his messenger more swiftly over the earth, than Hermes served Jove of old. Is not man greater than the mythological gods? ”

“ Mythological gods, yes,” Woldemar spoke up. “ But they, like the laws Victor spoke of, are of man’s making. Not much divinity about them, I should think.”

The professor fixed a keen glance upon the new speaker, the curves of his mouth assuming a contemptuous expression. “ You seem to think,” said he, “ that man can make laws, as well as gods? ”

“Of course.” was Woldemar’s prompt answer. “In monarchies, rulers, ‘by the grace of God’ fashion the laws to their liking; in republics, they are made by the people themselves. You do not question so much, I hope?”

“And will you please inform me, what you understand by law?” the professor asked with a show of innocent curiosity.

“Why, law, in the sense I spoke of it, is the will of the people, expressed in some form recognized as binding,” Victor answered, instead of Woldemar.

“An act of the legislature, whether it expresses the will of the people or not,” suggested Leslie, who, though really anxious to draw the ladies into participation, had shown himself an attentive listener.

“Why not say plainly, the pretended will of the sovereignty, if that is what you are driving at?” said the professor, suavely enough. But suddenly assuming a severity of tone and a fierceness of manner that startled Victor, he added: “But that is a miserable makeshift. You can find half a dozen such definitions in the ordinary dictionaries. Why, even Blackstone knew that much, only it took him a great many more words to say it. And every jackanapes of a lawyer that has bought him a sheep-skin from some diploma-mill chatters it after him ever since. That, to be sure, is the kind of law that the British Parliament, the American Congress, and every puny State legislature grinds out daily by the cart-load. You can get it made to order, cheap for cash. The capricious whimsicalities of unlimited monarchs are on a par with the trash given us by constitutional governments, — for, — mark you, Blackstone is not sure but that anything Parliament says, no matter how absurdly ridiculous, is law. And I suppose I need not tell you, gentlemen, that whoever has an axe to grind, or even a small hatchet, is a welcome guest in the halls of your legislatures, not to mention the smaller fry of city councils and other law-making corporosities, provided he furnish the sugar to sweeten their tempers. *Law*, indeed! If this sort of law did not, fortunately, possess the knack of

the Kilkenny cats, which, you know, ate each other up until nothing was left of them but the tails, it would long ago have inundated the world, like a second Deluge."

When Rauhenfels made mention of "jackanapes" of lawyers, Leslie had winked at Victor so droll a grimace as to start the young Auf dem Buschs into an audible smile, severely testing the self-control of the ladies to avoid following their example. He now improved the opportunity afforded by the pause, to demurely inquire, what, in the professor's opinion, became of the tails left by all the Kilkenny cats?

"Tails, is it?" snorted the professor, flashing a keen glance of defiance at the demure speaker. "Pray sir, will you tell me, what it is, that your statute books contain, but just cats' tails? From cover to cover, from A to Izzard, what but cats' tails? Not even assorted, but just thrown together, pell-mell, relying on the charitable presumption that judges and lawyers know their A-B-C-, the scientific principle upon which indexes are constructed, by means of which to put their hands on tail A or tail Izzard, as occasion may require! Why, my young friend, eliminate from your Statutes at Large, your Common Law, your Omnium-gatherum of Chancery Rules, stolen from the Civil Law, — eliminate from them the few ingots of rational thought that have come down to us from such venerable seers as composed the decalogue and like codes, and you will have a vast and imposing mass of cats' tails for your trouble. Put them into your pipe and smoke them!"

"You would not impose so cruel a task on me, now would you?" said Leslie, with pleading voice. "Even if I deserved it, it would be unmerciful to the ladies, who, I submit, are not to be blamed for the cats' tails in our statute books. I trust, rather, that you will condescend to enlighten us as to *how* we are to obtain a better quality of law. For if neither monarchs nor legislative assemblies are to be relied on, I can think of but one other source from which law could emanate, — the people themselves, in their original sovereign capacity. But the only instance I can remember in history or fiction, in which that

plan received a trial, was a signal failure. Even our Pilgrim Fathers, who for a time undertook to personate legislatures, judges and executioners in their aggregate capacity, soon found, that a pure Democracy would not, to use a phrase of Carlyle, march."

"I should think not," sneered the professor, the downward curves of his mouth deepening perceptibly. "And supposing it *did* march, think you that the quality of the law would thereby improve? I may grant you, that the people have a marvelous proficiency in picking out knaves and fools as their representatives; but they *are* representatives; and since the stream can rise no higher than its source, they reflect truly the calibre of their constituents. No, my young friend! The chances are, that a hundred thousand fools will quite equal, in their aggregate stupidity, the folly of any smaller number of them, just as the tyranny of majorities is as destructive of liberty, as that of a single-headed despot. Oh, no, do not understand me as joining in the popular cry, in this sense, of *Vox Populi vox Dei!*"

"But you have not vouchsafed the information we crave," Leslie insisted. "You have, instead, only cut off one more source of possible legislative authority, and I am at my wits' end to imagine how the evil you so graphically describe might be remedied."

"Don't you see," said Woldemar, who could not resist the temptation to pour what he deemed a broadside into the enemy's unprotected front, although it went sorely against his grain that in doing so he was siding with the Southern lawyer, — "don't you see what the gentleman is driving at? He has distinctly disavowed all authority. Except metaphysics. Ask him, and if he confesses his real view, he will tell you, that not only the State, but the whole Universe, is governed by speculative philosophy, whose high priest is Hegel, the inventor of a mystical system of Trinity, whose cornerstone is the doctrine that Being and Naught are identical, and that the identity of the two constitutes the World. No wou-

der, then, that he spurns all laws emanating from a source that recognizes common sense. For he who enters the realm of Hegelian Speculative Mysticism must leave understanding behind."

Rauhenfels turned to the new speaker with a sarcastic smile. "I congratulate you," he said, "on the good use you seem to have made of your time while in Germany. No doubt, you made a profound study of Hegel and his philosophy; or, if not of Hegel, at least of those of his adversaries, who prove in learned disquisitions how much of a mystery Hegel has remained to them. You quote Dühring almost verbatim. Yes, sir! The world *is* governed, — not by speculative philosophy, but by reason, which it is the office of speculative philosophy — *speculative*, mark, not in the sense in which your highly respectable firm deals in sugar and coffee, or a land shark in acres and town-lots, but as searching after Truth — to discover, and of the legislature, or other law-announcing authority to announce. Yes, sir! This same Hegel, and every thinker who has searched after and discovered Truth, are the real law-makers. For whatever is, is by virtue of the reason for its being. Discover that, and you have its law; and he who announces it, is the legislator. Who, think you, was the true legislator, — Galileo, the humble Italian astronomer, or Urban VIII, backed by the wisdom and power of the inquisition? Surely, the Pope was in authority, wielding the power of the Christian Church. He haughtily commanded the Sun to dance attendance upon our Earth, the Earth to stand as the fixed center of the Universe. Yet do we not all agree, that the philosopher's whispered '*E pur se muove!*' was the more potent decree?"

"But this is a mere fable!" Woldemar announced, oracularly. "It is now admitted by those best informed on history, that Galileo did not utter these famous words at all, nor ever retracted his recantation."

"Well, is not Fable more true than History?" demanded the professor, with some animation.

“Of course,” put in Victor, eagerly. “It is the judgment of the world, that this was the proper thing for Galileo to say under the circumstances; and whether he spoke the words or not, they are perfectly true.” With some hesitation he then added: “But it seems to me, that Mr. May’s question has not yet been answered. If the acts of Congress, or the State legislature, are not the law, what are they?”

“Exactly so,” said Auf dem Busch Senior. “It is necessary that we have law, and the law shall be reasonable, as the professor has well spoken. Now I like some uphearing, who shall say, if the law be reasonable? Shall I myself say so? Then all say that is law, what they like. We have a Sunday law; and some people say it is reasonable. I think it is tyranny. Now who has right?”

“Ah, that is a very different thing,” said the professor, with great deference. “Right — that is, the law of God, — is eternal and immutable, as God himself is. But since it exists in our consciousness only, constituting our *conscience*, every man carries in his own breast the criterion for right and wrong. And you, Mr. Auf dem Busch, have forcibly pointed out the necessity of some external criterion, to decide authoritatively between individuals who differ, whether honestly or wickedly, in their assertions of right. It was this necessity, that gave us the decalogue on tables of stone. It was this necessity, too, that brought us Christ, who established a religion of Mercy instead of the rigid rule of jealous Jehovah. It is this necessity, in fine, that gives us parliaments and congresses, and legislative bodies of all sorts. Yes, you have pithily put it: There must be authoritative statement of what is right and wrong. Whether this be by an autocrat or a parliament, a king or a popular assembly, matters really very little. The essential thing is that it be recognized as authoritative, and that it be obeyed as such. As the Church demands faith in its dogmata, on pain of excommunication, so the State coerces obedience to its commands, though it cost the property, the life, or even the liberty of its defier — ”

“How far, then,” Leslie interrupted, “does your definition of law differ from that given by Mr. Waldhorst, or Mr. Auf dem Busch, or even myself?”

“As the true does from the false!” the professor exclaimed promptly. “The dogma of the Church is infallible, because to the faith of the believer it is divine revelation. But how about the unbeliever? Can it be law to him? So with the citizen: Possessing in his own breast the highest criterion for right and wrong, he necessarily measures the law by that standard. If he find it true and just, he will abide by it, and that law is probably a divine revelation to him. But if it be of the Kilkenny Cat kind, made to-day, to be repealed to-morrow, or changed, modified, or amended — what shall be said of it? Or if it be a gigantic steal from the many to enrich a favored few? Or if it be an infamous piece of barbarism —”

“For instance?” Leslie inquired.

“You want an instance?” the professor exclaimed, his eyes flashing, his mouth curving downward, his voice trembling with excitement. “Let me mention only the statutes of half the States of this Union, which in all seriousness proclaim property in man! Think of the monstrous contradiction — man, whose essential quality is freedom, to be declared by the *law* to be property! And, not enough that the slave States enact such damnable heresy against human dignity, but the federal government itself, — representing slave *and* free States — by a statute to which it proposes to exact obedience, degrades every freeman in the land to the level of a Jack-Ketch, condemning him, at the beck of the vilest dealer in human flesh, to help hunt down, like a bloodhound, his runaway ‘chattel,’ and deliver back into slavery a man or woman, to be scourged by an enraged master for the crime of having aspired to their God-given freedom! Is this instance enough to justify a freeman in protesting that such cannot be law?”

The words of the professor, spoken with impressive pathos, produced a different result upon his several hearers. Wolde-

mar Auf dem Busch had imbibed, during his absence in Europe, the positive views prevalent among the Germans on the subject of slavery; and it was natural that the closing words of his antagonist should command his assent. But it was equally natural that he should dislike to applaud a man so utterly unsympathetic to him; so he remained silent.

Leslie had a smile for the professor's earnestness. He looked at the young lady by his side to note the effect produced upon her, and neither he nor Woldemar was pleased by the eager assent to be read in her sparkling eyes and from her eager, half-parted lips.

Victor was the one most deeply interested in the views expressed by the professor. There was a dazed look upon his features that betrayed the difficulty he found in weighing the argument. *Absurd*, had the professor said, were the laws of slavery? Surely, he must be ignorant of the true condition of things in the slave States. And yet,—he was so positive! And of his sincerity there could be no doubt. And—he was certainly no fool! For however paradoxical had been his talk about law, he could not, at bottom, deny any of those striking statements.

Victor again experienced the doubts and troubles that Colonel May had awakened in talking on this subject; only now the shock was greater, and it came in the opposite direction. It pained him to hear the institution of slavery so savagely assailed.

Auf dem Busch Senior, alone expressed his thorough approval of the professor's words. "It has been as I thought," he said, with an air of unmistakable relief, "that we have been misunderstanding the professor. He has well spoken the truth. In this matter, like in all other matters when he speaks in earnest. He denies not that we must obey the law; but he is in wrath about foolish law, like Sunday law, and slave law. But we will be vexatious no more to-day with slavery. It is not yet dark; I will enjoy a smoke in the open air. So I ask the gentlemen to join me, if it shall be pleasing

to them. You are a judge of a fine cigar, Mr. May? Our friend Rauhenfels is also a judge, and when he has not his cob-pipe and country tobacco, he is not afraid of my brand. You will like it, I make no doubt. You are not to mind the ladies. We have seasoned them. What, Pauline?"

"Indeed, you may say so," the maiden responded; "and the drawing-room as well. You can have no idea, Mr. May," she continued, turning to this gentleman as she arose with the others, "what German gentlemen can do in the smoking line. When uncle puts his Meerschaum into requisition, and Cousin Woldemar joins him with a favorite *El Sol Regalia*, and Professor Rauhenfels puffs away at his cob, the fragranee is sometimes overpowering, even to me, who am partial to the aroma of tobacco smoke; and the atmosphere around them is as foggy as the philosophy they discuss."

"There," said the uncle, shaking his forefinger at the girl, "make us not so black a picture before Mr. May."

"No blacker than the color of aunt's curtains in the morning after one of your revels," the girl retorted. "But don't let us spoil your enjoyment, gentlemen. I am sorry not to be able to inhale the fragrance of your cigars, in the open air, with you, but some domestic duties claim my attention for a while. Presently I will be happy to join you, if you have no objection to my company; and I expect to find you all in excellent spirits, your tempers mellowed by the soothing influence of a fine Havana."

It annoyed Leslie to hear of the girl's detention in the house, for politeness forbade his remaining. All the greater was his gratitude to the old gentleman, when he heard him decree that the domestic duties must give way, for once, to the more immediate duties to their guests. "I want, that you show Mr. May what we have in the garden," he said; and then to Leslie: "You will admire the skill that she has as a gardener."

XIX.

THE EVER NEW OLD STORY.

BUSCH BLUFF was a pretty villa, which had not yet lost the charm of novelty, in the eyes of its owner at least. Perched on the summit of a graceful knoll on the range of bluffs from which it took its name, environed of all sides except that toward the river by a grove of thrifty forest trees, it commanded an extensive view of the river, as well as of the bottom lands and bluffs far up and down on the other side. A mile or two to the southward the swift current of the turbid stream slackened its speed, seeming to linger fondly near the town of Pennyville, where it had washed out for itself a deep, broad basin in the angle formed by veering a point or two to the left. On the north the Arsenal Island, — named so because located opposite the national armory, more popularly known as the Arsenal — divided the rushing waters into two channels. It was covered with a dense growth of young willows and sycamores; uninhabited, save that a few rugged fishermen had erected there a rude hut or two to shelter them against the rain or storm while plying their vocation. Further up, on the other side of the river, the log cabins and board shanties of Papstown dotted the shore, while below in a southeasterly direction, the distant hamlet of Cahokia nestled among the majestic trees produced by the rich alluvial soil of the American Bottom, just visible from the most elevated point of the grounds around the villa. Its owner, with exultant sense of proprietorship, not unpardonable under the circumstances nor always successfully concealed, pointed out to his new friend, the young lawyer, the salient traits of the landscape, adding to his explanation of the scenery, such items of historical, legendary and scientific information as he had stored

in his mind, chiefly gleaned from conversations with his friend, the professor. For the latter gentleman prided himself upon his artistic tastes, and his powers of accurate observation, and the merchant delighted to repeat some of the high sounding phrases in which the professor indulged, now and then. Thus, in commenting upon the peculiar vegetation of Arsenal Island, he informed his politely listening young companion, that the perennial youth of the trees was due to the ambulatory nature of the island.

“Yes, sir,” he said, “ambulatory is how the professor calls it. You see, it is so: The water dashes with great might against the upper point and all the time carries away some earth. This makes the trees to fall into the river, and they sometimes make snags, so dangerous, you know, to steamboats. But on the back part the earth sticks fast, and when the water is low, and the sun shines on the new earth, it makes willow trees to grow, and maybe sycamores, or some other trees which like to grow in moist earth. And so, you see, the island melts in front, and grows behind, and travels down stream all the time and the trees are always young.”

They had now reached the spot from which the aspiring church steeple of Cahokia, topped with the Roman cross, came into sight, as well as a few of the lowlier habitations, clustering about the church, with their moss covered roofs. The sun was low in the horizon; the western shore of the river along the bluffs facing the east, somber with the descending shadows of approaching twilight. But the slanting rays of the crimson luminary nearing his couch in the west, bathed the bluffs on the opposite side in a flood of mellow light, bringing them into bold relief against the intervening miles of heavily timbered bottom-lands, checkered, here and there, with patches of luxurious corn fields in the vicinity of Cahokia. Here, again, the didactic instinct of the merchant asserted itself, and he proceeded to enlighten his young friend on the history and peculiarities of this venerable town.

“More ancient,” he explained, “than our own proud city.

It is inhabited chiefly by descendants of French-American and Spanish-American Creoles, who have great pride and squalor; also great poverty and independence. Their pride and independence makes them to hate civilization; and their poverty makes them proud. They are much skilled in fish-catching. For our river has fine Cat and Buffalo, if you know how to catch them. They cultivate some corn in the fat bottom-land, more than a hundred bushels on the acre. And they smoke tobacco which they plant themselves. When a young Creole wants to buy a ribbon for his sweetheart, or maybe coffee or something for his old folks, he chops down a pecan tree, or an ash or hickory, like they have some splendid trees all over the bottom-lands, and hauls it to our city in an ox-cart, and sells it for six bits a load, and is for a while rich."

Leslie seemed to listen with profound interest; but his eyes rested not on the distant view of the sun-bathed church spire, nor even on the majestic steamer soaring into sight on the river below, moving with swan-like grace on the bosom of the placid waters opposite Pennyville. And it is to be feared that he did not reap the full benefit of the merchant's sage teachings; for on sighting the approaching steamer, the latter launched out into an instructive discourse on the vastness of the carrying trade and interstate commerce of our Western metropolis. A picture closer by riveted Leslie's gaze, — one more beautiful than which no painter in happiest mood ever conceived. For there, a little in advance of them, stood Pauline, more tall and erect, seemingly, than Leslie had deemed her, — her finely shaped figure in bright summer robe gracefully outlined against the darker foliage of the shrubbery. One of her hands was raised on high in the act of drawing down toward her the branch of a tall oleander, while with the other she bent its cluster of flowers toward her companion, as if to invite him to inhale its fragrance. It was Woldemar that stood there beside her, erect also, and much taller than she, so that her shapely head was turned upward to meet his eye. An eager look was in her own eyes, — a pleading, expectant look, and a winning

smile slightly parted her rosy lips. Was the young lawyer much to blame that he forgot Cahokia, Arsenal Island and steamboat, in gazing upon those expressive brown eyes and distractingly tempting lips? Or that he was deaf to the instructive discourse of the sage merchant, straining his ears, instead, to catch, if possible, the import of the conversation carried on by those two?

What he heard, when he did hear, was commonplace enough. It was Woldemar that spoke: "Yes; it reminds me of the fragrant almond." Not much surely; and when he had said these words, Pauline gently released the slender twig, casting upon the shrub a last loving glance as it swung into position. When she turned her face in the direction where Leslie was standing, she saw the gaze of intense admiration with which he regarded her. She blushed. It was a weakness of hers to blush. Her words to Woldemar could not have been of much importance to elicit the reply he had heard; but commonplace as was that reply, it had startled him. For Woldemar had accompanied his words with an expression of tenderness that was an entirely new feature to the eyes of Leslie, and which, together with the smile that brightened his countenance as he looked at his fair companion, gave it a dangerous charm. At least Leslie thought so; and he acted promptly on the spur of this thought.

"Pardon me, Miss Waldhorst," he said, loud enough to compel the lady's attention; "is this shrub, on which you lavish such tender regard, one of the triumphs of your genius for gardening, of which your uncle is so proud?" And quitting the side of his host with an apologetic bow, he joined the young lady.

"This shrub, sir," she said in playful banter, "is the triumph of no one's genius, unless it be the watering pot. It is the result of Uncle Auf dem Busch's liberality in allowing me to order an unlimited supply of these useful exotics, without which I don't know what we should have done the first year or two with our patch of a garden. This rose-tree is a

gem, repaying the small attention it requires with a profusion of beautiful and delightfully fragrant blossoms; its graceful, tree-like shape, with its showy leaves, at the same time, furnishing valuable material for the arrangement of ornamental bosquets."

At the first words addressed by the young lady to Leslie, Woldemar bowed and left them, joining his father; and the young lawyer had the satisfaction of witnessing, once more, the scowl on Woldemar's face, which Leslie had come to regard as habitual to it.

"Rose-tree, did you say?" the rejoicing young man inquired with a deferential show of curiosity. "I thought it was an oleander."

"So it is," Miss Waldhorst responded. "But I like pet names, — suggestive ones, you know. And having heard the professor one day explain that oleander is a name corrupted from two words of some dead language, meaning rose and tree — coming to think of it, now, he said bay — I preferred the name rose-tree, as being prettier, and very appropriate. Do you think so?"

"Beautifully appropriate, indeed!" Leslie replied with warmth. Then, turning his hungry eyes reluctantly from the bright face before him to the oleander, and thence toward the flower beds and bosquets surrounding them, he added: "The same unerring taste inspired this pet name — so suggestive of beauty and strength — that created this delightful little paradise. I thoroughly agree with Mr. Auf dem Busch in his appreciation of your talent — genius, I ought to say — for landscape gardening. This, indeed, is Art in high perfection."

Miss Waldhorst flushed. Not, as Leslie for a moment imagined, with pleasure. The smile faded from her lips as she answered: "Please, Mr. May, spare me the humiliation of such remarks. I am happy to think that uncle takes pleasure in my way of arranging his flower beds and grouping the shrubbery. I make no pretension to art, or landscaping."

"Forgive me, Miss Waldhorst," spoke Leslie, in deferential

earnestness. "Not for what I said, which should not offend you, but for having — unintentionally, you will believe me, I hope, — seemed to flatter you, and thus to wound your sensitiveness. I plead the absolute sincerity of my words in extenuation of my fault."

"Surely, sir," said the young lady, "your remark becomes offensive by repetition, in pushing me to disclaim modesty."

"Ah, how can you help disclaiming modesty!" Leslie exclaimed, in a tone of sincerity and earnestness not usual to him. "True modesty cannot possibly be conscious of itself. I am a poor hand to quote poetry; but I remember a line, written by a gentleman whose acquaintance I made in Venice, expressing so exactly and forcibly what I mean, that you will pardon me for quoting:

"Never can modesty, e'en in a dream, proclaim her own nature:

With but the word she is lost, fled at the sound of her voice."

Just as Leslie was reciting the lines, Professor Rauhenfels approached with Victor, and both stopped to listen. Victor seemed pleased but the professor with a smile of conscious superiority, remarked: "It seems to me as if I had heard these lines before. Where did you get them?"

Leslie hardly deigned to conceal his chagrin at the interruption, and it imparted some asperity to his voice, as he promptly responded, placing himself squarely in front of the professor in doing so: "From the author himself, as I have just informed Miss Waldhorst!"

"I know the author well," the other continued, serenely ignoring Leslie's impatience. "He is a pupil of mine in the philosophy class, and a man of considerable ability. He would surely make his mark in the world, if he could rid himself of his unfortunate hallucination of being a poet."

"Well, I think I should share this hallucination, if it be one," observed Victor, who was evidently impressed with the

beauty of the epigram recited by Leslie. "To me the sentiment expressed seems wonderfully true, and the language terse and apt."

"Perhaps so," Rauhenfels assented. "But that does not make it poetical. Why, he himself expresses the same thought in a much more poetical form. Something like this :

" 'Modesty's speech is always a silence that tells she is modest ;

Never declaring her own, has she the sweetest of praise.'

But, not content to let the distich remain in this rather neat shape, he must needs inform us, that

" 'Modesty, sweetest of maidens, is not aware she is modest ;
When she knoweth herself, then she is never herself.'

Observe, he still has an image — the maiden — to symbolize modesty. But then, afraid, apparently, that even in this form his wisdom may not sufficiently impress itself upon his reader, he proceeds to give the utterly abstract statement to which Miss Waldhorst has just been treated."

Had Leslie's desire to be alone with Miss Waldhorst been less urgent, the announcement, that the author was a member of the professor's class, might have elicited further inquiries. But just now the one thought uppermost in his mind was Pauline Waldhorst. It was to his infinite satisfaction, therefore, that Victor, evidently bent on learning more of the poet, drew the professor away with him to prosecute his questioning.

As soon as the others were fairly beyond ear-shot, he eagerly turned to the young lady, saying "You have not yet given me the assurance of your forgiveness, Miss Waldhorst."

"For what?" she asked.

"For the awkwardness, with which I seem to have offended you."

"Are you quite sure, Mr. May, that I have nothing to forgive but awkwardness?" The words were spoken with such

demure simplicity, that Leslie was really at a loss to understand her drift.

But, "Indeed, if you will believe me, nothing else!" he answered without hesitation. "And surely you will not punish me for what was really not a fault, but truly my misfortune."

"Punish you?"

"Cruelly, by not forgiving."

"Sir," she said, a faint smile working its way to her lips, "I fear that what you call your misfortune is really a grave fault, — the sad disposition to tease. But I must not shame your poet-friend by assuming a modesty which would prove me immodest. Let me assure you, that I have nothing to forgive on the score of awkwardness. And it will be my turn to sue for forgiveness, if —"

"If?"

The smile on the young lady's face brightened and took on such arch roguishness in the fresh young face, as to set the beholder wild with delight. "If you can establish your sincerity," she continued. "Are you willing to submit yourself to an unerring test?"

"Nothing would make me more happy!" he replied with fervor.

"Then tell me: Have you ever seen the plant commonly called Touch-me-not?"

"Only in the shape of a prudish old maid," he replied readily.

"Or a Mimosa?"

"The name I have heard; but I cannot associate it with a plant."

"It is well. Follow me."

She led the way to a secluded part of the garden, and stopped in front of some potted plants resembling, Leslie thought, tiny Acacia or Locust trees, carefully protected against rough northerly winds. "Now sir," she said, speaking in a solemn whisper, and endeavoring to compose her

features into owl-like gravity, in exquisite contrast with her mirth-beaming eyes, "you are in the presence of the never-erring oracle *Mimosa Sensitiva*. Kneel to it, as if you meant to worship. You may spread your handkerchief to protect your knees against the dust. Place your right hand over your breast where you are supposed to have a heart. Then, looking me full in the face, repeat the words you wish me to believe; and in token of your sincerity, bow to the oracle and press its topmost twig with your left hand to your lips. If you prevaricate, it will droop in shame and sorrow on your polluting touch."

Leslie did as he was bidden. It was clear enough that she was playing a trick on him that would, in the end, result in his being laughed at; but was it not a delightful thing to kneel there, almost as if he were kneeling to herself, and to obey literally her injunction to look her full in the face? This latter part of the program he protracted to a shameful extent; twice had he spoken the words; and still his eyes were fixed in eager gaze upon the lovely priestess of the oracle, until, with imperious gesture, neck and face suffused with crimson visible even in the darkening twilight, she exclaimed with solemn voice: "The oracle, sir, demands your homage! Remember your promise!"

Then, conscious of the rudeness of further delay, he boldly grasped the topmost branch of the little plant and pressed it to his lips. His curiosity was on tip-toe to see what would come. The effect startled him. Although expecting some such issue, he was surprised to see the little plant close up its leaves pair by pair, with deliberate regularity, then bend down its twigs and shrivel up and die, apparently, within a few seconds.

The maiden evidently enjoyed his perplexity and indulged in a peal of triumphant, though musical laughter. "How now, Sir Knight!" she cried. "What am I to think of your protestations of sincerity?"

"I suppose I ought to shrivel up and sink into the ground,

as that idiotic thing is trying to do," he replied, leaping to his feet, and joining in the laugh as loudly, if not as merrily, as Pauline. "But tell me," he asked her, "must this poor Mimosa die in consequence of my iniquities? Is the stab which its oracular sentence has inflicted on my reputation, like the sting of a vengeful bee, to cost its life?"

"Oh, no, Mr. May," said the lady, in soft, reassuring tones, delightfully sympathetic in Leslie's ears, notwithstanding the tinge of irony audible in the voice, "it is to be hoped that the touch of your lips is not quite so venomous as that. I venture to prophesy that in a few minutes it will unfold its pretty leaves, straighten out its drooping limbs and, wholly resuscitated, rejoice with me that you have so bravely passed through the ordeal."

"Passed through the ordeal!" the astonished young man repeated. "It has disgraced me. It has tarnished my honor. Surely, Miss Waldhorst, you do not rejoice over the foul spot your oracle has cast over my fair name?"

"Why, Mr. May!" the young girl exclaimed, astonished in her turn, but smiling pleasantly. "Do you not see the point? The Mimosa would have been as sensitive to my touch as to yours. Its oracular virtue consists in testing your courage, so long as you are unacquainted with its peculiar characteristic. If you had not been honest, you would not have dared to touch the plant. So you see that the oracle has honorably acquitted you, and it now becomes me to ask your pardon. Are you generous enough to grant it?"

He snatched up the hand and carried it to his lips. "I thank you for the delightful lesson you have given me, most wise and beautiful priestess!" he said, and would have retained the dainty fingers that sent thrills of ecstasy to his heart, but that the heavy footfalls of Mr. Auf dem Busch Senior announced his approach.

"It is already late to be in the open air," he said. "We will go in. The others are already in the parlor. We will have some music, if Mr. May likes."

Leslie was about to answer in the stereotype phrases used on such occasions, but the old gentleman continued :

“ I heard laughing. Has Pauline played her 'Touch-me-not trick?' ”

The question elicited no audible answer. Pauline, who had, indeed, often amused herself by showing off the peculiar quality of the Sensitive plant, was, for the first time in her experience, anxiously considering what effect the experiment might have produced upon her visitor. He had called her a *wise*, as well as a beautiful, priestess. Was he mocking her?

Leslie, on his part, was puzzled to decide, whether he was pleased or otherwise to learn, from the old gentleman's question, that she had played this trick before. The exultant consciousness of success, which she took no pains to conceal, might have assisted him in finding an answer to his doubt.

The parlor by lamplight (gas had not yet been introduced to this part of the suburbs) presented quite a cheerful appearance. Its furniture had evidently been selected with an eye to comfort and ease rather than elegance. The chairs and sofas had a look about them as if they would enjoy being sat upon. The table in the center was large and solid enough to hold books, writing materials, or papers for the temporary accommodation of those inclined to so use it. One article of equipment alone bore evidence of a disregard of cost in the fitting up of the room: An elegant, very fine piano (a Chickering Grand, the dealer had called it). This had been purchased by the merchant on the suggestion of Pauline's music teacher, that her progress in the art warranted a better instrument than the one that had been used in the Auf dem Busch family from time immemorial.

When they entered, Pauline, whispering a few words into the ear of Mrs. Auf dem Busch, immediately disappeared into another room, to the visible displeasure of Auf dem Busch, Senior. Leslie, with a newly formed determination to make his peace with Auf dem Busch Junior, appropriated the vacant chair at his side and opened conversation. “ I take it for

granted," he said, "that you have seen, during your sojourn in Europe, many fine residences and beautiful private parks, so that naturally your judgment is more critical than that of us simple Americans. But is not this villa of your father's a bright gem in its way? Particularly when viewed in contrast with the showy, but sometimes utterly tasteless houses and yards affected by our men of — money?"

"Professor Rauhenfels has told father many times, that ours is a very fine place," Woldemar made answer, with cool politeness.

"Oh, the professor!" exclaimed Leslie, the slightest touch of a sneer in his voice. "I don't take much stock in his opinions. Except," he added with a low laugh, "on cats' tails. Ah, what a center shot you gave him at the table about his Hegelian philosophy."

The professor and Victor were engaged in an animated discussion sufficiently far off from Woldemar and Leslie, to be out of ordinary hearing distance. Woldemar, casting a look in their direction, replied: "He deserved it. I wish I could tell him what I think of him openly; but father has taken such a liking to him that he would be deeply offended if I did not keep on good terms with him. And see there; even Victor, who up to this time has shared my antipathy to this man, is now charmed by him, like a helpless bird by a snake! I gave Victor credit for better taste and sterner self-respect."

"If you knew Victor as well as I do," Leslie replied in a confidential whisper, "you would not be surprised to see him take up with any man who has a positive opinion on any matter, and is not backward in asserting himself. And our friend Rauhenfels is not overly bashful, — do you think?"

Leslie had touched Woldemar in the right place, if he was really in earnest about propitiating his young host. "I should think not!" he replied, whispering also, but with some emphasis. "He is as crammed full of conceit as a two bushel sack with three bushels of chaff in it."

Having said these words, he seemed to regret them, or to

resent, perhaps, the familiarity in which the young lawyer had indulged towards him. For he relapsed at once into uncongenial silence. But Leslie was not to be put off so easily. He continued the conversation with that winning candor and frankness that had so enslaved Victor, and against which not even Woldemar was proof, now that it suited Leslie's purpose to conciliate his rival. (For Leslie had never for a moment doubted that Woldemar sustained the relation, in very dictatorial manner, of lover to Miss Waldhorst.) He succeeded in melting away the icy reserve of the young merchant, and was making brave headway in gaining his good will, when the old gentleman, frowning at the protracted absence of Pauline, called upon his son to entertain the company with music, thus putting an end to the conversation with Leslie.

"If ladies find not the time to do honor to honored guests, we will teach them a lesson in what is polite," said the old merchant. "Woldemar, play you something for Mr. May and the professor, what they will like."

"What *will* the gentlemen like?" said Woldemar, with a smile. Without waiting for an answer, however, he continued: "Perhaps Mr. May would like a real German Folk-song?"

Of course, Leslie would be very much pleased with a German Folk-song, and the professor said that no music could be better. So Woldemar sat down to the piano, and sang, in a resonant, pleasing voice, the song of "Heiden Röslein," accompanying himself on the piano. Before he had concluded the first line, Mrs. Auf dem Busch joined her son, singing the melody in a clear soprano; then the husband followed with his deep bass, and Victor completed the quartette. When the refrain was reached, several of the younger members of the Auf dem Busch family, who had been granted the privilege of the parlor on this occasion, joined in the chorus, and all the singers united, with evident enjoyment and hearty good will, in swelling the melodious harmony of the chorus refrain

"Röslein, Röslein, Röslein roth,
Röslein auf der Heiden!"

During the singing of the second verse Leslie's enjoyment was heightened by the re-entrance of Miss Waldhorst, who joined in the soprano with her own bell-like voice, thus enabling Woldemar to reinforce the bass, adding perceptibly to the musical effect.

"Would you not explain to me the burden of the song?" Leslie asked the young lady when the singing ceased. "Every one seems to enjoy so thoroughly the meaning of the words, that I am sure it would add to my own enjoyment of the glorious music, if I understood the import of the words."

"It is all about a little wild rose," Pauline explained blushing without conscious cause. "I have a translation of the song somewhere, which I will show you if you wish."

"And sing it to me?" he added eagerly. "I am sure it will be a rare treat to me to hear you sing this song in English."

"Certainly, if it will please you," she assented, selecting one of the books on the music stand, and placing it open on the rack of the piano. "Woldemar, will you have the kindness to accompany me?"

For answer the young merchant at once intoned the prelude, its softness contrasting, though not unpleasantly, with the more powerful chords of his previous rendition. Perfect silence pervaded the room as she sang. She had a sweet, clear voice, of volume sufficient to fill the parlor. No one joined in the chorus of the refrain. Even the youngsters, eager enough to take part in musical performance, instinctively restrained themselves, and thus avoided marring the effect of Pauline's pure voice, as it swelled into a ringing fortissimo just before the conclusion.

Leslie was deeply impressed. "How touchingly beautiful!" he exclaimed, as he caught his breath, after the singing had ceased. "What exquisite tenderness in the sentiment!"

"Exquisite fiddlesticks!" the professor exclaimed, approaching the piano, and taking from it the book from which

Pauline had sung. "Miss Waldhorst has enchanted us all with the wonderful sweetness of her singing. But try to read the words without the insinuating charm of her voice, and you will find love-sick sentimentality instead of sentiment — unmeaning, flat twaddle, instead of the spirited, sparkling little gem of Göthe, so touching in its simplicity, so genuine in its metaphor. This translation sounds like the lackadaisical gushing of a sentimental school-girl over a valentine, with a vignette of two hearts transpierced by Cupid's arrow."

"What is the matter with this poetry?" inquired Victor, who had been rudely shocked by the professor's discordant remarks. "You cannot demand in a translation the force and beauty of the original. And I look upon this poem as a very creditable imitation in English of the poet's idea. A literal rendering of the words would necessarily have destroyed the rhythm and rhyme, without improving the mere content."

"Decidedly not!" sneered the professor.

Leslie was incensed at what he deemed a wanton piece of effrontery to the whole company. "I learn with astonishment," he said, speaking in a tone of such withering contempt as Victor had never — save on one unforgotten occasion — heard his friend use, "that the gentleman is as much at home on the subject of poetry, as on that of metaphysics, or carving grouse. Perhaps he possesses the 'divine afflatus' in a higher degree than my unfortunate Venetian friend, or the author of the English version of the 'Wild Rose.' In which case it would be uncharitable to suppose that his remarks are dictated rather by envy, than strict regard for poetical truth."

The professor's eyes flashed, and the corners of his mouth assumed a decided downward tendency. But the torrent of invective, anticipated by those who knew him well, was stayed yet a while by the remarks of Woldemar, who, deeming himself an ardent admirer of Göthe, could not permit this opportunity to pass by without breaking a lance in defense of his favorite poet, and at the same time assist in the discomfiture of Professor Rauhenfels.

“The professor is right in one respect,” he said; “the lines of Göthe are certainly more spirited, — more spicy, if I may use that expression, than this translation. How could it be otherwise? I agree with Cousin Victor, that no translation can ever equal an original poem, unless, as I believe I heard the professor say, the translator surpass the author in power.”

“As Shakespear and Göthe himself did in reproducing the works of those whom they glorified!” the professor interjected.

“Then Mr. Rauhenfels has it in his power to vindicate Göthe’s *Heidenröslein*,” young Auf dem Busch continued, “and to prove himself the peer of Shakespear, by reproducing “*The Heiden Röslein*” in English, in a version not so flat and wishy-washy as he characterizes the one we have heard.”

“Gentlemen,” the professor said, pouring out his words with fierce defiance, “do you mean to deny a freeman the right to speak his conviction? You flare up at my remarks, as if they were in disparagement of your own merits. Apply them so, if you feel the smart of the lash. As to the difficulty of translating a poem from one language into another, that is a remark that has been made before, and the wisdom of the company here assembled will hardly mark an epoch in the history of literature. Nor is there any terror for me in your sneering challenge. No one is more sincere in his admiration of Göthe than myself; and let me say, with deference to the present company, that the men who rise to an adequate appreciation of his greatness, are exceedingly rare. I do not claim to be a poet; but if I could not do better in the translation of a poem than this author has done, I would not offer to let other people get sight of my productions.”

Auf dem Busch listened to the quarrel with amusement at first; but when the professor’s vehement speech threatened unpleasant consequences, he essayed to pour oil on the troubled waters. Having unbounded confidence in the ability of his friend to make good any of his assertions, he interrupted the

speaker with a proposition. "I have heard say, that Americans try pudding by eating it. Suppose now, you eat the pudding, and tell us in English, what Göthe says in the Heiden Röslein."

Without another word, the professor drew forth a scrap of paper and a pencil, and sat down, staring at the ceiling, as if the poem he was to translate was written there.

Meanwhile Leslie turned to Miss Waldhorst and asked her opinion on the professor's judgment, volunteering the information that he, for his part, deemed the poem he had heard her sing with such exquisite pathos, to be very fine.

"I — I must say," the maiden answered with some hesitation, "that I like the German much better. The tenor is, that a wanton boy saw a rose, — a little rose, you know, a diminutive for which sounds well in German, but it would be absurd to say 'roselet' in a poem — and, boy-like, he wanted to break it for himself, — pluck it I mean. There is a line, which I am sure that even the professor cannot put into English with the beautiful effect of the original —

' War so jung, so morgenschön ! '

— you cannot say that in English. And it is so touching when the little rose defends herself with her thorns, and the wild boy, — not minding them at all — plucks her from her parent stem, and the rose can do nothing but suffer it. And I cannot describe to you the pathos and tenderness of the refrain, simple as the words are —

' Röslein, Röslein, Röslein Roth,
Röslein auf der Heiden ! '

But see: the professor seems to have finished his task. I am eager to know what he has made of it."

The professor read over what he had written, and, turning to Miss Waldhorst, said, loud enough to be heard by all present: "Here is, in such crude form as my limited time enabled me to employ, *my* version of the Heidenröslein in English



Leslie closely watching her, she placed the paper on the rack, and began to sing.

words. Will you honor me, Miss Waldhorst, by singing it to the company with that grace and pathos, which will make it tolerable to them?"

"Let us hear the words first!" cried Victor, "that we may have them clearly before us. The professor himself said that music bribes the ear."

"You shall be fair," proclaimed the host. "If the professor likes first to have the singing, Pauline shall first sing."

This decree was not demurred to, and the young lady took the paper handed to her. But the professor's chirography was not as legible as print, and she had to call the writer to her assistance to decipher it. A flush of pleasurable excitement was visible in her face, as, Leslie closely watching her, she placed the paper on the rack, and sat down to sing, playing the accompaniment this time herself. Everyone, of course, listened with silent attention.

"Youth espied a rosebud rare,

Rosebud on the heather;

Dew-gemmed in the morning air, —

And he yearned the rose so fair

From its stalk to gather.

Rosebud, rosebud, rosebud red,

Rosebud on the heather.

He would pluck the rosebud rare,

Rosebud on the heather!

Rosebud cried: My thorns beware!

I will prick thee, if thou dare

From my stalk me gather.

Rosebud, rosebud, rosebud red,

Rosebud on the heather.

Wantonly he seized his prize,

Rosebud on the heather!

Vain was struggling, vain were sighs, —

Boldly plucked he, spite all cries,
 Rose and thorns together.
 Rosebud, rosebud, rosebud red,
 Rosebud on the heather! "

"Bravo!" exclaimed the old gentleman, when the song was finished. "And I will say 'brava!' too, because I know not if the writing is finer or the singing of Pauline. Ah, the professor was wise, when he wished Pauline to first sing his song. But now, Professor, you will read it? Victor and Mr. May shall now judge, if it be good poetry."

"I know one thing already," said Victor: "and that is, that the music sounds better with these words than with the others. That may be, because the professor gives us the same image which we get from the original."

The professor seemed much pleased with Victor's remark. But a recognition that he might have prized more highly came from the young lady, who extended to him her hand and said, her face beaming with delight, "I thank you, Professor Raulenfels, for having made Göthe speak to me in English. This is the 'Heidenröslein' as he pictured her, — to me, at least. Will you believe me, when I tell you, that your rendition has put the pathos into the refrain, which makes it so touching in the original, and which I entirely missed in the other translation, although the words are very much alike? It suggests admiration, tender solicitude, and finally sympathetic regret for the fate of the poor rose."

"And yet," was the professor's answer, "it is the fate of roses to be plucked."

"Therein seems to lie the touching power of this poem," said Pauline. "We feel, that the rare rose is destined to be appropriated by the hand that is not afraid of her thorns. And there is no escape from destiny!"

"Yours is a genuinely poetic instinct, Miss Waldhorst," the professor exclaimed, in undisguised admiration. "You have caught the poet at his trick. How is it that Göthe hims-

self puts it? — He ‘ calls the particular to its universal consecration!’ And Heine, less philosophically, but more popularly, perhaps, suggests, that

“ ‘ It is an old, old story,
And yet forever new;
And he, to whom it happens,
His heart doth break in two.’ ”

There was more music after this, and animated conversation, to which they all contributed their due share. Miss Waldhorst’s vivacity was a surprise to both Woldemar and Leslie, with very different effect on each. When the guests had taken their departure, at a late hour in the night, the one was overjoyed, the other dismayed, by the cordial and pressing invitation extended by the host to the young lawyer to repeat his visit at an early day, with the evidently sincere assurance, that he would be always welcome.

Perhaps the dismay would have been deeper, if Woldemar had caught the look of eager expectation with which Pauline regarded the guest until his answer came, or the vivid flush that suffused her face when she shook hands with him on saying good-night.



SHADOWS OF COMING EVENTS IN A SANCTUM.

WOLDEMAR AUF DEM BUSCH'S statement that Victor was, like a helpless bird, under the charm of Professor Rauhenfels, was not without an element of truth, though in a manner and for a reason better comprehended by Leslie. Not attracted toward the stranger himself, he naturally ascribed the influence he had gained over his uncle to successful wiles of sycophantic blandiloquence. The antipathy thus experienced grew into positive dislike by reason of the stranger's offensive habit of announcing his opinions, often unasked, on any and all subjects that happened to be under discussion in his presence, — announced, too, with an exasperating air of infallibility, and many times in direct contradiction of Victor's sincerely cherished convictions.

The consequence was that Victor shunned him whenever he could do so without offending his uncle. But Victor was a sincere searcher after truth, and battled against error whenever he recognized it as such, though at the cost of the merciless demolition of fondly hugged illusions. Permitting himself, one day, to be betrayed into a fierce wrangle with the professor on a topic upon which he entertained very positive views in direct opposition to those of the professor, the latter scattered Victor's arguments like empty chaff before the wind. Victor felt deeply humiliated; but however hotly he resented his discomfiture, he could not but admit the force of his adversary's logic, and bow, with what grace he might, to the power of a superior intellect. After this, again and again, he engaged in fierce debate with the professor, on such topics

of science, religion, and particularly politics, on which he had formed decided opinions, suffering defeat after defeat. Although many of his pet theories were cruelly shaken to pieces in the hot contentions, his impressible nature, ever ready to accept what he recognized to be true, just or real, was gradually drawn towards his opponent, his distrust melted away, and his antipathy changed to wonderment and awe before the towering intellect of this marvelous man.

Such was the magic spell that fascinated Victor's mind. Its influence became so great, that Victor ceased to feel humiliation when the professor made light of convictions that had been sacred to the young man, as the embodiment of truth to him. He instinctively felt that the mind of Professor Rauhenfels condescended from its own loftier level to cope with a weaker intellect, and took comfort in the belief, that he was himself thereby elevated to a higher plane. His opponent, in some way impressed him with the thought, that aspiration after truth was the truly divine afflatus, — that quality of human nature, implanted by the Creator, through which redemption from error and sin is accomplished — the possession of which he felt to be a common trait between the professor and himself.

His editorial duties left him little leisure to devote to the study of poets, or the laborious task of wrestling with the abstruse reasoning of Hegel. He was nominally the assistant, in fact however the principal, editor of the *Beobachter im Thal*, a daily newspaper published in the German language. It were, perhaps, nearer the truth to say that he was its only editor. For Mr. Becker, whose name figured at the head of the paper as "Proprietor and Editor in Chief," was a gentleman of Pennsylvanian ancestry, whose acquaintance with the German language and literature extended no further than to the *patois* known as "Pennsylvanisch Deutsch," which he spoke with the liberal admixture of Americanisms idiomatic to the "Pfälzer" settlers in Pennsylvania. Victor might well, therefore, be held responsible for the political and literary

coloring of the paper edited by him, though only as "assistant."

To infer, from this condition of things, that Victor was sovereign ruler in the sanctum, would be pardonable, but nevertheless gross error. For Mr. Becker, whatever was his proficiency in the other two "R's," had certainly mastered the elements of his "arithmetical." He knew how to put two and two together for a purpose. Now his purpose, besides enjoying his glass of beer (or several glasses of beer) and game of Solo in the company of boon companions, was the accumulation of dollars. He reasoned that his hoard of dollars would increase with the popularity of his paper. And to secure popularity, the paper must advocate the views held by the public, so he argued. Now the views of the public came to him through the medium of his friends of the saloons; and these were not always in accord with the views entertained by Victor. There was, in consequence, many a dispute between the dollar loving proprietor, and his, in this respect, at least, impractical editor. On the question of the enforcement of the Sunday law, for instance, there were heated discussions in the sanctum. And so with regard to the kindred subjects of Temperance, or Total Abstinence Societies, on which their views differed rather widely. Finally, a peace was patched up between them which, although its terms satisfied neither party, yet enabled them to get along without hostility. But then came another topic that began to agitate public opinion, especially in the circles in which the *Beobachter* had its readers and subscribers, and which threatened to become more troublesome than any of their previous differences, because Victor stood firm and was intractable on all questions involving his conviction.

Leslie May was a frequent and always welcome visitor at the sanctum about this time. Welcome not only to Victor. For Mr. Becker regarded the young lawyer as a man of rising importance, to be reckoned among whose friends was an honor, and might prove of advantage to the *Beobachter*. Mr. Becker's

friends looked upon the young man as the champion of personal liberty and of the freedom of conscience, — that brightest gem in the escutcheon of the land of their adoption — who had vindicated the law by turning it against itself. This arose out of the fact, that Leslie had succeeded in breaking down the prosecution of the Sunday cases to the surprise and envy of his brother lawyers; to the admiration and gratitude of most citizens of Teutonic origin, who hailed his success as the Triumph of Truth and Freedom; and to the no small chagrin of politicians of the Know-Nothing stripe. To Victor, the result had been no surprise; but his joy was none the less exultant when Leslie, in the first flush of his triumph, himself informed him of his success. A romantic incident connected with the trial not only added greatly to the young lawyer's personal interest therein, but led Victor, when, on a subsequent occasion he learned the particulars, to see in it the hand of Providence, dealing out retribution and poetic justice.

For the prosecuting witness, on whose testimony the prosecuting attorney relied to prove the facts of the case, was none other than Victor's old enemy, the whilom overseer Jeffreys, to demolish whose credibility as a witness had been an easy and most delightful task to the young lawyer. Of course, neither Mr. Becker nor his friends knew of this circumstance, and all the more admired the astute man of law, in tearing off the mask of sanctimonious hypocrisy from the informer. Victor had not become acquainted with this feature of the trial until afterward; but the success of his friend was in itself so joyful an event, that in the exuberance of his spirits he was not content to talk the matter over in his sanctum, but yearned to impart the great news to sympathizing friends, and in this mood proposed a visit to the villa. The readiness of his friend in accepting the invitation pleased him much, and he found it quite natural that Leslie should, on this occasion, be the lion of the evening, and monopolize the lion's share of conversation at Busch Bluff. The cordial words of praise that fell from his uncle's lips, the profuse and somewhat exagger-

ated compliments paid him by Cousin Woldemar and even the elegant homage that lay in his sister's eager attention and sparkling eyes were so entirely in accordance with his own feelings, that he saw nothing in them but the well merited tribute due to superior ability.

The renewed intimacy between the two young men, however welcome to both, was not wholly conducive to harmony in the sanctum. Unconsciously to the editor, not unnoticed by others, the *Beobachter* grew more emphatic in its advocacy of the particular shade of Democratic doctrine that had been instilled in his mind by the teachings of Colonel May. These doctrines were advocated by Leslie with a fervor which astonished Victor, who had never noticed enthusiasm as a trait in his friend's character; just now, however, he was certainly enthusiastic on the subject of State Sovereignty, going to an extreme in this direction to which Victor could not follow. But his own views became more positive, his editorials more decided, in support of the constitution. He saw in the strict construction of its provisions, by which the sovereignty of the nation was divided between the several States on the one hand and the Federal government on the other, the safeguard to ward off the danger that, in the minds of many, threatened to shake the government to pieces. Loyalty to the constitution forbade warfare against slavery by the general government, because it vested all power over slavery in the States. But the majority of the readers of the *Beobachter* were not disposed to draw this distinction, and Mr. Becker insisted on more vigorous articles against slavery. Victor responded by a zealous advocacy of the Emancipation Societies then springing up in various of the slave States. This course satisfied some of the city subscribers; but as the *Beobachter* circulated quite extensively in the surrounding free States, at least in its weekly edition, and as the Fugitive Slave law was beginning, under the interpretation it had received by the Federal courts, to arouse serious opposition in these States, Mr. Becker was not satisfied, but demanded outspoken radical anti-slavery editorials.

The proprietor of the paper was not equal to the editor in carrying on a dispute on the basis of legitimate argument, to be decided by common sense or reason. Victor had not hitherto found it difficult to avoid a direct surrender of his own convictions in conducting the paper. Even the compromise on the subject of Sunday laws and temperance agitation could not be claimed as a victory by the proprietor. And as Mr. Becker's political views accommodated themselves rather easily to the demands of temporary expediency, Victor might have come off triumphantly in the hot disputes that followed on the slavery question, but for the impenetrable shield with which his opponent's utter inaccessibility to argument armed him, when it was his policy not to be convinced. The fear of losing subscribers was to him an argument more potent than any that Victor could bring to bear. It was during one of the violent contentions between them, in which the proprietor's ultimatum followed by a peremptory refusal on the part of the editor, was about to produce an immediate rupture between the belligerents, that the entrance of Leslie May into the sanctum caused, for the moment at least, a suspension of hostilities. The excitement of both the disputants was too great to be concealed from the visitor, and Mr. Becker himself, to Victor's relief, stated the cause of their quarrel, appealing to the young lawyer for aid in bringing the editor to his senses.

Leslie had at that time attained to a popularity, in consequence of his success in defeating the Sunday-law-cases, — a popularity greatest among the very people with whom Mr. Becker associated — which commanded the respect of the proprietor of the *Beobachter*. He also possessed, as Victor so well knew, the gift of seductive persuasion which made him almost irresistible in carrying his point, when he was in earnest. And just now he seemed, for a reason not quite apparent to Victor, to have set his heart on keeping the present editor of the *Beobachter* at his post. But it was no easy task even for the diplomatic skill of Leslie May, to pour oil on the

troubled waters: for Victor was inflexible in what he deemed a matter of duty, and Mr. Becker stubborn in his zeal to please his subscribers. All the efforts of the mediator seemed in vain, until, in the very nick of time, he advanced a proposition that set both the disputants to thinking. He suggested the candidacy of the young editor for the legislature, — a proposition that dazed Victor. He saw a hitherto secretly cherished ambition thrust forth from the innermost recesses of his heart into the glaring light of day, and rudely pushing him to action before the time had come for which he was waiting. Yes: It was a dream in which he had fondly indulged. He had thirsted for the opportunity of distinguishing himself as a public man. Having served as a member of the General Assembly might put him in the way of an election to Congress and — to meet Nellie May on her own level. Nellie May! The proud beauty, the worshiped idol of his heart, whose image had been newly enthroned therein by the reading of that letter intrusted to him by Leslie, and which he had not returned, but — how he blushed, even now, to think of it! — appropriated as a priceless treasure! Once again, it seemed, fate was hurrying him on to the realization of a plan that he had relegated to the far-off future. Leslie's suggestion must be considered, — must, indeed, be answered.

Was it feasible?

The same question was in the mind of Mr. Becker. The prospect of the editor of his paper being a member of the legislature was an alluring one to him. It would be a great card for the *Beobachter*. And what was even of greater importance, it would put his paper in the way of patronage. Advertisements, at good, round prices, payable out of the government funds, would pour in, at the mere nod of the editor, if he possessed any influence at all, — and he knew Mr. Waldhorst well enough to be easy on that score. He would, he was sure, make his mark. Posted, as he was, on the political questions of the time, it was not at all improbable that he would rise to a position of a leader in the House, or at least

of his party in the House. Not quite so sure was he, whether, supposing him to have attained influence, he would wield it in dispensing patronage to the paper. But then he was perfectly sure that he could rely on his editor's loyalty, and trusted to his own diplomatic skill in manipulating the legislature, if need be, under cover of Victor's popularity. By all means, then, let Mr. Waldhorst be elected to the legislature as a representative German, from the editorial staff of the *Beobachter im Thal!* And Mr. Becker, too, pondered the question, Was it feasible?

So confident did Mr. May profess to be on this point that all doubt vanished from the mind of the proprietor, and even Victor found it easier to stifle the misgivings of his natural diffidence. "You see," he explained to the hopeful proprietor, "I am myself more deeply interested in the matter than even you or my friend, Mr. Waldhorst: for my father is a candidate for the United States Senate. It is very important for us to have so staunch a supporter of his party as well as so firm a personal friend as I know Mr. Waldhorst to be, as a member of the General Assembly when the election comes on."

Of course!

Nellie's words in connection with this scheme were graven on Victor's memory, and the vivid recollection of her enthusiastic gratitude for the assistance volunteered by Ralph Payton fired him with zeal, before which his party loyalty, even his profound sense of duty to the country, paled into insignificance. His mind, if he had known it, had been made up on the first instant, to accept Leslie's suggestion. The prospect of being able to contribute by his vote as well as the whole of any influence he could bring to bear—whatever that might amount to—to the elevation of his friend and benefactor to the United States Senate, appealing to his profound sense of obligation and gratitude, constituted an overpowering motive, sufficient in itself to put to shame all possible doubts and objections. And above all these considerations, and at the

bottom of all his thoughts in connection therewith, there was the distant vision of a radiantly beautiful face, irresistibly luring him on with its entrancing smile.

And so Leslie's plan met with cordial approval by the powers of the sanctum, and, for the present at least, peace and harmony reigned supreme there once more. It was settled that neither Mr. Becker nor Victor should put themselves, just yet, to any trouble at all, but leave the matter to the management of the young lawyer, who promised to secure Victor's nomination by the county convention, if he would only consent.



XXI.

HOW THE MACHINE IS WORKED.

EVENTS soon proved that Leslie had not promised more than he was able to perform.

It was a trying time to Democracy. Victor exerted his utmost ability to vindicate its doctrines in their pristine purity. But while he combated political heresies in the columns of his paper, Leslie, in a more quiet and unostentatious way, did far more effective practical work. It was his creed that political principles are best vindicated by the success of the party advocating them; hence he looked upon victory in the elections as of greater importance than the discussion of abstract principles. To him it was of far less moment that the democrats should be convinced of the truth and justice of their cause, than that democrats should win. He wanted his father elected to the United States Senate; and that could be accomplished only by having a Democratic majority in the General Assembly. He therefore bent his energies to swell the numbers of Democratic voters. Nor could his father be elected unless he was the choice of a majority of the democrats in the legislature; hence he labored to procure the election of as many adherents to the cause represented by his father as possible. That Victor should be one of these, he had, as we have seen, early determined; and as he was perfectly sure of Victor's loyalty to whatever cause he espoused, he took more than ordinary pains to commit him to the policy advocated by his father. It may be inferred from the stand taken by Victor against his principal, to what extent he had been successful in this respect. Yet he deemed it of great importance to guard, as far as possible, against the danger of adverse influence, the greatest of which he reckoned Victor's extreme conscientiousness.

The Democratic County Convention had been called for an unusually late day. The leaders of the party, burdened with self-imposed responsibility for the welfare of the State, had held back with the promulgation of the policy according to which the country was to be saved from the misrule and corruption under which it had suffered at the hands of Know-Nothingism without subjecting it to the mercy of the republicans, who were to be even more feared on account of their avowed purpose of subverting the constitution. It had become obvious that there would be at least three parties opposed to one another in the impending contest; and the Democratic leaders had determined to wait until the last possible moment before giving out the watchword under which Democracy was to do battle. The know-nothings made a gallant stand, inscribing upon their banner the magic words that led them to victory before. "The Constitution" and "America for Americans" was their war cry. The republicans followed, calling upon Freemen to vindicate Freedom. Both of these parties had nominated tickets for the State and county officers, and the construction of a Democratic platform and nomination of Democratic candidates could be put off no longer.

So, finally, the convention was called, and primary meetings appointed for the wards of the city and the townships of the county, to select delegates. Then came a busy time for central committeemen, members of the Democratic clubs, and wire-pullers and ward politicians generally. The Democratic newspapers were full of stirring appeals to the Democratic voters to be on hand in the primary meetings for the purpose of electing representatives to the party convention.

Victor, who had always conscientiously performed a voter's duty in this respect, was sincere and earnest in his editorial exhortations. He emphasized strongly the great importance of primary meetings, as constituting the foundation upon which the party organization was built up, the fountain so to speak from which all its authority flowed, and in whose hands lay the determination of the principles for which the party con-

tended. He demonstrated that in a government based upon the will of the majority of the people, the omission to express this will in the only authentic and efficient manner in which it can be done, is a treasonable dereliction of duty.

But Victor, on this occasion, did not confine his activity to the writing of editorials in his newspaper. His patriotism and loyalty to the Democratic party had been perceptibly quickened by the prospect of being a candidate himself. He called on as many of his personal friends as his time would allow, reminding them of their duty to the country. At Busch Bluff, the way to which had not been so long as to deter him from making a visit there, he was received with significant smiles by his uncle and cousin, and the voluntary promise of the former that he would not forget to vote for him. It was evident that Leslie had forestalled him there, and that the old gentleman had received his cue from the young lawyer. Pauline, also, mentioned to him, as she attended him to the gate on his departure, that Mr. May had told her the grand news of her brother's going to the legislature. "And he says," she added with an eager, triumphant look into his eyes, "that you are going to make a United States senator of his father."

On the evening appointed for the meeting in his ward Victor was on hand at the precise hour of the call. He was surprised and much pleased to find the hall respectably filled at this early hour. But his surprise was still greater on hearing a well-known member of the central committee, almost as soon as he had entered the hall, call the meeting to order, and propose Mr. Victor Waldhorst for chairman. Victor protested; but his feeble stammering was drowned by the voice of the committeeman, who demanded that all democrats favoring his motion should say aye! and then, that all opposing should say no! whereupon he proclaimed that the motion had been carried, and called on Victor to take his seat on the platform.

Victor was really and truly unprepared for the honor thus thrust upon him. But as there was no time for deliberation, and principally because he lacked the presence of mind to so

word a refusal as not to give offense to the meeting, he bashfully permitted himself to be conducted to the chair.

The smiling face of Mr. Becker was the first he encountered on looking around, and his love for this gentleman was by no means stimulated by the thought that flashed upon him, that he owed his present uneasy position to the ambitious scheming of the newspaper proprietor. He was confirmed in this suspicion by the next move of the committeeman, who thus addressed him :

“ I now move you, Mr. Chairman, that that active and prominent democrat Nehemia Becker, Esq., be elected secretary of this meeting.”

The motion having been duly seconded, was mechanically put to a vote by the chairman.

A voice from another part of the hall then moved the appointment by the chair of a committee of five, to select and present to the meeting the names of five reliable democrats, to be voted for as delegates to the county convention to be held at Hamilton Hall on Monday next.

The motion had hardly been put and carried, when a paper was slipped into his hand, containing the names of five persons, of whom Victor was personally acquainted with but one, and that was his employer, Mr. Becker. The chairman's embarrassment was great. It was not in accordance with his views that matters should be precipitated at this rate. The selection of delegates to the county convention was a duty of such momentous importance as to demand careful deliberation. Nor was he at all satisfied that Mr. Becker was a proper person to be intrusted with any discretion in connection therewith. But what was he to do? The meeting was waiting for his action. He personally knew but few of the persons present. So he reluctantly announced the gentlemen named on the paper before him, which he had fortunately recognized as being in the handwriting of Leslie May, to constitute the committee of five. The persons designated rose, and left the hall for consultation.

It was then, before the door had been closed upon the retiring committee, that a new surprise awaited the astonished chairman. A voice from a distant part of the room cried out: "Mr. Chairman!" Victor was not acquainted with the voice, nor with the gentleman standing up and evidently claiming the floor. At this crisis, to his great relief, some one close by whispered into his ear: "Dr. Moorman!" So he recognized Dr. Moorman as being entitled to the floor. Dr. Moorman wished to offer a Preamble and Resolutions, for the consideration of the democrats present at the meeting, and sent them up to the secretary's desk to have them read. As Mr. Becker, the secretary, had left the room on committee duty, the task to read fell on the chairman. The paper was as follows: —

"WHEREAS, we claim it to be the right, as it is the sacred duty, of democrats in primary meeting assembled, to make known their views, and speak out their sentiments, touching the affairs of the nation; and

WHEREAS, we deem it of essential importance, that our representatives in the General Assembly be informed of our views and convictions touching the election of the representative of our glorious State in the Senate of the United States; and

WHEREAS, we have witnessed with profound satisfaction the congressional career of that staunch and reliable democrat, the Honorable LEONARD MAY, who has so ably and successfully represented the interests of our State in the Congress of the United States for three consecutive congressional terms; therefore be it

Resolved, by the democrats of the Fourth Ward in primary meeting assembled, that the delegates to the county convention to be elected by this meeting be, and they hereby are, instructed to vote for such candidates for election to the General Assembly, as may be known to be favorable to the election of our distinguished fellow citizen, the Honorable LEONARD MAY, to the Senate of the United States.

Resolved, moreover, that we request the county convention to instruct the candidates to be nominated by said convention, and who may be elected to the General Assembly, to cast their votes in favor of the said LEONARD MAY at the election of a United States senator."

The reading of the paper was followed by the clapping of hands, the stamping of feet, the clatter of canes and shrill shouts of hurrah! usual on such occasions. The resolutions seemed to express the unanimous opinion of the people, for not a dissentient voice was raised. Victor, who was inclined, but for the verbosity employed, to hold his friend Leslie responsible for the authorship of the paper, was so thoroughly in accord with its purpose, that he spoke for the first time during the evening, in a loud, ringing voice as he put the question, and when he announced the unanimous adoption of the preamble and resolutions.

But not even yet had the end of surprises for the chairman of the meeting been reached. At the precise moment when he had announced the vote as having been carried, the Committee on Nominations re-entered the hall, and Mr. Becker, as its chairman, submitted a list of names, including his own, as well as that of Victor, together with three well-known friends of Mr. Becker, whom Victor had never suspected of higher pretensions of statesmanship than noisy declamation in bar-rooms, emphasized by calling all present to join him in a drink. He felt ill at ease. But the report must be put to a vote; and when it had been unanimously adopted, nothing remained for him to do but to announce the gentlemen therein named as the choice of the Democracy of the Fourth Ward as delegates to the county convention. As soon as this had been done, some one moved that the meeting do now adjourn, and in less than fifteen minutes after it had been called to order by the committeeman all was over, and the democrats of the Fourth Ward had spoken, so far as the election of the members for the county convention for that year was concerned.

Victor was not at all pleased with the result of the evening's work; least of all with his own share in it. He felt, as if the participants in the meeting had been used as puppets, bobbing up and down at the pleasure of some one behind the scenes pulling the wires. He was perfectly sure of this, so far as himself was concerned. Was this the way in which freemen exercised their sacred right of determining the policy of a party, as he had so glowingly set forth in his editorials? As it was still early in the evening, Victor proposed to Mr. Becker that each of them should visit some other ward meeting, with the view of obtaining fuller particulars for the *Beobachter* than would likely be furnished by the professional reporters. He for his own part immediately set out for the First Ward.

The meeting for this ward was held in a market house, which Victor reached in a few minutes. His suspicion that Leslie had obtained great influence with the Democratic Central Committee, and was manipulating the ward meetings in the interest of Colonel May, was strongly confirmed by the unexpected fact, that he found his own uncle, Auf dem Busch, Senior, occupying the chair. The further fact, that a set of resolutions similar to those that had been adopted in the Fourth Ward were offered here, did not so much surprise him, after the experiences of the evening. But there was here no such unanimity as had characterized the Fourth Ward meeting. After the reading of the resolutions there was applause, but there was also dissent. A loud voice demanded to know: "Who is this Mr. May?" Whereupon the mover of the resolutions answered sharply, that such a question could only proceed from ignorance or from gross prejudice; for that Mr. May had been for many years an illustrious leader of the Democratic party of the State, and its veteran champion in the National House of Representatives. "Then let him stay in the House of Representatives," the first speaker replied vehemently, "and let us keep our long tried senator at his post in the Senate. I move you, Mr. Chairman, to lay these resolutions on the table."

Victor saw that one of the men on the platform approached the chairman and whispered into his ear, whereupon the latter brought down his hammer with great energy, and succeeded presently in quieting the storm of applause and hisses that followed the words of the last speaker. "It is a motion," he said with quiet dignity, "and it is a second, that we shall put the resolutions, which we have heard, on the table. And I have heard that if it is a motion to put on the table, it shall not be debatable. Also, I decide, that it shall not be debatable."

Victor blushed at the thought that his uncle might, from ignorance or in his bewilderment, omit to put the question; but a renewed storm of applause from the one, and of hisses and groans from the other side of the disputants, rendering the further use of the gavel necessary by the chairman, relieved him for the moment of his anxiety. Loud exclamations of "Shame!" "No gagging here!" and of "Question!" "Take the vote on tabling!" resounded through the hall. Mr. Auf dem Busch was in no wise disconcerted. He soon restored order and continued, after again lending ear to the busy whisperer, "I put now the question, if we put the resolutions on the table. If you wish it, say aye!" The ayes were loud and numerous. Then the chairman demanded: "If you not wish it, say no!" And the noes, to Victor's anxious ears, were not so boisterous, but rather more numerous.

Before the chairman had time to give his opinion as to the result of the vote, there were many clamorous demands for a division. This time the chairman spontaneously bent his head toward the man who did the whispering, and then proclaimed, "I do appoint tellers to count the hands. I appoint my son, Woldemar Auf dem Busch, and my nephew, Victor Waldhorst, to be tellers. If you wish to lay on the table, raise up your hands!"

It is probable that Mr. Auf dem Busch could not have selected two more conscientious tellers in the audience; but

the sovereigns present were not going to put up with such barefaced and shameful nepotism on the part of the chairman; and they were not slow in letting him know this. Besides, it soon leaked out that Victor was not a resident of the First Ward at all, and had no right, therefore, to participate in the meeting. So the chairman was compelled to select other tellers. He did so with as much coolness and dignity as if the *faux pas* made in the first selection were due to some one else's blundering. As soon as, by dint of vigorous hammering with the gavel, he had quieted the laughter and yells of the crowd, he directed the tellers to count the uplifted hands ("only the right hands!" he enjoined on them), and announced after the count, that the motion to table was lost. The resolutions were finally passed by a small majority.

Victor had every reason to be proud of the success of the cause he advocated. In the Fifth Ward also, delegates had been chosen who favored the election of Colonel May, and of the May candidates to the legislature. Yet he left the hall in anything but a triumphant mood. But what most deeply pained him, was the wound that his self-respect received by the conviction, which he could no longer ignore, that some one had prepared the program which had been so accurately carried out in both the wards at which he had attended; and that the same thing had been done, or at least attempted, in the other wards was too plain to admit of doubt. That this person was Leslie May, was equally apparent. It was humiliating to think that not only himself, but also his uncle and cousin had been used as involuntary, even unconscious tools in accomplishing another's purpose. That this purpose was, so far as he could see, proper and meritorious, — that his friend Leslie had accomplished, far more efficiently and successfully than he himself could have dreamed of doing, his own purpose and aim, — did not blind his eyes to the danger that threatened, by practices of this kind, to undermine the liberties of the people. Leslie May was a wise, generous, well-meaning man — second in generosity and whole-souled patriotism to no

man, save, perhaps, Colonel May himself; — but what of that? What if a designing demagogue pursued a similar course in furtherance of wicked, selfish ends? What if a motive ulterior to the welfare of the State inspired the hand that fixed the wires and moved the puppets?

— And he had, but that day, lauded in glowing words, the primaries as the palladium that shielded the liberties of American Freemen!

He reached the office in a dubious mood. Dubious, because it was agreeable, after all, to know that a man of adroitness and skill was managing his election. He could not help rejoicing over the prospect of success, so greatly enhanced by Leslie's interest therein. His prospect of success! And what it meant to him, if he had the mettle to improve it — to compel the respect, if not more, of *Eleonora* May! For he had not forgotten the cruel emphasis with which she had insisted on her full title, the last time she had spoken to him, now so many years ago.

Yes, Miss Eleonora May, you shall yet learn to respect your “outlandish beau!”

He had hardly commenced to reduce the reports of the evening's work at the primaries into shape for a leading article in the morning's paper, when Mr. Becker entered, his face flushed with excitement and exultation. “Mr. Waldhorst!” he exclaimed, “congratulate yourself! The day is ours! If I were only as sure of being elected State Printer as you are of going to the legislature, I would consider my fortune made. But that lawyer friend of yours is a trump, and no mistake! Why, he had the whole thing fixed beforehand, everything cut and dried. If his father is half the man that his son is, he will go to the Senate in spite of anything the democrats, republicans and know-nothings can do, or all of them put together!”

The exuberance of Mr. Becker infected Victor to some extent. “Yes,” he said, “I know that Mr. May is a keen, shrewd and wise politician. And the most wonderful thing

about him is, that he makes people do what he wants whether they consent or not. Or even whether they know it or not!" he added, his cheeks flushing with shame at the recollection of the parts that he and his uncle had been made to play that evening in Leslie's program of the primary meetings. "And he is a warm and faithful friend!"

"Particularly in getting you into the legislature to vote for his father," the proprietor added, somewhat more soberly. "But he plays his cards well. I shall try to be on good terms with him."

Just then Leslie himself entered the office, bringing Professor Raulhenfels with him. Of course, Victor was eager to learn the result of the meetings in the other wards, and plied both Leslie and the professor with questions. Leslie was in an extremely pleasant mood; but his quiet subdued behavior contrasted strongly with the excitement of the professor, whose nervous boisterousness and exuberant hilarity greatly astonished Victor, who had never seen him under such excitement.

"Sir!" he exclaimed, in answer to one of Victor's questions, "we are going to astonish the Old Fogies that have been running this town. We will capture the enemy, horse, foot and dragoons! We'll show the know-nothings, that they were never so wise as in choosing their name. We'll teach the abolitionists that they can't abolish the constitution, just yet. My friend, — Mr. May — and I, we will for once put the electioneering machine on its proper basis, and show the world, what a little brains and tact can do!"

"Call it audacity, Professor!" said Leslie, with a quiet smile, "or cheek. For our success, so far, is due to nothing so much as to the boldness and audacity with which we speculated on the good nature of our friends, the metropolitan politicians, and of those of our friends that ought to be politicians. Our friend Victor, for instance," he added, turning his smiling face toward the editor, "must have been astonished this evening, when called on to preside over a ward meeting. Tell me:

How did you get along? It was so much easier than you thought, was it not? Of the result of the voting I have been informed, as also of the result in the First Ward, where your excellent uncle did good execution with the gavel, I am told. There must be an unruly set down there."

"But uncle got along with them splendidly!" said Victor, rather proudly. "I could not have done half so well!"

"Oh, yes, you could!" was Leslie's reply. "The fact is that you don't know what you can do until you try. But I wish you had some of your uncle's pugnacity. I suspect that he rather enjoys a spirited encounter now and then, and I would not like to be his opponent when he knows that he is in the right."

"But why did you not let me know what you were going to do?" asked Victor, with an undertone of reproach in his voice. "I was terribly embarrassed when the chairmanship was sprung on me without a moment's warning. And don't you believe that it was taking an unfair advantage of the voters to pack the meeting the way you did? — why, you must have had twenty-five or fifty men in each of the meetings — and to have everything prepared beforehand, cut and dried, so as to leave nothing for the real voters to do, but to say aye! This is Democracy with a vengeance, I should think!"

"Ho ho!" the professor spoke up in the place of Leslie. "So you wanted your friend to let you know beforehand what was going to be done at the meeting? You wanted to be in the ring, did you? It would have been Simon Pure Democracy, if you had had a hand in doing the cutting and drying!" Then he turned to Leslie and continued: "It is well that we know this, Mr. May. Hereafter we shall have to take our young friend into the conspiracy, to hoodwink and betray the real voters into saying aye to our treasonable plots."

Victor was dumfounded. He had a vague notion that he had said something foolish, without clearly knowing what. While he pondered over the professor's words, Leslie said, quietly: "That is just what the professor proposed to do.

He suggested that we should talk the matter over with you, so that you might be prepared to act when the time came. But I told him that I knew you better," he added, looking significantly at Victor. "I told him that I was pretty sure that you would have nothing to do with the whole matter, if you got it into your head that it was putting up a job. And you seem to take that view of it; don't you?"

"Of course we were putting up a job," the professor broke in; "and a good sized one at that. Nothing less than regenerating sleepy old Democracy: waking her up to the work that is on hand for her; securing a convention that may be able to cope with the know-nothings, and trip up the fanatical republicans in their treasonable attempt to undermine the constitution! I reckon that you are proud that you had nothing to do with putting up a job like that!"

"But," said Victor, hesitating, and much abashed by the professor's sarcasms, "the best end cannot justify improper means. Packing a meeting seems to me a great wrong committed against the majesty of the people. I do not see the difference between it and cheating, or lying, or committing forgery. For it is intended to be, and has the effect of, a falsification of the real sentiment entertained by them, — making them responsible for what they themselves have neither done, said, or intended."

"I think you are putting it in rather strong terms, Victor," said Leslie, more seriously than usual. "In the first place, I wish to disabuse your mind of the idea, that we sent either twenty-five or fifty men to any meeting. In the Fourth Ward, for instance, there were only three men with whom either the professor or I spoke a word before the meeting took place. One of these was the committeeman whose business it was to see to the organization of the meeting; a second one was the mover of the resolution you passed, and the third was our friend here, Mr. Becker, whom I requested to furnish us with the names of some friends upon whom we could rely as being in harmony with our views, to serve on the committee to make

nominations. Of course, the central committee always has some man at every meeting to prompt the chairman, in case he should need assistance. So in the First Ward: I believe that I saw no one that attended that meeting but your uncle and your cousin —”

“Yes,” Victor indignantly interrupted, “and my cousin did not vote for your resolutions, either!”

“Well, it seems that they were passed without his vote,” said Leslie with a smile. “Don’t be too hard on him. The mover of the resolution in that ward professes to be a warm friend of father, and of course I asked him to be on hand. So in all the other wards: you will believe me when I tell you that besides seeing that some one should offer, and if need be defend, the resolutions, and that trustworthy persons should be selected to nominate friendly delegates to the convention, I did absolutely nothing to influence the result. And in this matter I received valuable assistance from the professor. This is about the size of the ‘packing’ that either or both of us did.”

“I should not wonder if our young friend did a great deal more in the packing line,” said the professor. “I should wonder, though, if he did not do his level best in the columns of his paper during the last few days, to get his friends to attend the meeting. He may have gone to the length of asking some of them *personally* to come; but of course, if he did, he begged *them* to use all their influence against his nomination, and against any measure that he might favor.” The peal of laughter with which the professor pointed his irony was exceedingly distasteful to Victor.

“In the next place,” Leslie continued, “I would like to know of you, whether anything was done at the meetings of which you have any information, that was not perfectly square, open and above board? Do you not fully and freely concur in all that was done, including the resolutions instructing for the Colonel?”

“Most certainly I do!” was Victor’s hearty response. “And the resolutions in particular speak my inmost convic-

tion. I do not object to *what* was done, but only to the means employed in doing it."

"I will tell you what it is that troubles our young friend," the professor remarked sententiously. "He suspects that we have, in preparing the resolutions, in looking out for proper men to propose as chairmen, and, in general, to keep the meetings to their proper work, meddled with—usurped, if you please,—the legitimate functions of sovereign democrats—"

"And is it not so?" Victor interrupted.

"Oh, to be sure, *we* are not sovereign democrats, you know!" continued the professor, addressing his words, with smiling irony, to Leslie and Mr. Becker. "He confounds a primary meeting with a jury box; the voter must have no more knowledge of the man he is called on to vote for, or of his political principles, than the juror should know of the man or of the case he is called on to try,—so that he may cast his vote with the utmost ignorance obtainable under the circumstances. He is afraid to vote for a personal friend, lest it be selfish partiality on his part; or to advocate a policy which might by possibility result in benefiting himself, or a personal friend, because these are the practices resorted to by demagogues—"

Leslie slyly winked at Mr. Becker, who nodded eagerly. But the professor continued to speak in the high key habitual to him when in sarcastic mood, and concluded with the remark: "You see, Mr. Waldhorst will have no bias, no preconceived opinion of what may be best for the true interest of the country—in short, he would have no partisanship in *his* party."

"You willfully misrepresent and wrong me!" cried Victor, in great indignation. "I have said or done nothing to justify you in accusing me of such gross absurdities. What I said, or intended to say, is, that for a set of men to combine together to carry this or that man for this or that committee at a proposed meeting, to determine in advance on a set of resolu-

tions to be passed, and agreeing on the delegates to be sent to the convention, is to rehearse a farce, to the performance of which you graciously invite the public as spectators. Or, to put it in your own words, to do yourselves the work which the voters ought to do. It is worse — it is tampering with the highest safeguards of liberty. Granting that your work has accomplished what is right; aye, that you have done much better than the voters, uninfluenced by your plotting, could have done: — what is to hinder unscrupulous men to follow your example with less pure motives? The toleration of such practices would make of the government by the people a delusion and a snare. Nothing could prevent unprincipled demagogues from controlling the elections, the legislature, the whole government! It would bring us tyranny in the most oppressive shape that you yourself have so eloquently denounced — the misrule by secret and irresponsible conspirators! ”

Victor's blood was up, and he had not weighed nicely the words he employed. The professor smiled, as he replied: “ I am glad that you see the absurdity of *some* of your statements. For note: It is not *I* that accuse: I have but drawn the logical result of your own words. And I dare say, that you will be equally astonished when you come to see, as you will on a little reflection — the contradiction involved in your explanation. Does it not strike you, for instance, that the audience you mention in connection with the farce did as much, if not more, of the acting than those whom you call the conspirators? Admitting that they were, what by their being at the meeting they held themselves out to be — democrats — was not their authority in every particular precisely equal to that of the so-called actors? The vote of each counted one: the majority spoke for *all*. The binding authority of a primary meeting depends, and can depend, only on the theory, that, as every member of the party is invited to be present and participate in the proceedings, so the whole party is — must be — deemed to have been present and to have spoken its will. This theory

applies more forcibly still, of course, to all who were present at the meeting. Presumably they did what they came there to do, — voted their conviction. If so, they are bound by the majority. But if they abstained from voting, what better right have they to complain than if they stayed at home? Or is it censurable that *some* — those whom you called the actors — came prepared to do their work, having thought over and consulted about the questions to be decided and the men to be elected? You are pleased to designate this the rehearsal of a farce: don't you think it would have been much more of a farce, if nobody had come prepared to work?"

Victor made no answer. The professor's words sounded very much like some of the arguments he had himself urged upon the voters in drumming them up to attend the primaries. Again he pondered. But Mr. Becker seemed highly pleased and was not at all backward in letting the professor know that he approved of his sentiments. "You have spoken like a book," he said, as he approached the professor to shake hands with him. "I hope that Mr. Waldhorst will profit by your wisdom. The young man, in my opinion, carries his squeamishness entirely too far. I have often told him so. If, for instance, it came in his way, as a member of the legislature, to benefit his own paper, and advance his own interest, by shoving a printing job at his friend, for which the State pays a fair price, would there be anything wrong in his doing so? And ought he not strain a point to enable him to serve his party, himself and an old friend at the same time?"

"There is practical sense for you!" exclaimed Leslie, with a loud laugh and a sly wink at the professor.

But the latter cast a searching glance at the printer, and said: "Well, Mr. Becker, that is a matter about which we may talk hereafter. Let us not dispose of our chickens before they are hatched."

XXII.

DEMOCRACY IN CONVENTION.

SUNDAYS were red-letter days in Victor's calendar. He looked forward to them with pleasant expectation. He reckoned events with reference to their proximity to Sunday. Of all the week-days he liked Saturday best, because it would be followed by Sunday. He loved to hear the chimes ring Ave Maria on Saturday evening, because their stirring concord (distinguished from the single bell of other days), gave joyful promise of the golden morrow. Sweet to him was the peal of the bells on Sunday morning, attuning his mind to loftier aspirations; sweet the rolling music of organ and choir, so suggestive of high and ennobling thoughts. He felt as if God were nearer to him on this day; that the Sabbath day is truly a divine institution. And he blessed in his heart the Hebrew law-giver for the rigor with which he exacted its observance by the Chosen People.

One of the features distinguishing the German from the Anglo-American newspapers of the period was, that the latter omitted Sunday from their regular publication days, but included Mondays; requiring, in order to furnish the latest news, editors, reporters, compositors and printers to devote at least a part of their Sundays to their regular vocation. Victor thought the plan adopted by the German papers, of issuing a Sunday and omitting the issue of a Monday paper, much more rational. The custom of publishing Sunday papers was in course of time adopted by the Anglo-American press, without, however, omitting the Monday paper, so that for their employees there is now no Sunday at all. Under the combined influence of fierce competition, each paper striving to excel all others in the variety and amount of reading matter furnished

to their readers on Sunday, and the liberal patronage of advertisers, who soon discovered the peculiar value of Sunday papers for their purposes, they were increased in size to such enormous proportions, as to put it out of the question for ordinary mortals to wade through them, and to embitter the life of editors whose duty compelled them to make a mental inventory, at least, of the contents of the several contemporaries.

Things had not reached this pass, however, in ante-bellum days. It was still a pleasure to Victor to scan the Sunday papers while sipping his coffee and lingering over his Sunday breakfast. First, of course, his own *Beobachter*. For he had not yet lost the zest of taking in the full effect of his articles in their finished, printed form, and took considerable pride — none the less gratifying because coyly concealed — in the tact and judgment evidenced by a more than usually successful or interesting number, satisfying his own critical standard. Then he would skim over the other German papers, making note of any item of news or article of interest that might be utilized for his paper. But on the morning after the primary meetings he took up the opposition paper before his own, not, perhaps, because his own candidacy had stimulated his interest in political polemics, but in sympathy with the general excitement prevalent on the subject. At any rate he was eager to learn the attitude assumed by his competitor toward the convention to be held next day, and what, if anything, he had to say touching the resolutions instructing for a United States Senator in the person of Colonel May. His curiosity was satisfied to the fullest extent. He had credited his rival, with whom he was carrying on a bitter warfare on political grounds, all the more intense because both papers belonged to the same political party, with such sovereign contempt for truth and decency, that he honestly believed that no statement of his would ever surprise him. But on this Sunday morning he discovered that he had been mistaken in this belief. He was not only surprised, but absolutely stunned by the unparalleled feats of

perversion and distortion accomplished by the rival editor. His eye was first caught by one of the brief paragraphs in the editorial column, which may be given in English about as follows :

“ KICK THEM OUT! We are credibly informed, that at the meetings last night a disreputable set of rowdies succeeded in terrorizing the legitimate voters, and foisted in their bogus material as delegates to the convention. Let this body strictly investigate, and purify itself of the impostors! ”

Victor at once surmised that this was a blow aimed, if not personally against himself, then at least against the paper he edited. On reading further, he found his surmise but too fully corroborated. His cheeks blanched, though he was all alone in the room, as he read :

“ A DISGRACEFUL Row last night brought shame on the First Ward. A lot of hirelings, evidently in the pay of some corrupt political aspirant, or of a striker obeying higher orders, poured in on the primary meeting there, and overpowered the peaceful citizens. They seated a pliant tool as chairman, who ruled all points of order in their favor, and he had the insolence to appoint his own son and his own nephew as tellers to count the votes. In this way they succeeded in falsifying the views of the people of the First Ward, and declaring a set of delegates elected who are said to favor an obscure individual from the backwoods to replace our long tried Nestor in the United States Senate. Let the convention redeem the fair name of our city, and save the First Ward from humiliation and shame! ”

A little further on, this paragraph stared him in the face :

“ COMMENT UNNECESSARY. It gives us sincere pain to learn that our highly esteemed colleague of the *Beobachter*, Mr. Victor Waldhorst, has seriously stultified himself by taking part in the shameful proceedings in the First Ward last night ; and that, too, after he had participated in a high-handed piece of defraudation in the Fourth Ward. By a trick unworthy of his hitherto unsullied reputation he, with a few of the personal

friends of the backwoods aspirant for the United States senatorship, organized a meeting in the Fourth Ward before the time for which it had been called, and with resolutions cut and dried in his pocket, and a list of delegates agreed on beforehand, went through the motions of voting, and adjourned the meeting within five minutes after the regular time for which the voters had been notified to be there.''

Victor's first impulse on reading the insulting charges was, to hunt up the rival editor and compel him to retract, or inflict upon him such personal chastisement as might warn the miscreant to have some slight regard for truth and common decency. He leaped up from his chair and paced the room in rapid strides, lashing his anger into furious wrath, until it reached a pitch at which it must boil over, or find vent in some deed of violence. Yes; he must horsewhip the audacious, lying scoundrel, — would do it to-day, — now! What though it *was* Sunday! Not a day, not an hour must be lost in delaying the vindication of his personal honor.

The resolution so formed seemed to relieve the violence of his passion. He sat down again to his untasted coffee and read over the scurrilous paragraphs with closer attention. The second reading did not mend matters much. There were the infamous charges, the stinging insults that could not be tamely submitted to. There was the dastardly lie against his uncle, so entirely cut out of whole cloth; for a more sincere, well-meaning man than his uncle never lived. There was the assassin's blow, at his revered friend, Colonel May. No! such cowardly calumny must be signally refuted. The only proper answer, in case he refused complete and unconditional retraction, was to administer a horse-whipping to the lying scoundrel.

But soup is rarely eaten so hot as it is served. Victor reflected that there should be a witness to the execution of the summary punishment. Not, indeed, for his own assistance, — for he never once contemplated the possibility of taking, instead of giving a whipping, — but only to witness the fact.

Of course, this witness must be Leslie. Indeed, coming to think of it, Leslie was almost as deeply interested in this matter as himself, and would certainly take an active part in defending his father. But he should only stand by; Victor owed it to himself, to his uncle, and certainly to the Colonel, to keep the control of the matter in his own hands.

A rap at the door disturbed his busy thoughts, and simultaneously with his abrupt "come!" Professor Rauhenfels entered, accosting him with a cheerful "Good Morning!" He waited for no salutation from Victor, but plunged headlong into conversation, speaking cheerfully and in a tone of assurance and confidence that failed not of its effect on the editor. "The gods are propitious!" he said. "Apollo himself could not have favored us with finer weather for the work we have in hand. This raw, chilling, blustering atmosphere is just the thing to drive to cover the game we are pursuing. We shall find the new-fledged delegates squatting snugly in the back door bar-room attachment to some family grocery store, ready to dicker with the highest bidder for their votes, guzzling beer or tipping whiskey. Let us put in a good day's work before the battle opens, and we will have smooth sailing in the convention to-morrow."

Victor's face had brightened on seeing the professor. Possessing unbounded confidence in the wisdom and keen intelligence of his friend, he was eager to hear his opinion on the subject uppermost in his mind. The professor's remarks puzzled him, and he was not sure of apprehending their full import; but the matter in hand was too pressing to talk about anything else. "There!" he said, holding out the paper to his visitor, pointing with his thumb to the offensive items. "What do you say to that?"

The professor took the paper and leisurely read the paragraphs pointed out. Victor keenly watched the play of his features. There was at first a slight contraction of the eyebrows: but after a while a broad grin spread over his face, giving it a sardonic expression of triumph. "Good!" he



“There!” he said, holding out the paper to his visitor,
“What do you say to that?”

exclaimed, dashing the paper away. "So they are squealing already, are they? They'll squeal worse than that before we are through with them. Kick them out, indeed! If any kicking is to be done, we intend to have a hand in it, — or a foot, rather — hey, Victor?" He concluded his remark with a ringing laugh, puzzling Victor whether to ascribe it to the intended pun, or to the imaginary discomfiture of the adversaries.

"Do you think, as I do, that I ought to cowhide this villainous liar? Does he not deserve a thrashing?"

"For his good will, yes," the professor replied soberly. "If a person low enough to administer it could be found. But it is out of the question for you to dirty your hands with such a job. And why should you or I, or any one on our side of the question, think of punishing even an enemy for working into our hands in such glorious style?"

"Working into our hands?" Victor repeated in unfeigned astonishment. "What can you mean?"

"Just what I say. This editor friend of yours, — quite innocent of any intention to do so, I am sure — has done more for you and for the cause you advocate in your paper, than you could possibly have done without his gratuitous assistance. It is to be hoped that this scurvy sheet has been extensively circulated this morning; for it will serve better to introduce you to the members of the convention than a score of articles in your paper, or a column of extravagant eulogy and softsoap in that of your opponent. Just come out and see how eager they will all be to speak to you, and if you don't turn the talk to your own advantage, it will be your own fault. Besides, your adversary has laid himself so terrifically open to attack from you, that you must be a poor scribe indeed if you don't make him sick of his dirty tricks."

"But the convention will sit to-morrow, and no paper will appear until the day after," Victor, rather taken aback by the professor's way of looking at things, suggested.

"We have all day before us to work for the nomination,"

was the answer, "and a good two weeks after that for the election. With the start you have got, thanks to your involuntary helper, you may consider the question of your nomination as settled; and if you can only goad him into a few more specimens of such patriotic effusions as these, made, if possible, a little more personal to yourself, you may likewise count on your election, whatever may be the fate of the ticket on which you run. — But come! It is time to begin our day's work. If you *must* put yourself on a level with this blackguard, or prove that he is wrong by administering to him a well-deserved thrashing — or taking one, whether deserved or not — put off the cowhiding to some other day. *This* is the Lord's Day; let us serve the Lord by serving our country."

Loth as Victor was to sacrifice his precious Sunday leisure to any ordinary business matters, the stirring interests involved in the election left no room for hesitation or doubt as to what he must do. Nor was he unwilling to postpone the chastisement of the editor to some future time. "But where is Mr. May?" he queried, as he was getting ready to accompany the professor. "I thought we would go together."

"He has gone down to Busch Bluff," the professor answered casting a meaning smile at Victor. "He told me that he wished to consult the old gentleman on some electioneering business. We are to meet him at the Vaux Hall Saloon."

Victor pocketed the paper containing the offensive articles, as well as that morning's *Beobachter*, the latter containing a list of the delegates elected the night before, which might serve them as a guide to the places to be visited during the day. As they were about leaving the professor remarked:

"I suppose you have not forgotten Iago's advice to Roderigo?"

"What was that?" Victor innocently inquired.

"Put money in thy purse!"

Victor returned to his lodging that night, or it may be nearer the truth to say next morning, with a stock of newly gathered

experience and headache, purchased, — perhaps not too dearly — at the cost of the ready cash with which he had set out. Besides that, he had become indebted to his friend for a small loan, and a perceptible cooling off of his desire to cowhide his rascally colleague.

* * *

Monday was ushered in by a bright, crisp October morning, all too early to give Victor an opportunity to witness its glorious sunrise. Hamilton Hall had the advantage of him in this respect. Its hospitable doors, as well as its windows, had been flung wide open long before Aurora was ready to gild its walls, or to illumine the clouds of dust sent forth by busy bar-keepers and porters with brush and broom. For Hamilton Hall constituted the second story of a building known as Hamilton Retreat, a well-known popular resort, much frequented, even on Sundays, the know-nothing crusade against Sunday saloons and beerhouses notwithstanding, by politicians of ward renown and petty statesmen generally. Yesterday had been a day of bustle and activity at Hamilton Hall. Many barrels had been emptied of their contents, much dirt and litter scattered on the floors and a general cleaning up on Monday morning was excusable, in view of the rush that was to be expected on the assembling of the democratic convention. Thus, while yet the silence of the streets was scarcely interrupted by the rumbling, now and then, of a solitary milk or baker's wagon or the footsteps of an early wanderer echoed from across the way, there was within the Hall the din and bustling of dusting and sweeping, of scrubbing and scouring, of polishing decanters and replenishing them with the contents of round-bellied jugs, — of tables, chairs and benches moved from place to place, and of kegs and barrels rolled into place for use. When the sun had risen, and sent its first slanting rays through the freshly cleaned windows, the stir within subsided, and the city without began to rub its eyes and to put on its working-day garb. The streets grew livelier as mechanics and laborers trouped their way toward the treadmills, and

drays and carts rattled noisily over the rough macadam. The sky was beautifully blue; the atmosphere clear and bracing; the bright October morning altogether lovely; yet few of the passers-by lingered to enjoy its glorious charm. Even the rosy-nosed bummer, who would rival Croesus in wealth if time were money, as is sometimes asserted, wended his way to the bar-room in search of a tonic more potent than the freshness of the morning afforded. Shrill-voiced newsboys lustily shouted the names of their papers: "'ere's yer Herald! 'ere's yer 'Publican!" adding by way of whetting the appetite of sensation-loving readers, "All 'bout the 'loperment in high life!" or: "All 'bout the murder in Happy Hollow!" or all about whatever tidbit of scandal or horror they had to offer.

As the morning drew on apace, more customers found their way into the bar-room of the Hamilton Retreat, — the politicians of the small-fry sort, mostly, who had gone through a lively time yesterday, and were again on hand for to-day to feast, like a swarm of hungry mosquitoes, on the blood of tender-skinned candidates. Some of these worthies, fortunate in the possession of a stray picayune, anticipated the arrival of their victims by investing in a drink of whiskey, invariably demanding a Meelee cigar (retailed at the price of ten for a picayune) free into the bargain. But this extravagant outlay of money ceased as soon as the candidates, with now and then a stray delegate or two, began to drop in. The latter were promptly pounced on and buttonholed by those of the candidates that believed, or made believe, that their claims for past services demanded recognition by the party; others, less experienced in the practice of office-seeking, and therefore more diffident, gladly availed themselves of the offers of the patriotic bummers to introduce them to their friends — all of them men of great influence, these friends of the bummers — who would determine by their vote in convention the vote of the whole delegation from their respective ward. Corroboration of the great influence of the delegate thus introduced would follow

on the part of some brother bummer who happened, by the merest chance, to be standing near; and if quite sure to what office the candidate aspired, he, or some comrade, would inform the delegate, in a stage whisper, that there was not a more popular man mentioned in connection with such office, than the gentleman just introduced. The invitation to the drinks naturally followed, as the most convenient inducement to conversation with the delegate.

Quite a difference now developed in the tastes of the gentlemen invited: the whiskey straight, ordered before on pecuniary grounds, was now abandoned for brandy smashes, mint juleps, sherry cobbler, or such cocktails and toddies as a veteran toper might indulge in regardless of expense. In the matter of cigars, too, the plebeian Meelee was flung away with contempt, and even the Half-Spanish, and the Principe, ordinarily regarded as a luxury too costly, were now, when a candidate stood treat, slighted for the royal Regalia or Plantation Havana, furnished at the bar at a picayune apiece.

Toward the hour of ten in the forenoon the bar-room was crowded to an uncomfortable degree. The bartender, reinforced now by an assistant and the boss himself, was kept busy enough; yet many, indeed most of the men, were there for purposes other than drinking. Much talk was going on,— here in whispers, there in loud declamation; among groups of two or three or more; in front of the bar, where argument was emphasized, sometimes, by bringing fist or tumbler violently in contact with the counter; or in the comparative privacy of some nook or corner; soliciting votes or influence, denouncing rival candidates, promises to and by delegates, and to and by candidates and their friends—dickering, bargaining, plotting. Little knots of men gathering in the hallway and under the stairs leading to the hall above, obviously intent upon keeping secret whatever negotiations they were carrying on. When the hands of the bar-room clock indicated the hour of ten, a gradual exodus to the hall above began to thin out the crowd below, leaving the saloon in the possession of idlers, and of such of

the active politicians — committeemen and agents of rings and bosses — as were still busily engaged in planning and plotting for the nominations to be made upstairs.

The hall in which the convention was to sit began to fill up. A number of benches, sufficiently long to seat, each, a full delegation, were arranged on the floor, not unlike the pews in a church; a little banner suspended at the head of each indicated the number of the ward or the name of the township to which the bench was assigned. At one end of the room a platform was raised a foot or two above the level of the floor, just large enough to accommodate the officers of the convention. Besides the chairs and tables on the platform, and the row of benches lining the walls, intended for the accommodation of that most indispensable adjunct to representative bodies in the United States — the lobby — there was no furniture in the hall.

Victor was the first member of the Fourth Ward delegation that took his seat in the bench assigned to them, long before the secretary of the central committee called the convention to order. He looked about him, noticing with considerable interest the buzz and commotion of the men swarming into the hall, gathering, mostly, in little knots and groups, whispering excitedly, or making wise faces at each other. Professor Rauhensfels was there, walking about with the air of a very busy man, now among the delegates, shaking hands and grinning pleasantly, as if much delighted in doing so, anon accosting someone in the lobby gesticulating wildly, as if in demonstration of some hotly contested proposition. There was Uncle Auf dem Busch, also, sitting among the delegates from the First Ward, serenely contemplating his surroundings, evidently ready to act with becoming dignity in whatever character his services might be demanded. Leslie May, cool and perfectly at ease as ever, leisurely paced the platform, exchanging nods and whispered remarks with the gentlemen there; and Mr. Becker, delegate from the same ward with Victor, was on hand, but as yet too busy to take his seat. Indeed every one, — so

it seemed to Victor — was actively engaged in furthering some definite scheme, in which he was particularly, if not personally interested. It occurred to Victor that many of the delegates had, in political slang, “an axe to grind” in the convention, and that he was not alone in the awkward predicament of being a candidate before the same body of which he was a member.

When the convention was called to order, considerably after the time for which its opening had been announced, its organization was speedily effected by the election of a temporary chairman, a sergeant-at-arms and two secretaries. Victor took alarm as he noticed that not a single dissentient voice was raised against the chairman nominated by the central committeeman, whom he knew to be an ardent supporter of the competitor of Colonel May for the United States Senate. Everything moved smoothly, until the motion was put for the appointment, by the chair, of a committee on credentials, when a motion to amend by substituting a committee of one from each ward and township gave rise to a heated discussion, turning chiefly upon the impropriety involved in the amendment of putting men on the committee of credentials whose seats were contested. Victor felt greatly embarrassed how to vote on this question, as he feared that the right of the whole Fourth Ward delegation to their seats might be challenged. During the debate Mr. Becker appeared in his seat and added to his anxiety by the whispered remark, that Mr. May considered the fate of his father’s candidacy to depend on the issue of the vote on this amendment. Yet he deemed it wrong that one, whose right is in question, should be made the judge of such right. Must he oppose the amendment, as decency and justice seemed to him to require, and thus jeopard, as far as his vote would go, the cause of his friend and benefactor, and with it the cause of Democracy and truth, as he understood them?

Before he came to a conclusion satisfying his judgment, the roll of the delegates was called on the amendment, and Mr. Becker promptly responded for the Fourth Ward: “Five in the affirmative!”

Now Victor looked upon this act of his chief as an unwarrantable usurpation, for neither had Mr. Becker been appointed spokesman for the delegation, nor had Victor been consulted as to his vote. But the Fifth Ward had been called on to vote before he made up his mind whether it was his duty to disturb the proceedings by a protest; and after that it would have been exceedingly awkward and ungracious to do so. Thus it happened that Victor's vote counted in exact accordance with his personal wish, though not at all with his sense of justice. The amendment was adopted; and after the appointment of a further committee on the permanent organization and the order of business, the convention took a recess until the hour of two, to give the committee time to report.

The signal advantage gained over their opponents by the friends of Colonel May, developed after the reassembling of the convention in the afternoon. The first business in order being the report of the committee on credentials, its chairman announced that in the opinion of the committee, all sitting members were entitled to their seats; concluding with the recommendation that the petitions of the contestants be laid on the table. A minority report read by a warm adherent of Colonel May's opponent, declared it to be the opinion of said minority that the election of the delegates from several of the wards including the First and Fourth, had been clearly irregular, and that the contestants ought of right to be recognized as the legitimate representatives of the Democratic voters of these wards. The motion to adopt the minority report was ruled to be out of order, as violative of parliamentary usage, and the question stated to be on the adoption of the majority report. Victor was surprised at this ruling, especially in view of the temporary chairman's opposition to Colonel May's interests, and wondered whether to ascribe it to his idea of parliamentary usage, or perhaps to a shrewd move to conceal his real position from the Colonel's followers, or even to some of Leslie's maneuvering during the recess. At all events, Victor, conceiving that the convention ought to be permitted to

express its preference between the two reports, before committing themselves to either, rose, with the obvious intention of appealing from the ruling of the chair; but in doing so caught the eye of Leslie May, who indicated by a slight but unmistakable motion of the head, decided disapproval of Victor's purpose. At the same time Mr. Becker tugged at his coat tail, whispering energetically "Don't." And again Victor was too slow to seize the proper moment for his purpose, and again a vote was recorded that outraged his sense of propriety, but accomplished precisely what Victor most wished. The majority report was adopted, and thus all question of a contest avoided.

The convention now settled down to its business in good earnest. In the struggle for the permanent presidency the temporary chairman, notwithstanding his ruling just made, and supported by the opponents of Colonel May, was defeated. The president elect, in returning thanks to the convention for the honor conferred upon him, called attention to the perilous condition of the country, which, he said, was about to be shaken in its very foundation by a party of zealots who in their reckless fanaticism menaced the sacred constitution itself. "So shape your action," he concluded, "as to bring about the triumph of those principles of our party, rather than the victory of this or that man, or of this or that section. Never for a moment forget that although you are democrats, you are first of all Americans, — that you *are* democrats BECAUSE you are true Americans!"

Victor was much pleased with the president's remarks. He was in full sympathy with their import and registered an inward vow that he would, to the best of his ability, vindicate the grand cause of Democracy. As if in response to this patriotic resolve, came from the president the announcement assigning him to a place on the committee of fifteen to draught the platform of the party for the impending campaign. It was with a profound sense of responsibility that he followed the chairman of his committee into the side-room assigned

them for their deliberations. He found himself closeted with the most prominent men of the party in the city, feeling at once depressed with a sense of littleness in their presence, and elevated by a consciousness of the magnitude of the trust imposed upon him.

In the committee room the high pitch to which his expectation had been raised was toned down. The chairman submitted a paper, directly after the reading of which he called for a vote. It pledged the Democracy to the support of the platform of principles announced by the national convention that had adjourned from Charleston to Baltimore. Discussion grew passionate, and when at last a vote was reached, it was by a majority of one that the committee declared its preference for the national democratic platform.

No sooner had the committee risen, than a call was heard demanding the minority to remain and vote upon the question of submitting a report to the convention recommending for its adoption the platform of the free Democracy, which had just been rejected by the majority. Every member of the minority favored the proposition, and so it came about that the committee on the platform submitted two reports to the convention, — one signed by eight, the other by seven of its members.

If the contention had been hot in the committee, the wrangle that followed in the body of the convention itself on the reading of the two reports was fierce to begin with, and increased in passionate intensity with each speaker that succeeded in obtaining the floor.

Victor could not understand how any true democrat should entertain the slightest doubt on the subject. He was eager to join in the debate, fully convinced that if gentlemen would only listen to the reasons he had to urge as to the imperative necessity of preserving inviolate the constitution, they could not help seeing where the path of duty lay. But as yet he was too inexperienced in the ways of politicians to secure recognition by the chairman, and entirely too diffident of his own importance to force himself on the notice of the convention.

And so the convention lost the benefit of his wisdom, and had to content itself with the aid given by his unexplained vote.

As soon as the president succeeded in making himself heard long enough to state the question and call for the roll, the uproar subsided and breathless silence immediately settled on the convention. All eyes were turned toward the secretary as he called the names of the delegates; all ears were strained to catch the responses, and but few of the members omitted to keep close tally of the yeas and nays. An exultant shout of triumph on the part of the national democrats proclaimed their victory long before the secretary or president could be heard to announce the adoption of the majority report. But presently the deafening yells ceased. The sullen faces of the defeated side served to sober down the exuberance of the victors. Thoughtful men saw trouble ahead. Victor trembled for the success of the party under the circumstances. How could men, whose earnest convictions were so emphatically ignored by the platform just adopted, be enthusiastic in the support of the party?

Just then the smiling face of Leslie May appeared to Victor like a harbinger of good tidings. "We have done well, so far," he whispered into Victor's ear. "Things are going exactly as I hoped. A little prudence now in the selection of the ticket, and there can be no doubt of our success."

"But will the free democrats submit, and heartily support a party with whose fundamental tenets they are not in accord?" queried Victor, who was, nevertheless, much soothed and comforted by the assuring smiles of his friend, and eager in the hope that he would be able to dispel his own doubts and misgivings.

"What can they do?" suggested Leslie. "They want offices for themselves or their friends. They can get them only by the nomination of this convention. It would be suicidal for them to withdraw in wrath, or to give aid and comfort to the enemy, by either active or passive opposition. But we must make it to their interest to support the ticket by giving

them a liberal share of the offices. You needn't be afraid for yourself," he added, with a smile that, however friendly it was meant to be, was deeply offensive to Victor; "your name is sure to be on the ticket, and you are sure to be elected. So much I will undertake to guarantee to you."

"So Professor Rauhenfels has told me," said Victor dreamily; "though how either he or you should know, I don't understand."

As Leslie turned away the president was addressing the convention. His words sounded like an echo to what Leslie had just told Victor. He counselled harmony, reminding the victorious majority that had shaped the platform to their own views, that it was now their duty to conciliate, on the less important matter of nominating candidates for office, their less successful brethren. "Let me again beseech you," he said, "to have an eye single to the success of the party as such. It matters not so much what democrat you nominate, as that your nominee shall be elected. Remember that 'United we stand; divided we fall.' Let the Democracy of the county present an unbroken front to the enemy, and victory will perch on our banner. — Nominations for the office of sheriff are now in order."

The address of the president seemed to have a good effect on the ruffled temper of the minority, as well as on the minds of the majority. The nominations progressed without disturbance. If there had been danger of a bolt, it was allayed by the liberal concessions made to the minority. They received the lion's share of the lucrative offices, the candidates for Congress and the legislature were alone given to the national democrats. It was resolved, also, though by as close a vote as that by which the platform had been carried, that the candidates for the General Assembly be instructed to use their influence, if elected, to secure the election of the Honorable Leonard May to the United States Senate.

TOO LATE.

AND so it was that Victor became a candidate ; for the present, a pathway not strewn with roses ; involving duties not only onerous, but most distasteful to him. It was not his nature to shirk duty, recognized as such. Hence he willingly attended the gatherings of the Democracy at mass meetings and ward meetings. He even executed, to the best of his poor ability, stump speeches, whenever thereto appointed by the central committee. But when his colleagues on the ticket demanded other things, — such as visiting bar-rooms, treating crowds promiscuously, shaking hands with the unwashed sovereigns, and professing friendship and brotherhood with bummers, beats and frauds, he demurred. To Leslie and Professor Raulenfels, with both of whom he spent much of his time in those days, he confided that he thought such methods of soliciting votes to be degrading and vile. Leslie laughed at him in his pleasant way, twitting him on his aristocratic pride ; and when he gave indications of distress, endeavored to reassure him and put him at his ease by reminding him that there was really no need for exertion on his part at all. But the professor took him reluctantly to task for his silly prudishness, — so he called it — and lack of logic. “ A rational man,” he harangued, “ who proposes to accomplish an object, must not shrink from using the necessary means. None but a fool hopes for success otherwise.”

When Victor, abashed by the professor’s dogmatic assertions, which yet seemed to have a basis in sound reason, timidly inquired whether he meant to assert that the end *ever* justified the means, the answer came quick as thought : “ Always ! else how could any end be accomplished ? ”

“But does this mean, that I may do wrong that good may come thereof?” Victor persisted.

“Wrong is never justifiable!” the professor proclaimed, his eyes sparkling, “But what *is* wrong? I dare say that you hold it wrong to lie. And so, indeed, it is, if you lie to gain an unfair advantage over your neighbor. But how, if you lie to *please* your neighbor, as you do every time you smile upon a bore who keeps you from your work, instead of kicking him out of the office as you would like to do? In a similar way you lie twenty times a day, and I doubt that you consider it wrong. — It is surely wrong to kill; but only if the killing is without adequate motive. You would not blame the executioner for carrying out the sentence of the law on a condemned criminal? So the most rigid code of law deems killing in self-defense a justifiable act. Aye, — the law itself commands killing, and that by wholesale, when deemed a means to accomplish a higher end; and none but Quakers object. Let me use a loftier illustration: Rebellion is the gravest offense against either human or divine law; yet the apostasy of Luther is glorified by all Protestants; and the rebellion of the colonies is looked upon, by Americans at least, as the grandest achievement in our history.”

“Lucifer rebelled, also,” said Victor, musingly, “and the world assigns to him the lowest pit in hell.”

“And justly so!” the professor replied with animation. “Lucifer, according to Dante’s *Divine Comedy*, abides in hell, because he would rather be First there, than Second in Heaven. Rebellion against tyranny is loyalty to the divine Right; but Lucifer rebelled against the divine order, — doing wrong for the sake of wrong — and has hell for his reward.”

“But how does all this affect my electioneering?” Victor inquired.

“Don’t you see? Then let me tell you. I assume, that when you accepted the Democratic nomination for the General Assembly, you honestly meant to be elected. You honestly mean to be, now; if you did not, you would be a fraud and a hypocrite. To accomplish this end, you must have votes, —

more of them than your competitors on the other tickets. You want as many as you can get, for you do not know how many either you or your opponents are going to get. The rational thing, then, is, to get them! Get them by all lawful means at your command. Get them with clean fingers, if you can, — but get them! Nor let the fear of dirtying your hands deter you from doing your work. You can wash your hands when the work is done, and the ballots do not smell after they are counted.”

Poor Victor, who had a powerful motive to be elected, beyond what even the professor suspected, was carried along by the eloquence of his philosophical friend, and knew not how, if even he had wished it, to meet the arguments advanced. And as his duty was thus plausibly shown to be identical with his strong desire, namely, to secure his election to the legislature, he bravely set about doing the things that were popularly supposed to be necessary to catch votes, — such things as he supposed the professor meant when he spoke of dirtying his fingers. He professed to enjoy the rough jokes current in bar-rooms. He pretended to believe in the disinterested friendship of professional patriots, who proffered their services in behalf of the good cause, stipulating for a dollar or two to set up the drinks for the boys, so as to get a chance to talk to them. He bought tickets for raffles which he suspected would never come off, and for concerts which he did not mean to attend. He invested heavily in charity fairs, and subscribed liberally to funds for the relief of supposititious widows and orphans. He shook hands with everybody he knew or supposed that he ought to know, heroically dispensing bland smiles and sugary compliments promiscuously. And he did all of these things with a show of such hearty good will as to challenge the admiration of his friend Leslie, and even to command the approval of Professor Rauhenfels, notwithstanding his secret conviction, that all this cajolery, flattery, — this sycophantic fawning and toadying to the voters in reality never changed any one's mind, and that he was a despicable

coward, truckling to a base and really unfounded popular prejudice.

Down at Busch Bluff his course did not meet with unanimous favor. The old gentleman, to be sure, thought his candidacy quite the proper thing for an editor and a lawyer, and was not disposed, therefore, to find fault with Victor's efforts to court popularity. His sister Pauline, too, looked upon his prospective election to the legislature with not a little pride, never once questioning its absolute certainty, and took pleasure in hearing the subject discussed, particularly when it was discussed by the young lawyer, who was such a firm friend of her brother, and who could talk so fascinatingly about her brother's prospects — or about anything else that formed the subject of talk between them. But Woldemar's aristocratic notions, accumulated during his European experience, rebelled against what he termed cowardly cringing before the rabble. It was bad enough that a member of the family should be identified with politicians, and he could hardly forgive Victor for standing as a candidate. But that he should degrade himself to the level of the scum of the city, fawning like a servile dog before the rag-tag populace supposed to have votes, — this was more than the stomach of Woldemar Auf dem Busch could stand without violent protest. And so he protested. Protested in sharply sarcastic rebukes administered without stint. All the more bitter when the young lawyer was by, whom he never failed to include in his sneers, and whom he openly blamed as the seducer of his cousin, misleading him and corrupting his morals.

Toward Pauline Woldemar's manner had undergone a remarkable change of late. The lofty condescension, that had formerly characterized his intercourse, was no longer observable. His patronizing airs were now supplanted by a show of deferential devotion that puzzled, while it pleased, Pauline. Assiduous court he paid when alone with her, or at least when the young Southerner was not by, so that Pauline often wondered whether Cousin Woldemar was profiting by Mr. May's

example of politeness. But the frigid reserve displayed whenever the latter was present, as well as the severity of his comments on the disgraceful doings of Victor under the influence of Mr. May, too plainly indicated his aversion.

One other member of the family, — Mrs. Auf dem Busch herself, — took sides with her son in these dissensions, so far at least as to show herself less gracious than formerly in her intercourse with both the young politicians. Victor, on his part, ascribed the loss of favor to the fact that he was a candidate, and it did not trouble him much. Nor did her haughty demeanor toward Mr. May lessen the frequency of this gentleman's visits to the villa. What with friendly calls on the ladies, such as might be demanded by, or at least find excuse in, social etiquette, calls on the old gentleman for advice (which he professed to value most highly), on important business matters, calls in the company of the professor, appointments with Victor to start out on some pre-arranged electioneering jaunt, which invariably landed him at Busch Bluff — there was never lack of occasion to visit the place where Pauline Waldhorst dwelt.

Perhaps Victor was mistaken as to the cause of Mrs. Auf dem Busch's coolness toward him. It may have been less the sympathy with her son's aversion to politicians that produced it, than the conviction, reached by a mother's reasoning, that Victor was to blame for Woldemar's uncomfortable state of mind, because he had originally brought the smooth-tongued Southerner into contact with the family. Victor was blissfully ignorant of the offense he had thus given, as also of the discomfort experienced by Woldemar in consequence of the intimacy springing up between the Southerner and his sister Pauline, — an intimacy patent to every one but him. The old gentleman noticed it with profound regret, for it sadly threatened his pet plan of obtaining Pauline for a daughter-in-law. Mrs. Auf dem Busch saw it, of course, for it gave uneasiness to her son. It was not in her nature to hate cordially; but Leslie May came as near to arouse this feeling in her breast as

anyone had ever done. She did not love her foster-daughter with any degree of cordiality; but she had accustomed herself to look upon her as Woldemar's future wife, and the evident favor with which the young girl received the attentions of the stranger, she thought unbecoming in one aspiring to the honor of becoming her daughter-in-law. The thought of serious intentions on the part of the young lawyer did not trouble her; she was, on the contrary, firmly convinced that he was an arrant flirt, playing with the girl's affections for his mere amusement. That Pauline should, in her giddy vanity, permit this trifling,—that she should so far forget her own dignity and the relations she sustained to the family — this it was that tried her patience. And on this point there was perfect unanimity between mother and son, although not a word had ever been spoken on the subject by either. But the mother's eye was quick to discern, and her heart tender to sympathize, with the trouble of her offspring. It needed no words to reveal to her that Woldemar suffered, — more keenly, perhaps, than he was willing to confess even to himself.

It was indeed a strange experience through which the young merchant was passing. Why should he be so keenly vexed by Pauline's impropriety of conduct — for he was honestly convinced that it was improper — toward this presumptuous young Southerner? He was not her guardian, not her brother, — not even her suitor.

Not her suitor!

Yet she must know that it was his father's darling wish that she should be his wife. To be sure, he himself had never spoken a word either to her or to any one else, that might be construed as a promise, or as in any wise pledging him. He had been too wise and too guarded in his conduct for that. And, coming to think of it, might not her conduct be accounted for on the theory that Pauline was piqued by his lack of lover-like attentions toward her? He had heard of such things as young ladies coquetting with others for the purpose of rousing the jealousy of those whom they wished to attract. Yes!

That must be it. Well, then, he would drive this presumptuous stranger out of the field by treating the lady with a little more consideration and devotion. He might go so far without irretrievably committing himself. This thought flattered his vanity. He found it easy, — found it delightfully agreeable, indeed, — to pay courtly attentions, in a mild, non-committal way, to his fair cousin. But the effect on Pauline was not as he had anticipated. She seemed very much pleased, indeed, by his kind treatment; but the smile of sisterly gratitude with which she rewarded him was cold and tame in comparison with the beaming joy that flushed her cheeks when welcoming the young lawyer. The flirtation with the latter, as he was pleased to consider it, continued unabated, and Woldemar began to suspect his cousin of being a heartless coquette. How strange that he should discover this trait in her character just now! How, stranger still, that he found it so difficult to believe; how strangest of all that this discovery should make him miserable!

Miserable! That Pauline was a coquette! What business was that of his? His pride took alarm. The coquette must be left to her fate. This savage resolution soothed his ruffled temper for a time, at least when Leslie May was present. But in his absence, a word, a look from Pauline was sufficient to melt it into thin nothingness. Then he came to the conclusion that charity toward the poor girl demanded a heroic sacrifice on his part. Filial duty pointed in the same direction. He must commit himself openly by appearing as Pauline's suitor.

It astonished Woldemar how little effort it cost him to adjust himself to this situation when he had resolved to make the plunge. He admitted to himself, with a feeling something like compunction, that he ought to have done so long ago. It would have pleased his father. It would have saved Pauline the humiliation of this disgraceful flirtation with a stranger. And he gloated vengefully on the anticipated discomfiture of the detested lawyer, to forbid whose further intercourse with Pauline would be his first care after informing the fortunate young maiden of the distinction awaiting her. Still, he put

off the decisive word from day to day, hardly knowing how to account to himself for the delay. Surely, it could not be that he was afraid? Oh, no! Diffidence was not his weakness. He had fully made up his mind; his opportunities to be alone with the maiden — he might now truly say, the maiden of his choice — were ample; there was no conceivable obstacle in the way: Why, then, delay?

But one morning, — the morning of a glorious, mellow Sunday in October, full of sunshine and that soft, hazy Indian Summer brightness peculiar to Western Autumn weather, — the young lawyer was on hand directly after breakfast, waiting, he said, for Victor and the professor, who were to meet him here for a canvassing tour into the suburbs, to make sure of some voters supposed to be doubtful. He professed surprise that the others had not yet arrived; but Woldemar suspected that he did not feel his disappointment too keenly. And the readiness with which he joined Pauline in a walk over the grounds, to inspect chrysanthemums and asters, the dahlias and what other floral tribute generous Autumn yielded, and the pleasure mirrored in Pauline's face seemed to support his misgivings. It was very evident that the time before the arrival of the other conspirators against Woldemar's peace passed more heavily to him than to either Mr. May or his cousin. During the exceedingly tedious interval of half an hour, while he was watching the young couple from an upper window of the house, the resolution ripened in Woldemar's breast that he would not wait another day — not another hour — before he would claim at Pauline's hand the privilege of getting rid of the hated, dangerous, soft-spoken — intruder, — rival, he came near thinking, but that he indignantly suppressed the word as being unworthy of himself. In accordance with this resolution he threw off his dressing gown, worn, as was customary at Busch Bluff Villa on Sunday mornings, for comfort; made an unusually careful toilet, and placed himself in ambush to intercept Pauline before she should return to the house after seeing the politicians off.

Presently he saw her wave her handkerchief to the young men, as they drove away in the barouche, and turn her face toward the villa. He watched her from a bosquet of dense foliage, as she stepped leisurely along the graveled pathway, not aware that she was being observed. Her face glowed with unusual animation, though her eyes had an absent, dreamy look, as if her thoughts were far away. When she passed the bosquet, Woldemar stepped forth from his ambush, accosting her with an abrupt request for a moment's conversation.

"Cousin Woldemar!" she exclaimed, with a little shriek of surprise at the sudden apparition. "How you have frightened me!"

"I beg your pardon, Pauline," he said in reply. "And I hope that your surprise will be of a more pleasing nature when you have heard what I wish to say to you. May I detain you for just a little while before you return to the house?"

"Why, certainly, Cousin Woldemar," said the girl, recovering herself. "But why not go in? We have all the forenoon before us; and if what you have to say is pleasant, as you suggest, let uncle and aunt share the pleasure with us. Or," she added, casting a glance at his full toilet, "are you on your way up town?"

"Not unless you send me away," he said with a complaisant air, and a smiling look into her wondering eyes, which for some reason unaccountable to her, she was not pleased with. "Can you not guess what it is that I wish to say?"

"No, Cousin Woldemar, I have not the least idea. Unless," she added archly, "you have changed your mind about poor Victor's electioneering. Is it something about the election?"

"Election!" he repeated, disgust audible in his voice, and a shade of disappointment visible in his eye. "You can think of nothing, of late, but politics and politicians. No; I have that to say that concerns you and me more nearly."

The light died out of Pauline's eyes. The roguish smile that had accompanied her last words, faded from her face.

Woldemar could not but notice the change. "Be not afraid," he said, forcing a smile, but not able to hide all traces of disappointment. "I am not going to scold you. Although," he added, with an indifferent attempt at playfulness of manner, "some people might have deemed it their duty, in my place, to caution you against such improprieties of conduct as you have indulged in. But —"

"Improprieties of conduct?" the girl repeated, turning pale. "What do you mean?"

"Oh, nothing in particular," was the answer, given a little reluctantly. "Let it go. I was about to say —"

"But wherein have I been guilty of improprieties?" Pauline demanded, in a low, but emphatic voice. "I have a right to know."

"Well, I mean of course, your toleration of the shameful way in which this young hot-blood of a Southerner has been paying court to you," said Woldemar.

"*Shameful*, Cousin Woldemar?" The blood had retreated from the face of the young girl, leaving it as white as the lace collar that encircled her throat. "What word has he spoken that was not gentle and courteous? What act has he been guilty of, that was not worthy of a gentleman?"

"Oh, I dare say that he was polite and courteous enough — to you at least. But do you believe it to be consistent with maidenly modesty and good manners, that one, who is to be the wife of another man, should accept such attentions?"

"Was I to be the wife of another man?" Pauline asked, fixing a searching glance on the young man's face. "If so, it is strange that no one ever told me of it."

"Oh, well, the matter has not been put into the shape of a written contract," Woldemar replied, a little petulantly. "But you know, as well as I do, that it is my father's wish that I should marry you. Why do you, then, let this fine-spoken gentleman play with you as if you belonged to him? Why lavish upon him smiles, and favors, and compliments, such as you have never bestowed upon me?"



He gazed into her face with unfeigned tenderness.

A deep flush for a moment crimsoned Pauline's face, to leave it, in the next, as pale as before. "Cousin Woldemar," she said, speaking in a low unimpassioned voice, hardly above a whisper, yet with an emphasis that deeply impressed her cousin, "I am glad, that you throw all the blame on me. For that proves, that Mr. May has not, even in your estimation, been guilty of the shameful improprieties of which you speak. I doubt that he or any one else could infer from your conduct that I was to be your wife, or that you loved me. As to myself, I sincerely grieve that by any act of mine I have forfeited your esteem. But would you have deemed it maidenly modesty in me to give Mr. May to understand that any other than a cousinly relation existed between you and me, when you had never, by any word, conduct, or even gesture, hinted such a thing?"

Her words fell heavily on his ear. He felt himself decidedly at a disadvantage. But never before had Pauline appeared to him so queenlike in her dignity, so charming in her exquisite beauty, so altogether lovable as now. And he understood, now, what a *faux pas* he had committed in opening the conversation, and was eager to repair his mistake.

"But I do love you!" he exclaimed with greater warmth of feeling than he had ever displayed in her presence before. "I love you with all my heart! And I came here to tell you so. Pardon me, Pauline, for offending you. I did not mean it. Forget my rude words. It was a mistake I made; I see now that I have been in the wrong all the time. You are good and wise; you will forgive my blindness, will you not? And all will be well with us, now that you know that I love you."

He gazed into her face with unfeigned tenderness; he sought to seize her slender white hand. But the hand moved away from his, and his eager gaze was met by an earnest, almost sympathetic look out of her soft brown eyes, — a look so eloquent of tender regret, and withal of a deep joy which she could not wholly conceal, that it thrilled him with ecstatic delight, while yet it gave him vague alarm. "I have nothing to forgive, Cousin Woldemar," she said, "although some of your

words have deeply pained me. I, too, may pain you by what I have to say; but you will be glad of it in the end. For you are right in saying that I knew it to be your father's wish that I should marry you. At least I was presumptuous enough to so imagine from his genuine kindness and fatherly tenderness toward me at all times. But it was never your wish, Cousin Woldemar. You never loved me. You do not love me now. If it be your intention to marry me, it may be because you are angry with Mr. May; or because you wish to please your father; or even because you wish to please me. That is kind and generous of you; but it is not love."

Her words stung Woldemar to the quick, for he felt them to be literally true, so far as they referred to the past. And in his present mood it maddened him to think how foolishly he had underrated the priceless treasure so long as it was within easy reach. But why should she doubt his protestations now? That his present feeling toward her was that of love — of passionate, mad, unreasoning love — was beyond question to him. And she ought to know it, because he had told her so. Perhaps he had not been emphatic enough in his declaration. Was she right, — had he given her sufficient reason to suppose that he was acting simply in obedience to his father's wishes? It began to dawn upon him that Pauline might possess a degree of pride that he had never suspected, and that she might insist on being wooed for her own sake. It cost him no effort, now, to meet her on this level. So he repeated his assurances with greater warmth and emphasis. He called on God to witness the sincerity of his passion. He had recourse to the vows and oaths of which lovers are so prolific to gain their ends. He would have knelt to her, but for Pauline's imperious gesture forbidding it. For the first time in his life he doubted his oratorical powers, and condescended to precatory phrases.

With indifferent success, or rather, without success. For a faint smile of incredulity curled the girl's lips as she answered, improving the first pause he made in the flow of his earnest

protestations, "How can you believe that you love me, when you have such sharp eyes for my 'improprieties?' Is not Love usually depicted with bandaged eyes, and ought he not to be — just a little — blind!"

Her self-possession and calmness, emphasized by that shadow of a smile, contrasted sharply with the fever of passion into which he had worked himself. Her lack of response to his pleadings began to alarm him. The thought maddened him that his suit might meet with a rebuff. His wounded pride got the better of his judgment.

"What is it that you demand of me?" he exclaimed hotly. "Must I be blind, in order that you may believe in my love, or in the sincerity of my words?"

The smile vanished from her face. "I do not doubt the sincerity of your words, Cousin Woldemar," she said, the calm assurance of her manner impressing him more even than her words. "I am sure that you are incapable of any intention to deceive me. But I am equally sure that you are deceiving yourself."

"Oh, Pauline, how can you speak so cruelly!" he protested anew. "Do you doubt the genuineness of my passion, when every fiber of my heart quivers with intense longing for your love! What can it be but love that compels me to confess to you how wrong I have been all this time? Or am I indifferent to you? Have I sinned, in my blindness, beyond forgiveness?"

Pauline was about to answer, when the voice of Mrs. Auf dem Busch was heard from the house, summoning the girl to the performance of some household duty, which summons she hailed as a most welcome pretext to shirk an answer. But as she turned to obey, Woldemar seized her hand with a firm grasp.

"Let mama wait!" he exclaimed peremptorily. "Speak to me before you leave me."

"Then listen, Cousin Woldemar," she said, speaking in low, measured accents, looking him full in the face, for a sec-

ond, then dropping her eyes to the ground. "I do not love you. I know, now, that I never did love you. There was a time when I would gladly have assented to your father's wish to become your wife; that time is gone by. I can never be your wife."

She again started to go; again he stopped her. "Stay!" he cried. "Tell me, when did you learn that you cannot love me? When did you find out that you can never be my wife?"

"You have no right to ask me such a question," she replied, drawing herself up to her full height. "But I will tell you. It was when I became convinced that you did not love me. Then I knew that I could not; that I would not accept your hand or fortune as a beggar accepts alms."

"Ah, that is it!" he exclaimed, in a tone blending sarcasm, anger and defiance. "This fine Southern gentleman has taught you what love is, and now you turn your back on your earlier friends. You and your brother Victor worship this paragon of a backwoodsman as if he were a superior being. You are both attracted by him as the moth is by a brilliant light. And you will both learn, that although his light is but the murky flame of a tallow dip, it is sufficiently hot to burn to a cinder your showy wings, and leave you maimed for life."

Then, flinging away the hand he had held in his iron grasp, as if he were hurling the girl herself from his pathway through life, he made for the garden gate in angry strides, leaving Pauline free to join his mother in the house.

Mrs. Auf dem Busch had witnessed the angry departure of her son, and probably heard the last loudly spoken words. She accosted Pauline as to what had happened between her and Woldemar.

"He is angry with me," said the girl, hoping, though faintly, that something might happen to avert the necessity of an explanation.

"I could see that myself," the lady replied. "I wish to know what you said to make him angry."

Pauline looked around uneasily as they passed through the hall toward the sitting room. She knew that Uncle Auf dem Busch was in the library reading his Sunday paper: If he would only call her! They reached the sitting-room, and Pauline, seeing no escape from the impending doom, nerved herself for the ordeal. She gave a simple and truthful account of what had been said, making no attempt to shield or excuse herself, or to throw any blame on her cousin.

A cloud had been gathering on the face of Mrs. Auf dem Busch which made Pauline exceedingly uncomfortable. When it broke at the conclusion of the recital, there was a storm which the girl suffered to blow over without murmur or resistance. Mrs. Auf dem Busch summoned and pressed into service her whole stock of sarcasm (easily exhausted) and invective (of which she possessed a goodlier store) to do justice to the occasion. The poor girl was enlightened as to many traits in her character the existence of which she had not before suspected. Fickleness, ingratitude, head-strongness, coquetry, self-conceit, silliness, were some of the ingredients composing it, as she might learn from her aunt's schedule of them. The voice of the latter lady was somewhat more emphatic than usual. It was sufficient in volume to penetrate to the library and attract the attention of her husband, who presently made his way into the sitting-room to learn the cause of the excitement. Mrs. Auf dem Busch spared the girl the pain of repeating her confession by volunteering the desired information, given not so tamely, perhaps, as Pauline had given it to her, but with an emphasis and accentuation of particular phrases, which, together with some embellishments that added spice to the plain truth, made Mrs. Auf dem Busch's version much more pointed and exciting to the old gentleman than Pauline's would have been.

But Mr. Auf dem Busch did not duly appreciate the rhetorical accomplishment of his spouse: or, perhaps, overrated the same. For he capriciously insisted on hearing the story over again from Pauline herself, ungallantly suggesting that

perhaps the lady's presence was necessary in the kitchen, to insure the success of their Sunday dinner, while he put the girl through her catechism.

“ Yes,” said Mrs. Auf dem Busch, getting ready to obey her husband's broad hint, “ this hussy is not worth the spoiling of our dinner on her account. To refuse our Woldemar! Does she expect a prince out of a story book to come and marry her? ”

She was about to leave the room, when she suddenly turned to the girl, commanding her to see to the cooking in the kitchen. Then, when the girl had obeyed, she addressed herself to her husband. “ Now what are you going to do about the matter? You will have to speak an earnest word, to bring her to her senses. If the shameful ogling and coquetting with this wind-bag of a lawyer, whom Victor has brought into our house, is not stopped, and that right soon, she will become the talk of everybody that knows us. It looks as if she has got it into her silly head that this coxcomb means to marry her; but he has no more notion of it than of marrying our kitchen girl. He is just making a fool of her for his amusement. Now, you talk to her, as you can when you are in earnest. — The idea of her refusing our Woldemar! ”

The old gentleman was more deeply affected than he cared to show. “ It is a case of much stupidity,” he said at last, interrupting the strides with which he was measuring the floor. “ Much stupidity! More of Woldemar than Pauline. If I had the chance, like Woldemar has the chance, this Mr. May would have no chance. But Woldemar learned stupidity in Germany, and he brought it home with him. And he lets it grow here. So a fool he is! The beautifullest plum just waited that he opened his mouth, and wanted to just plump in. And he looks in the clouds, and lets another fellow snap up the plum right before his nose. It is enough to get mad! ”

“ Busch, you are a fool! ” Mrs. Auf dem Busch informed him, with an air of sincerity that ought to have carried convic-

tion to the merchant's mind. "You are so gone on this girl, that I do believe you would marry her yourself, if you had the chance."

"Then I would be not a fool; contrary, wise. But because I am not a widower, and possess not the right of a Mormon, you are enough wives for me."

"And are you going to uphold this vixen in her self-willed foolishness?" the lady went on, ignoring his allusion to Mormonism. "She will listen to no one but you. I might talk to her until I am hoarse, and she would no more mind it than if I talked to the wind. A stern, severe sermon from you might bring her to her senses."

"Mean you, that I shall frighten her to love Woldemar?" he asked, soberly. "I will not shame my son so much as that. If he is proud, as he shows to be, he wishes not a wife that I court for him. And it is not right that I thrash Pauline if she says no. But you have so much right: I must talk to her. Go, send her here. But scold her not, mind! You don't know how your talk makes her grieve, and it is not her fault, when your talk does no good. It is I who shall scold so much as it is good for her."

Mrs. Auf dem Busch shook her head doubtfully as she left the room. She clearly mistrusted her husband's willingness to impress the wayward girl with the enormity of the offense of rejecting the suit of her son Woldemar.

Some minutes passed before Pauline came back. Whatever her uncle had intended to say to her, was postponed for the moment, when he noticed a suspicious redness about her eyes. "Did your aunt say something to you before you left her?" he inquired instead, betraying ungallant doubt whether his spouse had obeyed his parting injunction.

Pauline shirked a direct answer. She approach him with downcast eyes. But when she raised her face to look into his, he saw therein freshly shed tears. "Are you very angry with me, Uncle?" came from her lips, in a voice of anxious solicitude.

“ You feel, that I have right to be angry, — not? ” he blustered, more sternly than was his wont in speaking to her.

“ Oh, Uncle, I am so sorry! So sorry! ” she went on, looking at him out of her great, tear-dimmed eyes in pathetic appeal. “ Oh, if you knew how sorry I am! ”

“ You have right to be sorry, not? ” His voice sounded rougher, even, than before.

“ It makes me so miserable, dear Uncle, to know that you are displeased with what I have done. ”

“ Nonsense! ” the father of Woldemar exclaimed, a gleam of hope brightening for a moment his sober face. “ If you sorry, all is yet right. Woldemar is not so a fool, as he tries to be to you. He will speak over, and you speak so that you are not sorry. ”

“ But oh, dear Uncle, I cannot speak so that you will not be sorry, ” the girl sobbed out in keen distress. “ For you wish me to say yes, do you not? That is what makes aunt angry, because I did not say yes. And I must say no, dear Uncle, indeed I must! ”

“ So, so, you must say no? ” he remarked, eyeing her sharply. “ Why must you say no? Is not Woldemar good enough for you? ”

“ Oh, how can you ask me such a question! ” she replied, looking at him reproachfully. “ Cousin Woldemar is high-minded, noble and generous. He is good enough for the proudest lady in the land. And I thought it would be so easy a task to love him — ”

“ Easy task! ” the old gentleman shouted. “ Task! Well, and why loved you him not? ”

A deep blush suffused her cheeks. Whether of anger or of shame he could not be sure. She dropped her eyes as she answered, almost in a whisper: “ Because he did not ask me to. ”

“ So an ass! ” the irate man almost shouted. Then, turning to the girl with seowling face, he added: “ Because you never helped him, — not? Because he could read in your face that you would say no, when he would ask you, — not? ”

“ If he had asked me, I would not have said no, dear Uncle, I am sure I would not.”

“ But you said no, when he asked you this morning, — not? Why said you no this morning? ”

“ Because,” she stammered, “ he — he asked me — too late! ”

A low whistle, a look into her face betraying genuine surprise, regret and unmistakable vexation, marked the effect upon him of her words. “ So, — that is the time of day? ” he said, after a little pause. “ Too late! Then, also, you are already bespoken? ”

“ No, oh no,” she exclaimed hurriedly. “ Do you mean, whether I am engaged? No. If you mean that, you are mistaken, Uncle.”

“ Not engaged? ” he queried wonderingly. “ Then if you are not engaged, why spoke Woldemar too late? You like him. You say he is good enough for anybody. He asks you to marry him. Then, if you are not engaged, why say you no? ”

“ Because, dear Uncle, I cannot love him.” Her eyes sought the floor, and a crimson flood suffused her neck and cheeks, mounting upward over even her forehead as she spoke. “ I know now, that it would be a lie, if I promised to love him.”

“ More and more stupidity! ” Uncle Auf dem Busch exclaimed. “ Woldemar betook himself like an ass, I know. Because he was in Germany. But you have been here with me. I am proud over your good sense. What makes you a fool now? ”

“ Dear Uncle, be not angry,” said the girl, in low, pleading accents and with a look of painful distress he found difficult to resist. “ I could not do otherwise, indeed I could not.”

“ Women and mystery! ” the old gentleman mused. “ You like Woldemar. You like to please me. You like to please your aunt. And you are not engaged. Then why not marry Woldemar? ”

“Because it would be wrong to marry a man I do not love.”

“Then love Woldemar!”

“But, Uncle, Love comes not for the asking. Do you not know, that he laughs at the foolish heart that would compel him? And when he comes, he knocks not for admittance. He takes possession of the heart and rules tyrannically. All the senses are in league with him; all the affections center in him. He glorifies our very being. He elevates us into the realm of the Divine; for love is the God-like gift of God to those whom he exalts.”

Pauline stood erect, as she spoke. A rosy hue overspread her face and glorified its expression, as she raised her sparkling eyes, looking, — not at, but through her uncle, into the beyond.

“Oh!” said the uncle, raising his eye-brows. “Well, Pauline, if you are not bespoken, maybe you ought to be. It is a case of much stupidity.”



XXIV.

PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL.

PECCAVI! I freely confess, adorable sister mine, that six months, — or is it seven? — is entirely too long to keep you waiting for the answer to that pathetic question you put to me about the railsplitter's ballad of *The Glove*. And since I am no better acquainted with Schiller's poems than yourself, I can only give, by way of an excuse for the answer, a rough guess: Let us suppose that the Germans, in their inscrutable philosophy, spurn the distinction between a mitten and a glove; and let us suppose, further, that the ceremony of presenting the mitten is, among poetical Germans, not exclusively a privilege of the lovely sex, as it is among us prosaic Americans; then, — don't you see? — the application is easy enough. He would politely decline your thanks, — give you the mitten, as Victor did when you asked him to marry you — in fun. If this explanation is not satisfactory, let me suggest to you to get Leigh Hunt's *The Lady and the Glove*, or Bulwer's translation of Schiller's *Poems*, — either of which you will find, no doubt, in the congressional library — and read the poem for yourself.

And having now fully answered the momentous query, I will proceed to do such ample penance for my remissness in the epistolary duties of an exemplary brother, as shall secure absolution from even so stern a Father Confessor as *Lovely Woman* can be when she's in a tantrum. I propose to send you such a budget of spicy news, as shall cause your feminine heart to beat with the very ecstasy of feminine delight. I give you fair warning that I mean to disarm your just anger by tickling your palate and cramming your maw with the choicest morsels of gossip and delicate tid-bits of a swell brother's confidence.

— To begin with, I might say, as did Caesar to his friend Arminius, *Veni, Vidi, Vici*. For that is about the size of it. But then your woman's fancy might jump to a woman's conclusion, and tempt your diminutive wits to set about the unmaking of a match that is not yet made. I am sorry that I cannot indulge you in such exquisite sport, just now. For spoiling a match is, to the girl of the period, the rarest fun, is it not? Always saving, of course, that pinnacle of her ambition, — of hooking a fish for one's self, and then flinging the silly gudgeon back into the water, with lacerated gills; or leaving him to gasp away his miserable life at one's feet, while bating the hook for a fresh victim. Oh, no, Nell. I have, sometimes, swallowed bait; but never the hook. I manage, mostly, to turn the laugh against the fair anglers.

— But you may congratulate me all the same. For have I not realized the maxim taught us by Caleb Amos, — business before pleasure? — Nay, have I not *made* of business a pleasure, while you, poor slave of Society and shuttle-cock of Fashion, are making the pursuit of pleasure a laborious, unsatisfactory business? At least I judge from your last effusion that you are beginning to realize how high a price you are paying for the morbid ambition of shining as the acknowledged bell-wether — I mean belle — at Saratoga, or even at the capital. I can well imagine how sated — surfeited, rather, — you are by this time, of the fulsome adulation of short-witted fops, who brag among themselves of the favors secretly granted them by that “adovable creecher;” and how skeptical you have grown of the gushing admiration and friendship of lesser stars of the feminine persuasion, who do not believe half the horrid stories of your being an incurable flirt and shameless coquette — until they have repeated them the half a dozenth time. Of course *I* know how immaculate my charming sister is in this respect; but how are you to stop those tongues from wagging, when they wag in such lovely feminine mouths?

— But to my text. The way I took this city by storm, and became at once a famous, if not case-hardened lawyer, would

have astonished Blackstone himself, and is, if not miraculous, at least a trifle romantic. My gushing young friend Victor Waldhorst (of whom I shall have something more to say by and by) was the first to discover my dormant genius, you know, and is now firmly convinced that destiny means me to wear the silken gown and bestride the woosack as Chief Justice of these United States. You would agree with him, I have no doubt, in ascribing my phenomenal success to my own sterling merits, did not my equally phenomenal modesty impel me to give the devil his due, — that is, to admit, that I owe my success chiefly to our whilom overseer, old Jeffreys; it came about thusly:

— On my arrival in this city, I joined shingles with an old fox of a lawyer named Simms, and launched my barque to pilot confiding clients upon the storm-tossed billows of litigation into the haven of success — or defeat. Well, our firm was retained to defend the Quixotic proprietor of a beer garden, who was indicted for selling beer on Sunday. There had been many hundred indictments of the same kind; for the Germans are partial to a drink of beer or wine on Sunday, even such of them, if any, that drink nothing but water during the balance of the week, and the Sunday law had not been enforced until the know-nothings captured the city. So it came hard on the keepers of the beer houses to knock under to the new regime. I spoke of our client as Quixotic, because there was hardly a chance in a thousand to clear him. For every phase of the Sunday law had been passed on by the Supreme Court. Conviction must inevitably follow proof of selling, or even of keeping open an establishment for the sale of, beer, or any other alcoholic drink, on Sunday. So we informed our client of the hopelessness of any defense we could make, and suggested to him that by a plea of guilty he would not only save his lawyer's fee, but also escape with a far smaller penalty. But he was clear grit: he insisted on being defended against an iniquitous and tyrannical law, holding that it would be cowardly and wrong for him to submit without

resistance. So, you see, we lawyers were put on our mettle, and I, for one, determined to secure an acquittal, if it were within human endeavor.

It fell to my lot to bear the brunt of probable defeat, as being the junior partner, old Simms telling me with a sly wink, that one of the most important things for a young lawyer to learn was to bear defeat with equanimity. But I determined to die game, if die I must; and knowing that there was no hope on the law of the case, I set about studying the chances on the facts, by which I mean that I tried to find out what kind of evidence would likely be given before the jury to prove our client's guilt. With this view I visited the establishment kept by him — a beer garden of considerable pretensions and corresponding popularity. There I made some important, at least very interesting discoveries; but of these I will tell you later on, for they had no connection with the case in hand, and afforded no encouragement in that direction. So I next visited the clerk's office of the criminal court, to examine the indictment. And here, at last, a gleam of light broke in upon the hitherto gloomy outlook. Not that I found the indictment defective, or the smallest loophole through which I might have attempted to extricate my client: The work of the State's attorney was properly waterproof. But on turning over the paper I found indorsed thereon the name of our former overseer as the sole witness for the prosecution. Here was a prospect of fun, at least, if not of success. My face must have shone with exultation; for one of the clerks, looking at me with an expectant smile, asked me what flaw I had found in the indictment. I duly blushed for the unlawyerlike freshness I had displayed. A case-hardened lawyer, you know, would have reserved all show of feeling for the jury.

But when the trial came off, I showed my brethren of the bar what a lawyer from the backwoods can do by way of dressing down a swift witness. The old villain knew me at once, of course, and I could see by the furtive glances with which he regarded me, that he was not quite at ease. But he

gave his testimony with remarkable directness and effect, so long as he was in the hands of the prosecuting attorney. He had evidently improved in style by the experience he had gone through in the criminal court, — for he was the prosecuting witness in a large number of the Sunday cases docketed for that term. And even when my turn came to put questions to him, he answered boldly and readily enough, until I tackled him about his Brookfield experiences. Of course he denied that he had run off from there, and that he had sworn falsely, and that he had abused his position as grand juror to revenge himself upon his employer for having discharged him. Of course, too, he lied glibly in answer to my questions as to what he had done before he left Brookfield. It was then that I put him through a course of sprouts that opened the eyes of the jury. It was absolutely painful, though amusing in the highest degree, to witness his awkward attempts to wriggle out of one lie by telling another, until at last he stuck in the quagmire of his lies so firmly, that every motion he made but sunk him deeper, and he finally gave up in sullen helplessness. It was an easy thing, then, to show by his own testimony that he had been hired by a temperance lodge to visit as many of the beer houses and pleasure gardens as he could on a Sunday, and either to buy and pay for, or induce some other person in his presence to order and pay for, beer, wine or other alcoholic drink so as to be able to swear to enough to secure conviction, in which event he was to be paid by the lodge, in addition to the witness fee to be paid out of the costs of the case, a certain sum of money. My success was complete. I take credit to myself for the hit I made about the pay from the temperance lodge; that was not a random shot, but a shrewd guess, based on the fact that Jeffreys was the prosecuting witness in so many cases, and my opinion of the narrow-minded calibre of the average temperance fanatics. Not only was our client cleared, but every defendant, against whom Jeffreys was the witness, came off scot-free, because the State's attorney with the approbation of the judge, refused to go to

the jury in any single case on the unsupported testimony of the self-convicted perjurer. There was great rejoicing among the Teutons, you may believe, and the law-firm of Simms & May now enjoys great popularity among them.

— So much for my success at the bar. My career as a politician, though equally brief, was even more brilliant. In this regard the laconism of Cæsar would, also, be appropriate and expressive. You need not excuse me in your shallow-brained fashion, of tooting my own horn, when I say to you: Get ready your frippery to shine on the next higher round of the Washington Society ladder. Let mama practice to put a little extra stiffness into her courtesies to the lions visiting the capital, so as to support the proper dignity of a senator's wife. Now I do not claim the merit of having elected pa. As you hint, in your famous letter to me, he is a perfect team in himself, and has done, no doubt, Herculean work in canvassing the State. And I hope, among other things, that Ralph Payton has done his share of work in the Southwest, as he promised, and as was not only his duty, but to his own interest to do. But this I may say, defying contradiction, that I have done such work, as a veteran wire-puller might be proud of. I have hitched teams with a cranky philosopher in running the primaries, and keeping the convention straight. We succeeded in pledging most of the members nominated for the General Assembly, from this county, for pa, and the convention endorsed him by special resolution. But above all things I have secured a powerful element of the press, — an element that will most likely gain us a number of votes outside of our own party. And I have succeeded, — not without the aid of the cranky philosopher aforesaid, — in pledging Victor Waldhorst to our cause, and securing his powerful influence in the interest of pa. You think that was not much of a job, do you? But you should know better. You should remember that he carries his squeamish conscientiousness to a ridiculous extent. He would no more vote for pa, if he believed him to be wrong on some serious question of public

policy, than he would lie or steal. But I flatter myself that we have him pretty safely bound. He was chairman of a mass meeting that instructed for pa; he was a member of the committee, in the convention, that reported in his favor, and things must happen strangely indeed, if he can be induced to desert our cause, even if he be put to a severe test.

—Speaking of Victor Waldhorst reminds me, that I must tell you the particulars of my visit to Vaux Hall Park. That is the name of the public garden kept by the client I spoke of. Do you remember the place we visited one Sunday afternoon while at Stuttgart, called Frau Harm's Garden? Well, this Vaux Hall Park is in many respects very much like it. If you can bring your mind to bear on the amusing things we witnessed there, you will have an excellent idea of the circumstances under which I made the acquaintance of its patrons. One of these was a quaint old gentleman, who lectured me in a droll compound of Teutonic and Anglo-Saxon on the danger of drinking iced lemonade in hot weather. While conversing with him and drinking — *not* lemonade! — who should rush in on us, with radiant face and an exclamation of glad surprise, but Victor Waldhorst! This was interesting in itself; but it became more so by the fact, that he was accompanied by a sister, and a cousin and an aunt; and that the old gentleman who had cautioned me against lemonade turned out to be the father of the cousin and the husband of the aunt, and therefore the uncle of Victor and the sister. Not exactly an uncle in fact, as Victor subsequently informed me, but a distant relative, called "uncle" by courtesy, as was the "cousin," also by courtesy. But the sister was genuine. He introduced her as Pauline. That makes her Pauline Waldhorst, — a name that sounded not unfamiliar, and not at all unpleasant. Rather euphonious I found it in contrast with that oddity that served the others for a patronymic, — Auf dem Busch! — But I think the name Pauline alone so pretty, and so much nicer than the formal Miss Waldhorst, that you will permit me, at least in the privacy of our confidential correspondence, to call her Pauline.

Well, we had a great afternoon of it. I was polite to the ladies (note that I use the plural!) and tried to put my best foot foremost, entertaining the company with as lively an account of our travels (for I took care to keep you in the foreground) as I knew how. I needed but slight varnish to my colors, for I had very attentive listeners. Pauline, at least, and Victor, displayed a degree of interest that was very flattering to the narrator. Even the old gentleman (who, in spite of his whimsicalities, is by no means a fool) never took his eyes off my face, except to press upon me, now and then, the very excellent Rhein wine he had ordered. The cousin alone, whom they had introduced as Woldemar Auf dem Busch, seemed really bored. I must have trodden on some corn of his. Perhaps dimming his lustre as a traveler, for I learned he had returned, not so very long before, from a sojourn of several years in the old country. Whatever may have been the cause, the fact was, that he took no sort of pains to conceal his bad humor, and I was rather amused at the grimaces by which he betrayed it, and may have, on my part, transcended the limits of good form in trying his patience. You need, however, waste no sympathy on him. He is big enough to take care of himself, and has been to Germany. If he learned manners there, it is about time that he should conform to our American standard. He deserved all he got from me, and more than I gave him, for the exasperating air of proprietorship with which he lorded it over that glorious creature who calls him cousin.

Glorious, did I say? Well, let it stand. I may as well confess that I mean it. She is glorious. No newly opening rose-bud, gemmed with pearls of dewy morn, can vie with her in loveliness. (These words may sound to you like something you have heard before: so I will claim no copyright to them. But they express my opinion of her exactly. So I may as well employ a few more flowers in sketching her to you.) No daisy is more simple, no mignonette more unpretendingly modest than she; yet no camelia more queenlike in regal grace and beauty! Her smile, when it comes, (and it is easy to make it

come) accelerates the pulse and warms the heart, as if one had drank sweet wine. She is not a blue-stocking; but has a knack of applying dainty scraps of poetry just in the right places. Neither forward with her opinion, nor of what you might call a talkative disposition, she converses charmingly, and when her interest is aroused, her sallies are effective, usually, by their naive drollery and vivacious playfulness.

But she has her faults, too. In all the arts of coquetry her education has been sadly neglected. And then her angelic goodness makes one feel uncomfortable. I miss the wings on her shoulders. Her perfection puts me out of conceit with myself. I can see that she ought to marry some good man, — some such paragon of excellence as her brother will be some day, when he gets his sentimental nonsense knocked out of him by a little rough experience; or even as her cousin Woldemar might be, if he had not been to Germany. From these confessions you will understand that I do not propose making Victor your brother-in-law, nor, on the other hand, do I contemplate to give up, just yet, the exquisite sport of rousing the angry jealousy of the imperious, self-sufficient German Cousin Woldemar, by playing lover to this rare piece of girlish loveliness. It may prove a blessing in disguise to both. Do you understand?

—The discovery in Vaux Hall Park had other consequences also. It is evident to you, I suppose, that I made liberal use of my invitation to visit the villa of Mr. Auf dem Busch. There, on my first visit, I became acquainted with an odd genius, — no less a personage than a live philosopher, who gave us a scientific disquisition of the art of carving — in which, to do him justice, he is an adept — involving the law as a science, and winding up with a sermon on Cats' Tails and the absurdity of slave laws. A strange man! Repellant, yet fascinating. His influence over the inmates of the old merchant's household is truly marvelous, though exceedingly diverse. The old gentleman himself admires him as a hunter, and is thoroughly convinced that there is not a more learned

or profound man in the State. Pauline is infatuated with him as a poet; for she told me that he was the only man who had been able to make Goethe speak to her in English. She regards him as a superior man, I doubt not; though I hardly believe she likes him. Woldemar Auf dem Busch is, in this one respect at least, like me: We both look upon him as crack-brained, having succumbed to the influence of German metaphysics and speculative philosophy. But, unlike Mr. Auf dem Busch, who believes him to be an impractical visionary, I am convinced that he possesses, in spite of his cranky notions about philosophy, a keen insight into the motives and weaknesses of human nature, and a power of organization that is truly astonishing. I have already indicated to you that it was chiefly through his aid that we succeeded in pledging the members of the legislature in pa's favor, and what is almost of graver importance, that both Victor and the paper he edits are indissolubly attached to his interest. It would have amused you to listen to the arguments by which he corrected Victor's squeamishness. The latter's nice sense of honor rebelled against employing any but the most scrupulously straightforward means in carrying on the canvass. But the professor convinced him, in spite of himself, that hypocrisy and lying were commendable in a good cause. It sounded odd to hear him defend hypocrisy and prevarication, and I was sorely afraid that he was driving Victor into the opposition to our cause; but the professor's words were to him "confirmation strong as proof of Holy Writ," and Victor swallowed them all. Young Auf dem Busch once told me, that the professor's influence over Victor was like that of a snake charming a bird. Now doesn't that look like it? Yet Victor would indignantly deny that the professor had any influence over him at all, but that he only yielded to the force of the reasoning employed by him. If so, then reason is the God he worships, and Professor Rauhenfels is his Prophet.

— By the way, Nellie, are you not a little curious to know, whether Victor is given to worship any other idol besides Rea-

son? I dare say that you have not forgotten the devotion that attached him to a little lassie, who played havoc with the hearts of the laddies ever so long ago. Have you not his scalp dangling from your girdle-belt, — one of the earliest trophies of your prowess in the warfare against the sterner sex? His scalpwound, however, seems not to have proved fatal, — so much I can demonstrate, for he still wears a goodly head of hair. But as to the condition of his heart — why, you might come here yourself. You mean to come at any rate, don't you? To help electioneer for pa, you know; for you can do more in this line, than any other person, or half dozen persons, — more than even the professor. For in a certain contingency, which may or may not arise, his interest will be adverse to us, and in that case, nothing will hold Victor, unless it be your coaxing. If that contingency should come to pass it may turn out, too, that nothing can save pa but Victor and his adherents. So, if you are in earnest about doing something for the honor of our family, don't fail to induce pa and ma to make a stay of a few days, on your way home from Washington, at this gay metropolis of the West! Don't shirk duty! You know as well as I, that your power to lead Victor is limited only by the limits of the possible. So come, at the risk, if need be, of arousing a little jealousy on the part of your intended. — For I suppose that by this time you have committed yourself in the direction of that “sturdy Western beau” who went all the way to Washington to angle for an heiress and a seat in Congress? You ought to be weary of distributing mittens; and I judge that Payton has laid close siege to your heart, or what there is left of it. I cannot say that he is the one whom I would have selected as my brother-in-law; but then this match is your funeral, not mine. I don't admire the grit of a man, who has promised his support to pa, in a highly important election, and who is himself a candidate for Congressional honors, and instead of attending to his business, wastes his time in running after his girl, — even if he does believe the heiress to be worth more to him than his seat in

Congress. For I infer from some of pa's letters that he must have been dancing attendance on you at Saratoga, and followed you to the mountains! — But then he's a lucky man, I suppose, in having wormed himself into the heart of my giddy sister; and the Germans have a proverb that it is the lucky man that brings home the bride! And I hope that it may be his luck to lead home the daughter of a United States senator. To insure for him this luck, I strongly advise, out of abundance of caution, the careful lawyer would say, that you arrange a stay of at least a few days, in this city, and duly notify of the day of your coming,

Your indulgent brother

LESLIE MAY.



STORM-CLOUDS IN THE HORIZON.

MEMORABLE to Victor Waldhorst was the election of 1860. While his party had carried their legislative ticket by a slight majority, his own vote had been largely in excess of that of his colleagues, notwithstanding incessant vituperative attacks made upon him during the whole of the canvass, in the column of the rival newspaper. It was a vindication, also, of Professor Rauhenfels' prediction of the rival editor's discomfiture. "Naturally," he said, in talking over the result, "The jaundice-livered miscreant lied; and lies have the trick of the boomerang to cut back, sometimes, on the projector."

"Now do you see," said Leslie May triumphantly, "what I told you at Brookfield, so many years ago, that you have the address of an adroit politician?"

The pleasant smile that accompanied Leslie's words carried Victor back to the delightful time when they two, with Nellie May as an enthusiastic listener, had talked over the colonel's chance of success.

"Of course," had been the echo from Mr. Becker, "our editor of the *Beobachter* has been, thanks to our friend of the opposition paper, the best advertised candidate in the State." And, rubbing his hands in high glee, he added: "He will have things his own way in the legislature, and will have no trouble in electing a State printer."

"I hope," was Woldemar Auf dem Busch's comment, "that Victor will not sink the character of a gentleman in that of the politician, no matter how successful he may be as such."

"Fear you not for our Victor," the old gentleman spoke up.

“ Our Victor is through and through a gentleman. When he is a politician, then a politician is a gentleman.”

Memorable, too, was the election of 1860 to politicians ; even to statesmen. Memorable, because Democracy, triumphant hitherto in the Federal elections, had been hurled from power. Not by the verdict of the people in their original capacity : a majority of them had cast their votes against the man who would be President of the United States by choice of the electoral college. A large majority had been cast against those who would represent the people in the Congress. But Democracy had been dethroned, because a house divided against itself cannot stand. The democrats had split their forces into two angrily contending factions, neither of which, alone, was strong enough to outnumber the common adversary. And thus, although know-nothingism had received its quietus, — a fate from which not even the magic of its watchword “ Constitutional Union ” had saved it — the republicans had succeeded, by uniting their vote (not much larger than that of either moiety of the democrats) to elect an overwhelming majority of the electoral college and of the members of the House of Representatives. And politicians and statesmen were confronted with a problem whose solution would tax to the utmost their united astuteness and wisdom.

Memorable, above all others, was that election of 1860 to patriotically-minded citizens in every part of the Union. It aroused fierce anger in one section of the country, finding utterance in wrathful threats of forcible disruption : while in the other it fortified a determined spirit to check the growth of slavery and maintain the Union at all cost. As yet there was only talk on both sides, though talk fierce and passionate. Most people fondly imagined that the quarrel was but a squabble among politicians ; that the vindictive threats and taunts hurled forth and back were but the ravings of magniloquent fire-eating fanatics ; and that whatever of real difference there

might be between the sections would be smoothed over, as so many previous quarrels in the history of the nation had been, by compromise. For it was monstrous to contemplate that a nation of brothers, grown mighty and prosperous under a common flag, having by a common effort shaken off the yoke of tyranny, shining, the glorious beacon of freedom to all the world, should now bespatter the Goddess of Liberty with reeking gore in fratricidal strife. It was horrible to imagine brothers thirsting for their brothers' heart-blood, — kinsmen devastating the homes of kinsmen with sword and fire. So monstrous and horrible was the contemplation of these things, that few people deemed them possible in a Christian country, in the nineteenth century.

Yet there were those, who, albeit not pessimistically inclined, were deeply anxious.

Among these was Victor. The result of the election had forced on him the recognition of a phase in the issue between North and South which he had hitherto persistently ignored, and which now gave rise to gloomy forebodings touching the fate of the Republic. As an opponent of slavery on principle he had indulged in the hope that its limitation to the States in which it now prevailed would of necessity bring about its final extinction, and had hailed such a result as the most natural and desirable solution of the problem. Now that the election had demonstrated the hopelessness of further aggrandizement of slave territory, he saw with appalling distinctness that the people of the South understood fully as well as he what such limitation of slavery must necessarily lead to. Having lost the political ascendancy hitherto enjoyed, which had enabled them to legislate for the protection of their property, they now struggled for its bare preservation. The gradual extinction of slavery, Victor now saw with deep anxiety, was as much a deprivation of property solemnly guaranteed by the constitution, as direct abolition. If abolition was wrong, how could it be right to reach the same result by other means? And if the South was right in this struggle, what course did

duty point out for himself? He was deeply perplexed by the distressing uncertainty as to what Justice and Right demanded touching this burning question, which he was soon to be called on for decisive action.

But care and anxiety were forgotten when, one day, Leslie May informed him that his father, with mother and sister, had arrived in the city, and would make a stay of some days before proceeding on their way to the capital. Leslie had spoken in his usual quiet way, but was keenly observant of the effect of his statement on Victor.

"Really?" the latter exclaimed, steadying his voice with an effort, but unable to repress the flush spreading over his face, "Have you seen them? And how are they?"

"I have seen them, and they are well," replied Leslie, smiling at Victor's illy-concealed eagerness. "Both the governor and Nellie inquired after you, and are impatient to see you."

"I thank you." And after a swift glance into the eyes of his friend he added: "And them. Of course I shall pay my respects to Colonel May. It is highly important that I should consult him. And if Miss Nellie — pardon me, I mean Miss May —"

"Now, have done with that nonsense!" Leslie interrupted him, assuming that half-dictatorial, half-precatory, but wholly irresistible air that he found so effective in cajoling Victor. "It is not a question of mock marriage to-day, and you know, or ought to know, that my sister is quite ashamed of her conduct on that occasion."

"— If Miss Nellie will do me the honor to receive me, I will also call on her." The blush deepened on Victor's cheeks as he spoke, but Leslie was, for a moment, uncertain, whether the name "Nellie" possessed for the young editor the charm of old.

"You need not call on the governor," he said. "I have given him your address, and he will hunt you up as soon as he has the time. But Nellie and ma are at their rooms in the

Planters' House, and they will no doubt feel highly complimented if you will take the trouble to call on them."

"I shall be happy to do so," said Victor speaking in a tone of indifference assumed with a powerful effort. "What hour, do you think, would be proper for a visit to the ladies?"

"No hour better than the present," Leslie answered, consulting his watch. "They are through with dinner by this time, I suppose, and if you do not object, we will just step over to the Planters."

Victor was ready for a visit to the ladies of the May family, no matter how important the business in hand might be. The walk to the hotel was but short. In less than five minutes the gentlemen had sent up their cards to the ladies, but were informed by the returning messenger that the ladies were not in, although their doors were unbolted.

"Well," said Leslie, "this is unpleasant. But they cannot be far off at any rate. Will we wait for them in the parlor?"

Victor had no objection, and followed Leslie. They had to pass the ladies' parlor, the door of which stood ajar. Victor cast a glance into the richly appointed saloon, and stood suddenly still, — his eyes fixed upon a tableau that deeply impressed him. On a sofa facing the door sat Ralph Payton, engaged in eager conversation with a lady by his side, — a lady whom Victor so well knew; and yet he beheld for the first time that perfection of beauty that burst upon his intoxicated gaze from the sofa there. He stood spell-bound. Every fibre of his body thrilled with ecstatic transports. Those clear, gray eyes were Nellie's eyes, whose bright flashes had so often penetrated to his heart; yet now, as they were bent upon her companion's face, they beamed with a tenderness that was a new experience to Victor. That sweet mouth with its rosy lips, that had so often charmed him with its make-believe pouts, its droll mimicry, its irresistible smiles, was Nellie's mouth, tempting, as of old, but expressive, now, of a capacity for pathos, as well as humor, that was a new revelation. The

lady on the sofa was undoubtedly Nellie May: not the lovely child that Victor had known, but a radiantly beautiful woman,—the full-blown flower redeeming in resplendent brightness the promise given by the exquisite bud. Nellie May: But Victor felt as if it would be a desecration to apply the endearing diminutive to that magnificently beautiful woman, and repeated mentally: Eleonora!

As Victor paused, Leslie looked around.

“So, this is where you receive your friends?” he said, as his eye fell on the occupants of the sofa. “Well, Mr. Payton, how do you find yourself? And to what are we indebted for the pleasure of seeing you here?”

The lady promptly rose on hearing her brother's voice, and while Payton and Leslie were shaking hands she held out hers to Victor with a cordial smile of welcome. The blood rushed hotly to Victor's head as he stepped forward to clasp the hands so graciously extended. “Mr. Waldhorst!” she exclaimed, her face beaming with such genuine, unfeigned pleasure as to throw her visitor into raptures of delight. “You cannot believe how happy it makes me to see you after so long a time. You are glad too, are you not?”

“Indeed I am very glad to see you, Miss May!”

“There—please don't Miss May me, unless you wish to dis-may me, by remembering those silly words of mine that I had hoped you had forgotten!” She accented her word-play with a ripple of low, silvery laughter. “To you, you know, I wish to be Nellie. Or have I changed so much, that you do not recognize in me your old classmate? By the way, Victor—pardon, Mr. Waldhorst, I should say—you have changed indeed, and very much for the better. I would like to say, if I were not afraid that you would deem me guilty of clumsy flattery, that you have grown to be quite handsome.”

“Have I outgrown the scarecrow, do you think?”

“Well, I don't know that I can, or wish to, say that!” she replied looking at him with a smile of unmistakable admiration. “For, do you know, Mr. Waldhorst, that I shall

always cherish the memory of that brave act of yours as a bright, romantic incident in my prosaic life? That scarecrow has taken, in my mind, the shape of a chivalrous knight, whose devotion to me I would not willingly forget. — But the change I notice in you is less, perhaps, a physical growth, than an intellectual development; you have certainly improved in this respect since I last saw you at Brookfield.”

“How silly I must have appeared to you in those days!”

“Unless, indeed,” she continued, taking no notice of his remark, “it is my own growth and development that enables me to see you more truly now. For I, too, have grown somewhat since then, don’t you think, Mr. Waldhorst?”

To answer this question advisedly, required a closer survey of her person, and afforded Victor an excuse to feast his eyes anew without seeming to be rude, — an opportunity of which he availed himself to the utmost limits of propriety. “Wonderfully!” he said at last, in a subdued voice. Ralph Payton was within earshot and Victor felt annoyed by the thought of being overheard, so he said nothing.

Mr. Payton meanwhile chafed under the necessity of answering Leslie’s questions, and was casting uneasy glances in the direction of the lady, — a decided frown darkening his features whenever his eye fell on Victor. He was unsuccessful in concealing his vexation, if he made the attempt at all, in having his *tête-à-tête* with Miss May interrupted, and Leslie, in the sprit of mischief, or for some reason sufficient to himself, proceeded to add fuel to the flames of his anger. He took the young gentleman’s arm and said, in his bantering, pleasant voice:

“Come, Ralph! You have not yet spoken to Mr. Waldhorst. Tell him how glad you are to see him; and then let us go and hunt up the governor. Nellie, I suspect, and our friend Victor will not be sorry to have us leave them to themselves. They surely have a good deal to say to each other after such long absence.”

Payton grew wroth. But what was there for him to do?

Miss May looked as if her brother's remark quite suited her. So he stepped forward to shake hands with Victor, saying, with a scowl on his face that belied his words: "I rejoice to see you so well, Mr. Waldhorst?"

Victor's acknowledgment sounded just as cordial.

After shaking hands, Payton bowed to the lady, and saying that he hoped to see her later on, when she might be at more leisure, he left the room, without wasting another look at Victor.

"Come and sit down by me," said Nellie, as soon as the others had left. "I am sorry that both papa and mama are out, but they will be back soon, and you must content yourself with my company the while. I am anxious that papa should find you here, for he is real desirous of having a talk with you."

Victor gladly complied with her request to sit down beside her. He secretly hoped that some propitious power might postpone indefinitely the return of both Colonel and Mrs. May, while he was contenting himself with Miss May's company. The conversation between them was lively, as conversation with Nellie always was. So lively, that before Victor thought the time long, they had thoroughly talked over the probability of Colonel May's election, agreeing that small room for doubt remained, — the daughter expressing not only hope, but firm confidence on this point, and Victor pledging his utmost efforts to bring it about. They had engaged, also, in a stirring debate on the political situation, their opinions diverging just enough to make the discussion highly interesting. The lady had the advantage over him in having formed a decided opinion as to the course which it was the duty of the Federal government to pursue toward the States. There was no room for doubt in her mind. The whole matter lay in a nutshell: The Federal government had absolutely no right to interfere with the domestic affairs of the States, but must protect the right of property in the slave-holding States as effectually as in non-slaveholding States. Any usurpation of power to distinguish between them was a breach of the consti-

tution and must be resisted, — by force, if necessary. Her reasoning was plausible, to Victor, at least, who was carried away by it in spite of a vague, uneasy suspicion that she was repeating the arguments of Southern extremists, which he could not wholly sanction.

After one of her enthusiastic utterings in this direction, Victor ventured to suggest: “Don’t you think, Miss Nellie, that our opponents would be right in calling you a pronounced fire-eater?”

“Well, sir, if the assertion of our rights and of our determination to maintain them, makes me a fireeater, you may set me down as one. And I look upon a man who would do less as upon a coward not fit to live in a free land. Is it not your opinion, Mr. Waldhorst, that tyranny exists, not because oppressors are tyrants, but because the oppressed are cowards? Then give me a brave fire-eater always before a tamely submitting coward!”

The conversation was interrupted by a soft knocking at the open door. Victor beheld a neatly clad servant of striking appearance. Was not that Lucretia, the slave-maiden belonging to Nellie? As he looked at her, a slight flush suffused her face. It might be because of his rude stare, or it might be because she recognized him, — not the slightest twitching of a muscle of her face gave indication, unless the dropping of her eyes before his gaze might be counted as such. She too had grown to be very beautiful, and his mind recalled vividly a scene when this superb woman of Junonic grace even then, was threatened with the lash in the hands of a brutal overseer.

“Well, Cressie, what is it?” the mistress inquired, while Victor still gazed and mused.

“Missis May sent me to find you; she is in her room,” was the answer, spoken in a mellow, pleasant voice, possessing all the sweetness but hardly a trace of the *patois*, or lingo peculiar to negroes.

“Very well, Cressie. Tell her I am coming. And tell her I will bring Mr. Waldhorst along, who has called to see her.”

“ Yes, ma’am,” said the octoroon, casting one eager glance, though furtively, at Victor.

The latter was still looking at the open door through which the girl had disappeared when Nellie asked him :

“ You remember Cressie, don’t you? Has she not grown and improved as much as any of us? ”

“ As much as any of us! ” he echoed.

“ I am proud of her,” Nellie went on. “ She is perfectly devoted to me. I can trust her as if she were a sister. I sometimes think — now don’t you laugh at me! — I sometimes really think that she is trustier, and — well, wiser than I am. Now what do you say to that? ”

“ That you are fortunate in having so reliable a servant,” said Victor; “ and that her praise, out of your mouth, is doubly your own. Imagine her at the mercy of a tyrant like Jeffreys! ”

“ Don’t mention the brute! ” Nellie exclaimed, puckering up her face into a momentary scowl. Then, brightening, she added: “ Come now, Mr. Waldhorst, and pay your respects to mama. She will be delighted to see you.”

When Victor parted from the ladies, it was after a cordial invitation from both to call again before they left the city.

Victor stepped out of the hotel in exuberant spirits. He walked with head erect and eyes turned skyward, as if soaring through space. He felt as if he must shout out to the world the wild joy of his heart in having found the maiden that had won his undying love, — his boyish ideal, cherished so loyally as the embodiment of feminine grace and beauty transformed into a revelation of the Divine, before which he must kneel and worship. Yes! This woman transcended the image hitherto enshrined in his bosom as far as his imagination had idealized the Nellie May of his boyish days. And she had been so gracious, — had received him with such cordiality! How could he help reveling in the memory of her smiles, of exulting in the touching confidence she so trustfully placed in his ability to further the interests of her father!

It was a comfort to reflect, that they had, in the main, agreed in their political views. Yet, on recalling her positive statements as to the rights of the South, and the duties of freemen, a vague presentiment of trouble crept stealthily into his mind, imparting to his blissful day-dreaming the spice of uncertainty. What if they should disagree? He choked down the doubt as quickly as it arose. Were they not, Nellie and he, of one mind on the all-important, to the loving daughter overshadowing, subject of Colonel May's election to the Senate! He surely desired his election as ardently as did she; and she knew that he did. What mattered then, disagreement on minor points? Could it, if it did exist, endanger the cordial relations between them?

Then loomed up, in the midst of his busy imaginings, the frowning physiognomy of Ralph Payton. A dark shadow; first contrasting with, then imparting its somber hue to, the rose-tinted pictures his fancy was weaving. The shadow grew darker as he dwelt upon the eagerness depicted on the two faces that he had seen turned to one another on that sofa.

To be sure, there was great unanimity on politics between these two, — greater than that between Miss May and himself. Naturally: They were both Virginians by birth and Southerners by instinct, while he, Victor, had grafted his Southern proclivities on a vigorous stock of anti-slavery convictions. It was quite possible, then, that their conversation had turned upon the relations between Payton, as the colonel's successor in the House of Representatives, and the colonel as a candidate before the legislature. But then, why that frown on Payton's face when Victor appeared? If he and Nellie had been talking politics would not Payton have hailed Victor as a co-worker in a common cause? And that look of eager tenderness on Nellie's face — was it not eloquent of an interest more tender than that conditioned by a common political purpose? The brightly colored visions darkened under the shadow of gloomy doubt, asserting itself, and demanding recognition. Lucretia's pathetic face haunted him, too. Why should it? What had

he done to the beautiful octoroon, that her pensive features should disturb his peace of mind? Perhaps, — if he had analyzed his feelings — he saw in her concrete case the difficulty of the problem that was agitating the nation, — a problem that had no difficulty for Ralph Payton, nor, as he well knew, for Miss May. But Miss May's solution was incompatible with human rights for the octoroon girl!

Nellie's letter to her brother occurred to Victor. "Poor Victor," she had written. — And she had told him of her "sturdy rural beau," who was to her more than a mere gentleman. — Poor Victor, indeed! He experienced an agonizing revulsion from the height of human bliss to the depths of doubt and despair, as the thought confronted him that the cordial welcome she had extended to him was possibly but a form demanded by common politeness. Her smiles and pleasant words were but the tribute of courtesy and good-nature. She felt some compunction, perhaps, for the cruel words she had spoken to him before leaving Brookfield, and meant to atone for them in this way. Perhaps — he paled at the thought, but it forced itself upon him again and again — her feeling toward him was simply that of pity. Pity! Oh, if so, what a fool he had been!

The thought was too humiliating to be borne with equanimity. A touch of pride came to his aid and for a moment assuaged the poignancy of his woe. She need not pity him! No! Not even from Nellie May, — though dearer to him than his heart's blood — would he accept such alms. He would compel her to respect him. He would teach her that he was the equal, at least, of the man upon whom she lavished the priceless boon of her affections.

As for Ralph Payton, — let him beware how he cross the path of Victor Waldhorst!

* * *

Victor had looked forward to the interview with Colonel May in the eager hope that the veteran statesman might clear up the doubts that harassed him about the political situation.

Vaguely apprehensive that the attitude of some of the Southern States might call for coercive measures on the part of the Federal government not consistent with the views of extreme adherents to the doctrine of States' Rights, and that in such case it would become necessary to take sides for or against the adoption of such measures, he yearned for light to guide him in determining the course he ought to take.

But when they met, their conversation hardly touched upon politics at all. The colonel, being well aware of Victor's loyalty and devotion to him and his cause, spoke upon matters personal and easily carried Victor along, — obtaining from him a minute account of his life and experiences after leaving Brookfield, including a description of his present surroundings. Victor's narration led the colonel to express a desire to become acquainted with some of the people whom he described, whereupon Victor immediately proposed a visit to the store of the *Auf dem Busches* on Main Street, where the colonel and the two merchants were introduced to each other.

The junior member of the firm showed a decided reserve in his demeanor, unwilling to enter into conversation beyond what mere politeness required; but the two elder gentlemen took a liking to each other at once. So well pleased with his distinguished visitor was Uncle *Auf dem Busch*, that he extended to him and to his wife and daughter an invitation to spend an evening at *Busch Bluff* before leaving the city, — an invitation which the colonel, in behalf of himself and his ladies, promptly accepted.

“To-morrow, if it be suiting to you,” the merchant proposed. “Or, if it be that you have not fear before philosophers, after-to-morrow. On that evening the Philosophical Society hold a sitting at our house, and the philosophers will reckon it to their honor if you shall be present.”

“What — a regular society for the cultivation of philosophy?” the colonel inquired. “Then, will it not disturb them if strangers intrude on their deliberations?”

“Oh,” said the merchant, “you disturb them not. See

you, that they disturb not you. They are not a club, you know, — incorporated ; they are men who meet together, to study how to know things. And sometimes women come and help them, when it is a fine paper to read. They have meetings sometimes in one house, and then in another house, and after-to-morrow they shall have meeting at Busch Bluff.”

“ You arouse my curiosity, Mr. Auf dem Busch,” said the colonel. “ I take it for granted that you are a member of this philosophical society ? ”

“ Oh, no ! ” the merchant replied, with a humorous chuckle. “ I am not philosopher ; sure not speculative philosopher. I speculate only sometimes on Main Street. The president of the Philosophical Society is a friend, and he honors me to bring the society to my house ; and I like it to hear them talk, and sometimes I understand it what they talk. But when I understand it, then it is not speculative philosophy : contrary, common sense. I make no doubt it will interest Colonel May and his ladies, to take tea, once, with speculative philosophers.”

“ Indeed it will be,” said the colonel. “ Mrs. May will feel highly honored, and I am sure my daughter Nellie will look upon such an opportunity as a rare treat.”

“ So after-to-morrow will be fitting to you ? ”

“ Certainly. I hope that the ladies will be through with their shopping by that time, and will have the more leisure to enjoy their visit to Busch Bluff.”

“ Also, then on after-to-morrow evening,” said the merchant, nodding his head. “ I will do me the honor to send the carriage for you, at the Planters’, at four o’clock.”



MAGNETISM — REPELLANT AND ATTRACTIVE.

THE news of the invitation, when announced by the colonel at the Planters' House, did not produce the same effect upon the mother as upon the daughter. Mrs. May expressed, and still more emphatically looked, decided disapprobation. "I do not understand," she explained, in tone of unmistakable protest, "how you could accept so very informal an invitation. Who is this man with an unpronounceable name, that he should invite ladies to his house who are perfect strangers to him?"

"But, Mama," Nellie broke in, "surely, papa's name is well enough known to be received as a voucher for the respectability of his wife and daughter?"

"I dare say it is," the elder lady replied, a touch of sarcasm in her voice, while a slight nod of the head might have been understood as suggestive of reproof to her daughter. "The question, however, is not as to our, but as to his respectability. Who is there to vouch for the respectability of *his* wife and daughter?"

"Why, Mama, Leslie is on intimate terms with the family!" the sister urged with some warmth.

"You are aware, my daughter," came from Mrs. May frigidly, "that your brother Leslie enjoys a degree of freedom in the choice of his associates, that is not permitted to ladies. And I dare say that you are aware, also, of your brother's propensity to run after every pretty face, or what he deems a pretty face, without inquiring into the social standing of its owner."

"But he — I mean Mr. Auf dem Busch — is Victor's uncle," the young lady persisted. "And I am just wild to become acquainted with Victor's sister."

“Perhaps, my dear,” the mother admonished, “it would be more appropriate for you to speak of Mr. Waldhorst with less familiarity. He is no longer the young shopkeeper whom it was our pleasure, — or let us say, our duty — to patronize in Brookfield. It might now displease him, as well as Mr. Payton, to hear you call him by his first name.”

A merry little laugh preceded the daughter's answer. “Why, to be sure, he has become the *Honorable* Victor Waldhorst! And I have really forgotten to tease him with his new title. He is the editor of a newspaper with a name unspeakable except in the German tongue. And the Honorable Ralph Payton honors him with his jealousy. You are right, Mama, I must be more cautious to avoid taking the Christian names of these Honorables in vain. At least in their absence.” Then she added more soberly, “Now is not that respectability enough? The uncle, the aunt and the sister of an Honorable? And, Mama, coming to think of it, this uncle has quite a claim to papa's recognition on his own account. He presided at the mass meeting which instructed for him as United States senator, and was a member of the convention.”

“Such an upstart he must be!” the elder lady ejaculated, in no wise propitiated by Nellie's playful attempts at conciliation. “To think, that he should put upon us the affront of offering to send us his carriage!”

“Pray, Louise, is that the head and front of his offending?” the Colonel queried, smiling quizzically. “I ask for information, because I was impressed with the notion that it was rather thoughtful of the old gentleman, to spare us the annoyance of having to inquire our way to his villa.”

“Villa!” the lady repeated disdainfully. “What airs these Germans put on about their suburban roost!” And then she added, a little more resignedly, assuming the air of an injured victim to the exactions of tyrannical Democracy, “To think, that the wife and daughter of a — congressman, should be called on to ride in the carriage of a parvenu, merely to gratify his vulgar ambition!”

“Well, my dear, the mischief is done,” said the colonel, good-naturedly. “There is no use crying over spilt milk. We are going to see what a galaxy of speculative philosophers looks like, when assembled at tea.”

And Mrs. May accepted the inevitable with what grace she might, solacing herself with the reflection that the ladies they were going to visit were unknown to Washington society, and strangers to Brookfield, so that it was very improbable indeed that she should ever be called on to extend social recognition, as a senator’s wife, to any of the family.

Uncle Auf dem Busch passed through a similar experience on making known to his family the honor in store for them by no less an event than the visit, with wife and daughter, of a prospective United States senator. “It was very thoughtless of you to invite guests for the evening when you know the philosophical society is going to swarm here,” Mrs. Auf dem Busch remarked, the while a perceptible frown darkened her comely features, caused, perhaps, by honest dread of the task of entertaining guests of such high quality.

“Contrary, thoughtful,” was the merchant’s reply. “The colonel and the ladies from Washington will find pleasure to look at philosophers when they drink tea. The colonel said it expressly.

“Drink tea?” the lady inquired. “Did you invite them for tea, or for supper, or dinner?”

“Tea? Supper? Dinner? the merchant repeated with a look of bewilderment. “I invited not for dinner, not for supper! I invited for four o’clock. Four o’clock p. m. Means that dinner? Get we dinner, after four o’clock p. m., before next day?”

“Yes, Uncle,” said Pauline pleasantly. “I have been told, that at Washington the dinner hour is usually six. Some aristocratic people in our own city have dinner even later, when they have company. So you see it is difficult for aunt to know how to receive her Washington guests properly, if they have not been informed of the nature of the entertainment to which

they have been invited. They should know in what dress to appear."

"It affects nothing how they dress," the merchant exclaimed, vexed as well as amused by his wife's distress, which he ascribed to a hypercritical vagary of the female mind. "They know they come to sit down with philosophers, and they get to eat. Now you give them to eat something nice, how you can cook, and tea, or something else what they like to drink. Then the colo-nell and his Washington ladies eat supper, or if they like better, dinner; our philosophers drink tea; and it shall be a party A No. one, — if they dress white, or black, or if they put on a rainbow. Not, Pauline?"

The diversion attempted by Pauline for the benefit of her aunt, had not been graciously received by that lady. But, nothing daunted, the young girl persisted in her effort to put the hostess at ease, and therefore said, with a pleasant smile, "I am sure that Colonel May will be pleased with you and with our philosophical friends, whether we give them a dinner, or other meal. And if the ladies should be bored by metaphysical discussions at table, aunt and I will leave the lords of creation to enjoy their inevitable smoke in dining-room or library, and retire with Mrs. and Miss May to the parlor. I am sure," she added, addressing herself with a smile of perfect confidence to Mrs. Auf dem Busch, "that aunt will make it pleasant for the ladies, even if the gentlemen should prefer smoke and philosophy."

The lady addressed vouchsafed no indication whether Pauline's effort was a success. But the old gentleman seemed to understand the situation. He nodded with a smile of dry humor, as he said: "When they like to smoke, better as talk to you, they are in a fog." Turning to his wife, he continued: "Believe you, that you can manage, as Pauline has well said? She has right. She can make an evening pleasant for anybody. You and she," he hurriedly added, as his wife cast a searching glance at him. "If the gentlemen are like me, the ladies will not be alone."

“No, I expect not,” muttered Mrs. Auf dem Busch, turning her reproachful eyes from her husband to Pauline. “Not if that coxcomb of a lawyer is among them.”

Mrs. May was destined to receive one more shock to her sense of propriety, when, punctual to the appointed hour, the colonel and his ladies were invited to step into—not an elegant carriage, such as she had anticipated, but an open baronche; driven—not by a coachman in livery, but by the merchant Auf dem Busch himself. “The insolence of this man!” she exclaimed (though in a whisper) to her daughter as they descended the steps leading to the sidewalk in front of the hotel. “See, how he is appropriating us, just as if we were his equals.”

“Indeed, Mama, I hope we *are!*” Nellie remarked, with an arch smile. “The fact, that papa is just now expecting most important services from them need not raise them above our level at all.”

They had by this time reached the sidewalk, and Nellie exclaimed with a little shout of delight, “Oh, just look at that splendid span of horses! I am going to sit on the front seat with the driver. It will be a delightful drive.”

Sure enough, when the merchant, having bowed to the ladies on being introduced to them by the colonel, not without stately courtesy, was handing Mrs. May to her seat in the rear, the girl leaped nimbly up into the front seat, saying, with the enchanting smile that was at her command when she wished to please, “You will let me sit by you, will you not, Mr. Auf dem Busch? Papa must for once take a back seat. I admire your splendid horses, and would like to see you handle them.”

Of course the young lady had her way. She completely won the merchant’s heart by the intelligent questions she put to him, and by her enthusiasm over his really fine turnout. It was not long before she had coaxed him to intrust her with the reins, and then she challenged his admiration by the skill and coolness with which she managed the spirited steeds. All

in all, the two on the front seat were on excellent terms with each other long before they reached the merchant's pretty villa.

The meeting between Mrs. May and Mrs. Auf dem Busch would have amused Leslie, if his attention had not been engrossed in watching the first approaches between his sister and Pauline Waldhorst. This circumstance deprived him of the enjoyment of marking the expression of mutual aversion which for a brief moment marred the features of each matron, — coupled here with a look of haughty superiority, there with a glance of sullen antagonism — before the smile accompanying the conventional phrases stereotyped for such occasions masked their countenances. He saw, instead, a more beautiful scene: Pauline watching the descent of his sister from the barouche, her features animated with eager expectation, lips slightly parted, her face gradually brightening into an expression of hearty approval of the beautiful stranger, whose graceful elastic movements she followed with sparkling eyes, until they encountered Nellie's searching gaze. Then, a vivid flush heightening the color of her cheeks and betokening the pleasure of mutual recognition, the bright smile on Nellie's face found glad reflection in her own.

A scene charming enough to quicken even Leslie May's pulses.

Nellie waited for no formal introduction. Impulsively she flew toward Pauline, exclaiming, "You are Victor's sister?"

"And you are Miss Nellie May?" Pauline replied in a soft glad voice, looking eagerly into Nellie's eyes, and reading there such assurance of friendly good will, as to prompt her to meet half-way the proffered kiss and embrace.

There had been other eyes besides those of Leslie May to watch the meeting of the young girls. Victor, when he saw the cordial welcome of each to each, breathed a sigh of deep joy. He felt as if the dawn of friendship, rose-tinting the horizon of the maidens, had for him, too, a ray of brightness, — and of promise.

Young Auf dem Busch was likewise affected. Not with pleasure wholly unalloyed; for his self-complacency was disturbed. He had in his own mind set down the Southern belle as a much spoiled pet of society, and concluded that it would be the proper thing for him to ignore her so far as he might without downright rudeness. On witnessing the strong attraction that drew the young girls toward each other, and noting the exquisite play of her features, whose beauty was not at all marred by their intellectual expression, a vague apprehension dawned upon him, that it might be difficult to carry out his program, if she should take it into her head not to be ignored. But relying on his superior tact, he resolved to let her see, that he, too, had seen the world, and that he knew how to keep arrogance within proper bounds. But for some reason unaccountable to him he found his thoughts dwelling on the ridiculous proposition, how he would take it to be ignored by *her*.

The introduction of the Washington guests to the gentlemen of the Philosophical Society took place in the parlor. Among the latter was Doctor Taylor, with whom the young Mays had become acquainted at Venice, during their European tour. Doctor Taylor was a man of rather slender build, tall, and of comely appearance. His complexion, contrasting with his luxuriant, densely black hair, seemed fairer than it was. A mustache, sparse, but as dark in hue as the hair of his head, added piquancy to his frank ingenuous countenance, the predominant expression of which was that of calm serenity. His eyes, deep set, not large, snapped and sparkled with infectious mirth on slightest provocation of fun or humor, for the detection of the slightest trace of which he possessed a keen sense. This quality, which Miss May had not been slow to discover, as well as the zest with which he enjoyed a joke, which he invariably emphasized with Homeric laughter that never failed to carry his auditors with him, had led both the brother and sister during their sojourn in the city on the Adriatic, to cultivate his acquaintance.

Nellie, in particular, was pleased to meet with him again. "I am so glad to see you here," she said, on shaking hands with him. "Do you live here? You never told us, that you were from our own State, when we met in Venice."

"No," said Doctor Taylor, evidently pleased by her words. "I have not lived here long. — So, you remember me, do you?"

"Indeed, sir, I should be ashamed of myself, if I did not," said Miss May with some emphasis.

"I am very glad of it. This meeting with you is such an unexpected, agreeable surprise."

"Ah, I am sure I shall never forget how deeply we are indebted to you for the pleasant days we spent in Italy," said Nellie. "But for the highly interesting criticisms with which you favored us, we should have come away from that classic land without seeing, or, having seen, without understanding, a tithe of the literary and art treasures which you so kindly taught us to see, with the mental as well as the physical eye. You made so clear to us — to me, at least the world-historical significance of what I would otherwise have passed by as commonplace or unmeaning. Do you recall the time we met you at the Grand Square of St. Mark's, when we spent the time, — all that was at my disposal — in the Great Council Chamber of the Ducal Palace one day, examining the manuscripts and pictures of the St. Mark's Library, and how we listened — oh, for an hour or more — to your fascinating talk on Art, suggested by our inquiries touching Tintoretto's great painting of 'The Paradise?'"

"I remember," said the doctor, breaking into a peal of merry laughter; and then added: "And I remember, how my eloquence drove you away from the *Plazzo Ducale*; how, interrupting me with a lame excuse, in the middle of a finely worded sentence, you made your escape, rushing down the Giant's Stairway in a headlong run, colliding with, and nearly upsetting your own clumsy gondolier, who stood there, waiting for you."

“ Yes,” Nellie admitted with a smile. “ We had planned an excursion that day for Trieste, and came very near missing the steamer, notwithstanding our hasty and undignified retreat. And so I missed the sight of the Bridge of Sighs, and of more than half of the wonderful things marked down in our guide book as being crowded together there.”

“ And, Doctor,” put in Leslie, who had been attracted by the laughter, and had heard the latter part of the conversation, “ we might as well have given up that trip to Trieste, for all the pleasure or profit we had of it.”

“ Why?” queried the doctor. “ Was it so dreary an affair?”

“ Stupid,” said Leslie. “ If I had not, fortunately, had the copy of your ‘ Epigrammatic Voyage ’ with me, which you had so kindly placed at my disposal, I don’t know how I should have passed the time. And Sis, here, fared not much better.”

“ And so you had a stupid time of it with my ‘ Epigrammatic Voyage,’ did you?” asked the doctor, with a grin.

“ On the contrary,” said Leslie, “ I got so interested in trying to find out what your verses meant, that I forgot the dullness of the company.”

“ Not on the homœopathic principle, I hope?” And after another peal of laughter the doctor added: “ So my epigrams were conundrums to you, were they?”

“ That is what you meant them for, did you not?” asked Leslie in his turn, with a quizzical look at the doctor.

“ Why — what makes you think that I meant the epigrams for conundrums?”

“ Because you say, or rather you have one of the epigrams to say:

‘ Voyager, I cannot say I am modest, because I am modest;
If I could tell what I am, thou wouldst love me no more.’

This epigram cannot tell what it is, for fear of becoming prosaically plain; therefore the reader must guess. That is your purpose, is it not?”

A renewed burst of laughter was all the answer Leslie got. Then, turning to Miss May, he asked her, whether she, too, had taken a hand at riddle-guessing.

“I like your closing verses best,” the young lady replied, “and they are not riddles. At least to me they are word-paintings that tell their story very eloquently.”

Doctor Taylor regarded the fair speaker with a pleased and eager face. “Word-paintings?” he repeated. “What do you mean? What did the picture say to you?”

“It seemed to open up before me a mythological landscape, crowded with temples and statues of gods and goddesses taking on Homeric life. The columns of the temples dance, like a chorus of dazzling Greek maidens, beckoning the wanderer from the other side of the world to enter and behold the Goddess, combining with the wisdom of age the beauty of youth, filling the heart of her worshipers with classic joy.”

“Go on!” the doctor cried, as the lady paused.

She continued: “The picture brought to mind the delightful talks you had given us on the construction and meaning of great art works, so that I enjoyed over again the pleasure of your company, almost as if you had been personally present.”

The doctor’s eager, hungry eyes, fixed in a keen gaze on the lovely face before him, said, more emphatically than the words he had just spoken, that he longed for her to “go on.” But Nellie had caught a glimpse of Pauline, out in the garden all by herself, and obeyed a sudden impulse to join her. Offering a brief apology, she left him; and as she glided out of the room, his gaze followed her with a wistfulness that even the Greek maidens of his own Epigrammatic Voyage would hardly have called forth.

The early frosts of October had ruthlessly stripped the garden of its softer floral wealth, leaving only the hardiest autumn blossoms to brighten the lovely Indian Summer days that followed. Among these Pauline was busy, cutting what flowers she found, when Nellie approached her.

“Do you propose to get flowers enough out of this garden, at this time of the year, for a presentable nosegay?” she asked, as she watched Pauline’s deft fingers snipping away among the chrysanthemum stalks with a pair of scissors. “I would say, you will find hardly enough flowers for buttonhole bouquets to go round among your gentlemen guests.”

“Oh, yes,” Pauline replied, smiling and blushing at sight of Leslie’s sister. “You underrate the capacity of our garden. There are blossoms enough here, spared by the nipping frost, for several hundred buttonhole bouquets. But my purpose is a little more ambitious. I wish to fill a vase or two with flowers for the table. Will you help me?”

“If you will let me,” said Nellie, with alacrity. “But I have no scissors. Shall I run into the house and get a pair?”

“Take these, if you please, and cut as many chrysanthemums as you may find with long, straight stems. Meanwhile I will try to find some asparagus ferns, if the frost has left any uninjured.”

Nellie, like all her fair sisters, was fond of flowers. When Pauline returned, with quite a handful of the desired ferns, she showed her a formidable collection of perfect blossoms, including, besides the chrysanthemums of various shades of color, salvias of dazzling scarlet, and a few chalcies of deep blue; besides dahlias of exquisite hues, and a number of gaudy lanterns. “What do you say to this?” she exclaimed, holding out her floral treasures for Pauline’s inspection, with a triumphant smile. Where are the vases? Let us fill them out here.”

Pauline turned toward a little pavilion. “In here, if you please. The vases are on the table.”

The filling in of the flowers occupied the girls but a short time. Yet they produced a couple of bouquets, that without too great a stretch of laudation might be designated as works of art. Beautiful, both. Yet so different in construction and effect, as to astonish the young artists themselves, perhaps most of all. That they complimented one another on their

respective successes, was but natural, characteristic, however, was the sincerity with which either ascribed to the other the superior skill. Nellie had chosen the brightest blossoms at her command and combined them with such consummate taste as to produce an exquisite effect in the contrast and harmony of colors. Pauline had paid more attention to the contour of the material employed, building up her floral structure with the eye of an architect rather than that of a painter, pleasing less by brilliance of color than by the grace and symmetry of outline.

“Oh, what an exquisite picture you have composed!” Pauline exclaimed. “If I had not seen you do it, it would be hard for me to believe that so brilliant an effect can be produced with such common flowers. I could not equal its beauty with a hot-house full of exotics at my disposal.”

“Ah, but where in my bouquet is the charm of symmetry, the elegance of pose, if you won't laugh at the expression, of every blade of grass and leaf of fern that makes of yours a *chef-d'œuvre*?” Nellie's face shone in such genuine admiration, as she spoke these words, as to put their sincerity out of doubt. “But, never mind!” she added. “The two together will complement one another, and thus keep each other in countenance, if you put them on the same table. And together they will proclaim the floral wealth of your garden, and the taste of its mistress!”

“And the skill of Miss May!” added Pauline with an answering smile. “Your composition suggests the luxuriance of a bright June morning bathing his blooming treasures in the mellow sunlight of a serene autumn day —”

“Do not, please, cast about for complimentary phrases,” Nellie interrupted her. “They put me in mind of the conventional taffy they expect us to feed on in fashionable society. And I hate shams —”

“Meaning flattery?”

“Meaning flattery, most decidedly!”

“Therein, then, we quite agree,” said Pauline. “The

only trouble is, to detect it; for its insidious charm so easily cheats our judgment. Decius, you know, says of Cæsar

‘ But when I tell him he hates flatterers,
He says he does, being then most flattered.’ ”

“ Then let us drop compliments, and speak rationally, like the good friends we are going to be,” Nellie suggested.

“ With all my heart,” responded Pauline promptly, a flush of pleasure coloring her cheek. “ And since it is the office of a friend to speak the truth, whereat the friend’s friend must not take offense, let me remind you, that it was you that set the example of paying compliments — ”

“ While you, I suppose you want me to believe, spoke the unadorned truth,” Nellie broke in with her silvery laugh. “ Well, for the sake of peace, let us pretend that all we said to one another is true.” She was playfully arranging some of the flowers remaining after filling the vases, into pretty little bunches, as she added: “ Would you mind telling me something of the philosophers we are to meet at table? Doctor Taylor, for instance; do you know him well? ”

Pauline followed the example of her guest in working up the flowers into tiny bouquets. It was not long before a number of the dainty posies lay before the young girls. “ I am very slightly acquainted with Doctor Taylor,” she said; “ but my brother Victor thinks highly of him.”

“ Your brother thinks highly of every one, does he not? ”

Pauline cast a searching glance at her questioner, as if to make sure of her sincerity. “ Of every one that commands his respect,” she answered. “ He entertains a very high opinion of the gentlemen of the Philosophical Society; Mr. Taylor, in particular, he esteems not only as a philosopher, but also as a poet of high power.”

“ Poet! ” Nellie repeated, musing. “ Yes; that must be it. None but a poet could so fascinatingly discourse on subjects that were usually dull and indifferent to me. Why, he held brother Leslie and me spellbound, one day at Venice, explain-

ing to us what art meant. He made me forget and nearly miss an engagement I had that day, and ever since then I thought more highly of art, and of artists."

Pauline regarded Nellie with a shy little glance, as she asked: "Mr. May — I mean your brother — shares your admiration of Mr. Taylor as a poet, does he not?"

"What makes you think so?"

Pauline as she answered, was very busy, taking extraordinary pains about the flowers she was tying, so that she could not look at her companion. "I heard him say something of the kind. He seemed to be much pleased with something the doctor had written, and which he repeated to me."

"That is great news," said Nellie. "I never knew Leslie to take interest in any kind of poetry. At least not in lyric poetry. Was it something in the lyrical line he quoted to you?"

Although Nellie's look and voice betrayed no interest save that of innocent curiosity, still the delicate pink on Pauline's cheek deepened perceptibly as she made answer: "I cannot tell exactly. Perhaps it was didactic. It was in praise of modesty."

"Ah! in praise of modesty!" Nellie repeated with perfectly sober mien. "Yes; it must have been didactic, if brother Leslie took enough interest in it to remember it. It must have been one of the epigrams that he admires as conundrums."

Pauline, still concentrating her attention on the posy she was so assiduously at work on, said nothing. After a brief pause, Nellie went on:

"So this is all that you know about Doctor Taylor? — Well, who is that benevolent looking gentleman that wears blue glasses? He was introduced to me as Professor Something — I have forgotten his name —"

"Rauhenfels?" Pauline suggested. "But he does not wear glasses."

"No!" was Nellie's prompt response. "Nor is benevolence a salient feature of his physiognomy. I shall never for-

get the expression of his face when he was introduced to me. It was that of a hawk on the lookout for prey."

Pauline smiled. "You are severe," she said. "There is, it must be granted, something eagle-like in his face, when seen in profile; but when, particularly under excitement over some pernicious error, or public wrong, he utters withering sarcasms and fierce denunciations in his powerful, deep voice, he puts me in mind of an ancient Hebrew seer proclaiming the divine wrath of Jehovah."

"Ah, Pauline, I suspect that you, like your brother Victor, are given to idealizing people. He is of a lively imagination, and seizes upon and exaggerates all the plausible traits he finds or invents — charitably ignoring even grave defects — in those with whom he comes in contact. But the gentleman about whom I am asking you — ah, now I remember, Professor Altrue is what they call him — has a round, fair face, a massive forehead, and a mouth of almost feminine sweetness. I did not catch the color of his eyes behind his glasses, but they must be blue, to harmonize with the expression of kind-heartedness and intelligence beaming from his countenance."

"O, of course, I know Professor Altrue," said Pauline, looking up as if interested. "They mostly call him Domine, or, in a playful way, Doctor Domine. Because," she added, in answer to a questioning look of Nellie, "he is looked up to as a great authority on pedagogy."

"A schoolmaster, is he?"

"Well, yes, you may call him a schoolmaster. He was once the principal of a grammar school; but now is at the head of the school system of our city. Professor Rauhenfels says that he has a national reputation as an organizer, and has secured for our public schools the fame of being the best organized in the United States. He is very proud of the Domine, as being one of the very few of his disciples that has really mastered Hegel's logic — whatever that means."

"Disciples, did you say? Is Professor Rauhenfels also a schoolmaster?"

“In a sense, yes. He is the leader of what my brother calls the Philosophical Class.”

“And is your brother a philosopher too?”

“Only a most devoted disciple,” said Pauline, smiling. “And he is thoroughly convinced that there is not a pro-founder thinker in all the State, than Professor Rauhenfels, or a more competent teacher.”

“Cease to laud this paragon of wisdom in my presence, or I shall hate him!” said Nellie, frowning. “Indeed, I hate him as it is.”

“How can you hate one of whom you know little or nothing?” Pauline asked, looking a little surprised.

“It is a woman’s privilege, don’t you know, to love and hate without reason or rhyme,” Nellie answered, smiling, as if she enjoyed Pauline’s wonderment at such levity. “But I may know more about this Rauhenfels than you imagine. Never mind now. — That fine looking young man, Mr. Auf dem Busch Junior, — he is your cousin, is he not?”

“A very distant cousin, so far as blood relationship goes.”

“So far as blood relationship goes, — I see,” remarked Nellie, with a meaning smile that embarrassed Pauline. “Is he a philosopher, too?”

“Not of the Hegelian kind, at least,” smiling. “He sympathizes with you in hating Professor Rauhenfels, whom he calls a Mephistopheles.”

“How came he to call him Mephistopheles?”

“Oh, brother Victor, one day, remarked of the philosophy class, that some of its members reminded him of the Olympian Gods, ascribing to the Domine the attributes of blue-eyed Athene, to Doctor Taylor those of the song-dispensing, sun-light-shedding Apollo, and to Professor Rauhenfels the majesty of thunder-voiced Jupiter, when cousin Woldemar interrupted him, saying that he was cheating the devil of his due, for that Rauhenfels was as complete a Mephistopheles as Göthe had in mind when he wrote his Faust.”

“Good for your cousin!” said Nellie. “He shall have



“ But what are we going to do with these bouquets? ”

one of my finest posies for that. Mephisto! That describes him better than hawk!"

"But it is time that I should be thinking of the table," said Pauline. "Would you mind carrying one of the vases?"

"With the greatest pleasure. But what are we going to do with these bouquets?"

"They are to be utilized in giving the table a cheerful appearance. Each one of the guests is to have one tucked in his napkin."

"Here is a little beauty that I mean to pin on your uncle's coat-lapel," said Nellie. "I owe him an acknowledgment for his courtesy in letting me drive his glorious team."

"That will please him greatly," Pauline remarked. "You must have made a very favorable impression on him, if he intrusted you with the reins while he was by."

"And one for your cousin — Woldemar, is it? What a fine name! — for the smart thing he said of Rauhensfels. And your brother Victor shall have one, for old acquaintance' sake. I am quite sure that he will be proud to wear a flower that I gave him, don't you think?"

"But if you thus decorate the gentlemen of the house, it will be a slight to our guests, unless we remember them the same way."

"Well, you may honor my father if you will," said Nellie, smiling pleasantly. "And if Leslie has behaved properly, you may put one in his buttonhole. As to the philosophers, we will go sneaks in supplying them with floral favors. It looks as if there were enough to go round."



PHILOSOPHERS AT TEA.

THE meal passed off pleasantly. The distribution, by the young ladies, of the pretty posies, had put the gentlemen in good humor, and started the conversation in merry mood. Like a babbling brooklet the stream of talk flowed on, — smoothly now, now breaking into purling ripples of sparkling repartee; not deep, but gliding briskly over the well-worn pebbles of generalities, moving over such topics as elicited from each guest some pleasant remark. Doctor Taylor, for instance, said something pretty about the affinity between the bloom of flowers and the bloom of the maidens dispensing them; Professor Rauhenfels indulged in some punning on the names of May and Waldhorst, which latter he explained as meaning a nest in the forest; he was in turn corrected by Professor Altrue, who asserted that the word “horst” meant not a nest, but the place where birds of prey build their nests, the exact equivalent of our “aerie,” or, as the word is spelled in our editions of Shakespear, “eyry.” Then Woldemar Auf dem Busch had his fling at Professor Rauhenfels, wherein he was seconded by Miss May, who said some sharp things about German names, but was glad, in the end, that the professor’s barbed shafts of cutting retort were aimed rather at the young merchant than at her. Pauline spoke but little. By a judicious remark, now and then, she suggested a pleasant subject, upon which others dilated. Colonel May noted, with silent approval, the unpretending efficiency with which she assisted the hostess. Both he and Mrs. May were highly amused by the curious English in which Auf dem Busch Senior served up the few remarks in which he indulged, — furnishing to the lady proof indubitable of the correctness of her estimate of his low origin.

But a remark made by the host himself presently turned the conversation into a deeper channel. "Go you straightway home from here with your madam and daughter," he inquired, "or go you first to the State capital?"

"Our route home passes very closely by the capital, so that we shall not lose much time by a visit there," was the colonel's answer. "I shall be detained a few days in the city; but then we shall start for home. If we find it necessary on reaching the capital, we shall remain there until the convening of the General Assembly. Otherwise I may take the ladies home first, and then return to the capital."

"But you will let me stay in the capital, papa?" said Miss May, in a tone that was at once precatory and confident. "I have never attended at a governor's reception yet, and this is too good an opportunity to be neglected." Then, with a sly look at Victor, she added: "And I wish to have a dance with the Honorable Victor Waldhorst at the governor's reception."

"May I take you at your word, Miss Nellie?" said Victor, flushing deeply.

"Of course, Miss May will be at the governor's reception," Professor Rauhenfels spoke up. "I take it for granted, that you wish to be elected to the United States Senate, Colonel May; and even if it should not be your wish, you owe it to these gentlemen here, most of whom have been pretty active in your behalf, to make the best race you know how. And if you do not suspect it yourself, these gentlemen here—Mr. Waldhorst not excepted—are satisfied, that Miss May's presence at the capital next week will put your election out of doubt, whatever your chances otherwise may be."

"The professor has right, like always," Mr. Auf dem Busch Senior proclaimed. "If the colonel is prudent, then Miss May shall be in the capital. The colonel's election is may be sure; but double-stitched holds better."

"*Apropos* of the election," said Woldemar, thereby cutting off whatever reply might have been intended to Miss May's

suggestion, "is the outlook quite so clear as the present company seem to wish? To me it seems, that Lincoln's election has so complicated the slavery question, that political combinations are uncertain."

"One thing, however, *is* certain," the colonel observed, amid profound silence of the others. "If this Union is to be preserved, as I devoutly hope and trust it shall be, it will be upon condition that one-half of the people shall not be robbed of their property by the other half."

"Robbed?" said Woldemar. "Is not that a stronger term than you meant to use?"

"It is not too strong a term!" Victor almost shouted in his eagerness. "It is just the right term. If a lot of pharisaical hypocrites should demand of you to turn loose your horses and cattle, because they are God's creatures as well as you, — would you do it? And if you were made to do it by force, would not that be robbery?"

"Horses and cattle are not human beings," said Woldemar confidently. "Nor is it proposed, so far as I understand, to liberate the slaves by force, or at all."

"Call it liberation or not as you please," said Leslie May. "You deprive us of our property, if you interfere with us in its use. And mark me, sir, the South will not tamely submit to such monstrous spoliation, as the abolition of slavery would involve. If it be attempted under color of law, it will be such law as the highwayman imposes upon his victim, with the knife at his throat."

"The South will never yield to force!" Nellie added, with flashing eyes. "If it comes to that, the Yankees will find that two can play at the game. I hope — no, I don't hope for war. But if war ever comes, let the Yankees beware!"

"Peace, children!" the colonel demanded. "You talk as though it were proposed to fight. The danger does not lie there. There will be no fighting; but there may be disruption of the country. It is very clear, that if the abolitionists carry out their fanatical program, the constitution will be violated —

broken, in fact, — and what will there be then to hold the country together? ”

“ There will be a new constitution,” Doctor Taylor now spoke. “ Our present constitution seems too narrow for the vigorous people to which we have grown. Our nation has been expanding in every direction, — in territorial extent, in population, in power and wealth, and, — may I add? — in moral tone. But our constitution which fitted us very well just after the Revolution, is now the same as it was then. Fixed and rigid in its inflexible written form, it could not, like for instance the British constitution, grow with the growth of the nation — ”

“ You forget, sir, the chief characteristics of the American constitution,” the colonel threw in, “ which is precisely the quality that your statement denies it, — its capacity to conform to the changing views and needs of the people.”

“ By means of constitutional amendments, do you mean, sir? ”

“ Exactly.”

“ But if what I say is true, — if the growth of the constitution has not kept pace with the growth of the people, then its amendability has been of little avail, so far. Nor is the prospect promising, that the slavery quarrel will be settled by that means. Your son has just now stated, — and I believe that he fairly voices the Southern sentiment in this particular — that the South will *not* submit to what he calls — justly, let us admit — being robbed of their slaves. Mr. Auf dem Busch — the young man, I mean — inclines to the view that the abolition of slavery is demanded by public opinion, at least by a sufficient majority of the people to put it into the shape of a law. Thus you will have a breach of the constitution: for interference with the right of slaveholders in the States, in any manner other than by an amendment of the constitution, is, I take it, indubitably a breach of that instrument.”

“ I beg that you will not misunderstand my statement,” young Auf dem Busch protested. “ I distinctly disavow any

intention that Congress shall interfere with slavery in the States. I simply desire that it shall be confined to the States in which it now exists."

"Well," said Victor, rather warmly, "do you not intend thereby to eventually exterminate slavery? For, whether you confess it or not, is it not perfectly evident, that your policy will prevent any new slave State from being added to the Union? And do you not thereby deprive those States, whose interest requires the recognition of slavery, of their due share of influence in the councils of the nation? And will not that lead to the abolition of slavery as inevitably as direct abolition would?"

"It strikes me that my young friend has fairly and accurately stated the case," Colonel May remarked. "Whether it be the conscious policy of the free soil party to enhance the prosperity of one section of the country at the cost of the ruin and beggary of the prosperous citizens of the other, or not, — that is certainly the prospect before us, if Lincoln should side with the radical wing of the party that elected him. I am happy to say, that I do not believe he will."

"There is an element of profound truth in what our friend, Doctor Taylor, has suggested, that deserves, I believe, closer attention."

It was Professor Altrue that spoke, in a low, melodious voice, that, however, made itself distinctly heard. "He has pointed out the impossibility that a written constitution should accurately or truly represent the consciousness of a nation. Sir, I dare say, that if you will abstract from the political bearing of the question, you will readily see that this constitution, which you, very properly, so strongly defend as the safeguard of your rights, does not reflect the conviction which you yourself entertain on the morality of slavery."

"Whether I see this or not, you will readily grant me," said the colonel, "that an individual cannot be permitted to set up his own opinion as the standard of right and wrong."

“Clearly not for others,” Professor Altrue assented. “Else no one’s rights could be protected—”

“Then,” the colonel interrupted, “let me say, that the constitution is good enough for me, and that I do not propose to sit in judgment on its morality.”

“That is a thing that you cannot help doing, sir,” said the Domine amid the breathless attention of the others. “For while your own opinion has no binding force for others, it is the voice of God to yourself, and this very constitution that you set up as your standard demands of you that you judge it by that divine criterion.”

“Why must I judge it at all?”

“By judging I do not mean, necessarily condemning. But you do decide (for yourself, and so far as your influence goes) whether the constitution adequately performs its functions. The humblest citizen does this every time he performs his duty at the polls: how much more yourself, who are called on, as an illustrious statesman, to guide the ship of State. You certainly know it to be your duty to actively assist in amending the constitution so as to purify it from any defect that has become apparent to you. Is not that a judgment against its adequacy? Or you may oppose any suggested amendment, or simply remain inactive. Is not that a judgment in its favor? In this way every human being that owes allegiance to our government continually passes judgment on the sufficiency of the constitution.”

“And in doing so,” Doctor Taylor interjected, “they have no higher criterion than their conscience.”

“Precisely,” the Domine assented. “Now, what I wished to comment on is, as Doctor Taylor happily pointed out, the necessarily unequal development of the people and their constitution. Grant that a law, when enacted, represents the clear judgment of a majority of the people. That is the theory upon which we recognize its binding validity. To-morrow, changing circumstances, or it might be, the riper judgment of the people, may have changed the views of some of them, so that

the law no longer represents the opinion of the majority. Such changes are of daily occurrence; and it is obvious, that until such law can be amended or repealed, there is a tension between the will of the people and the law which, theoretically, expresses it. Ordinarily, such amendment or repeal follows as soon as this tension has made itself felt by the majority. But how, when the amendment requires more than a majority? Such substantially unanimous concurrence of opinion, for instance, as is conditioned by a majority of two-thirds of each House of Congress, to be ratified by a majority of every one of three-fourths of the State legislatures? It is evident, that a determined minority — it may be of less than one-tenth of the people — may defeat the will of the other nine-tenths, provided that they constitute the majority in one more than one-fourth of the States, though they be of the smallest. If the majority, then, is as determined as the minority, the tension will become so great, that a rupture, such as is dreaded by Colonel May, would not be surprising; nor, as Doctor Taylor suggests, that a new constitution — even several new constitutions — should result, if the old one, instead of being amended, should be fractured by the tension.”

“Which may God hinder!” the old merchant exclaimed. “Professor Rauhenfels, you have said us nothing over this point. We might hear an opinion of you.”

“Why do you want another opinion?” the professor responded, looking around at all the company, and then addressing the host with an amiable face. “Opinions are cheap, and worth about what they cost. Every man has, or ought to have, one of his own, worth more to him, probably, than to any one else. Does any one expect to change his opinion on hearing some one else’s? I can give a shrewd guess, that Colonel May still wishes to preserve the Union, slavery and all, although he may not be able to refute the argument of Doctor Taylor that it is superannuated and needs overhauling; or the reasoning of our friend, the Domine, that written constitutions are like a tightly fitting garment on a fast growing

youth, that must presently be rent asunder, unless replaced by one of ampler dimensions. And so, I suspect, our young friend Auf dem Busch will still insist that it is the duty of a Christian government to abolish slavery, although Mr. Waldhorst indignantly proves this to be highway-robbery, and young Mr. May shows us that if it is done, it must be done by sheer force, the which Miss May is equally sure, will be met with like force."

"But will you not favor us with your views on the subject?" Colonel May inquired. "I will confess that I am very eager to hear from you, after what Leslie has written and spoken to me of your part in the election."

"Do, Professor," said the Domine. "I am sure the whole company are anxious to hear your views."

There was general assent to this statement.

"My views as to what?" said the professor. "Do you wish to know, why I am in favor of Colonel May for the United States Senate? I will tell you: Because, by his course in Congress, he has given ample proof of his devotion to the American principle, — which demands Liberty through Law, and Law in Liberty. He knows, that there can be no liberty without law, and therefore demands the strict and literal compliance with our written constitution, as the only safeguard of our rights. And yet I agree with the Domine and Doctor Taylor, that a written constitution does not grow with the body politic, like the bark of a tree, which expands as the tree grows. But I see just in the tension which these gentlemen emphasize, as a possible consequence of the fluctuation, in public sentiment, the Magna Charta of individual liberty, — since it operates as a check upon the caprice of the people. For no tyranny is more oppressive and galling than the despotism of unbridled majorities. Colonel May recognizes in the conservative element of our government the sheet-anchor of Freedom and Right. So do I. He has evaded the question put to him by the Domine, as to his view on the morality of slavery: I care not what it is; under the present condition of

things it is of far greater importance to humanity, — to the cause of freedom — that our government remain intact, than that the normal condition of the slaves be changed. As Doctor Taylor once neatly expressed it, —

· 'Tis not the outward bond that makes the slave, —
But the base craven thought within the man.'

Slaves are such upon their own compliance. No freeman, loving liberty above life or ease, was ever yet made a slave. To the slave, then, manumission is of no benefit. The vice of slavery consists in its degradation to the master, because slavery is incompatible with his own freedom. Its recognition in the constitution is a monstrous contradiction of the principle of our government, and of the solemn declaration upon which we achieved independence. In depriving a human being of his liberty (for though this cannot be done with the slave's consent, neither can it be done without the master's act) he destroys the divine quality wherein man is the image of God. This is the sin that will bring upon us retributive punishment as surely as effect follows cause. But the forcible abolition of slavery would be no remedy: It would be a new crime. Not only sinning against the constitutional rights of the slave-owner, but adding the base perfidy of violating our own solemn covenant. Colonel May, whether abhorring slavery or not, abhors the treachery involved of robbing the South of the property solemnly guaranteed to them by the constitution. To this extent he truly represents my political conviction."

"It is your conviction, then, that slavery cannot be abolished under the constitution?" This question was put by Victor.

"Only by the spontaneous co-operation of the States," the professor answered, with impressive emphasis.

"So!" said Woldemar Auf dem Busch, a perceptible touch of sneering sarcasm in voice and mien. "That means, that under the constitution human freedom is at a discount, — good

only for one class, wicked in another. How glorious the 'land of the free, and the home of the brave!' "

"That means," the professor repeated, closely imitating the young man's sneering voice and manner, "that in this 'land of the free and home of the brave' neither covert theft nor open robbery are reckoned, as yet, among the virtues to be cultivated." Then, laying down his knife and fork, and fixing his opponent with a look of fierce contempt, he added, his voice pitched to the deepest bass, the impassioned earnestness of which impressed his audience with the solemn gravity of the subject: "Sir, you have probably studied Mrs. Stowe's 'Uncle Tom's Cabin,' and learned from her soul-stirring pictures of Life among the Lowly how easily Eva St. Clair would have settled this question that is agitating the country. Romantic sentiment makes short work of problems, such as these, that sorely try the wit of the anxious statesmen, philanthropists and philosophers. It is so easy to follow the dictates of the heart if you can only stifle the skeptical protests of the head, — most easy to those who are least oppressed with brains. What a glorious task is that of the poet, or even of a poetess, or one who is reckoned so, to divide mankind into two classes, — the wicked, who, like Shylock, stand on their bond, in this case the constitution, and the pious, the good, who insist that their neighbors shall liberate their slaves, constitution or no constitution — taking the latter to the place where little Eva and Uncle Tom are supposed to have gone, while providing for the former a warmer reception elsewhere. Is this, sir, what your wisdom comes to? Out upon such hypocritical cant! Such nursery-room morality, such St. Crispin virtue! You will not solve the eternal conflict between conscience and law by imposing your conscience as law upon others. Liberate your slaves, if you have any, and appease *your* conscience; but let your neighbor liberate or keep his, as *his* conscience may demand. That, sir, is the law of the land. Let no one violate it, pleading a higher law of God. Be warned by the fate of Antigone: She obeyed what she felt to be the law

written in her breast by the gods themselves in preference to the king's decree, and perished, because Institutions are valid, though individuals deem them cruel or absurd. So shall they perish, who lay sacrilegious hands on the constitution, come they from the North, or come they from the South! ”



"THE DEMOS KRATEO PRINCIPLE."

LESLIE MAY did not share the confidence of his father and sister in Victor's loyal adherence to the colonel's cause. The speech of Professor Rauhenfels had confirmed him in the conviction, that neither the professor, nor Victor, nor any of their friends, would ever co-operate with avowed secessionists. He himself thought secession to be as efficient a plan as the South could adopt for the furtherance of its own interests, and accordingly believed so much more readily than did his father, that the threats in which the slaveholding States were indulging, would be carried into execution. That in case of actual disruption his father would not be able to retain his seat in the Senate did not trouble his mind, nor in any wise abate his strong desire for his father's election; for not only would his influence in such case be highly valuable in securing favorable terms of separation, but Leslie reflected, his father's claim to preferment in the new government would be proportioned to the height of the place he gave up in the old. Who could surmise, what distinction was not in store for a patriotic Southerner, who threw up a United States senatorship to serve the South? — On the other hand he was well pleased to note the zeal of Victor in vindicating the constitutional rights of the South. And he noted with equal satisfaction that his sister had taken a decided liking to Pauline Waldhorst, and that she had adopted just the most effectual course in her behavior toward the Auf dem Busch family.

The political exposition of Professor Rauhenfels had taken a load off of Victor's mind. His duty now lay plainly before him: Obedience to the law of the land, unswerving fealty

to the constitution, whatever might be his conviction as to its morality from the standpoint of his private conscience. How happy the coincidence of duty with inclination! He was now in perfect accord with the Mays, — the father, the son, and — how his heart leaped to think it! — the daughter. Nellie had been very gracious to him at his uncle's house. She had given him a bouquet with a smile that was brighter than the flowers, and had begged him to accept her gift — for old acquaintance' sake. A firm friendship seemed forming between her and his sister Pauline. And beside all this, he was to meet her at the capital, under circumstances enabling him to approach her more nearly upon her own social level. She had promised him her first dance at the governor's reception; and Victor gratefully remembered the persistency with which his sister had coaxed him to take dancing lessons during the preceding winter. No wonder, then, that he revelled in blissful anticipation of the moments when, while guiding her through the mazes of the waltz, it would be his precious privilege to hold her hand, to hold within his arm that divine form, — forgetting in his rapture all about Ralph Payton!

* * *

The meeting of the General Assembly required the presence of Victor Waldhorst at the State capital. He met there a motley crowd of all sorts of people: Not to mention the members of the legislature, of both houses, there were aspirants for the United States Senate, their agents, friends and understrappers. Candidates for the various clerkships in either House of the Assembly, their friends and backers. Applicants for smaller places, such as door-keepers, sergeants-at-arms, folders, pages, and what not. Mr. Becker was there, to Victor's disgust, who had vainly hoped to keep him at home by representing to him the necessity of looking after the interests of the *Beobachter* during the absence of its regular editor. But Mr. Becker was convinced that the paper would be best subserved by securing the appointment as State printer, and his chances for this would be improved by his own presence at the capital,

with his friends, to explain to the members how the welfare of the State would be greatly enhanced by his appointment. Numerous other patriots were there, ready to serve the country by accepting place in whatever capacity they should be called on. Disinterested statesmen, also, in great numbers, ready to lighten the labors of the members in the arduous task of law-making, having brought with them carpet-bags full of bills ready drafted, — embryonic laws for the advantage and profit of scheming adventurers, corporations, rings and syndicates. Men among these lobbyists of highest ability, whose services commanded a higher price than the State could afford, or was willing to pay its officers without indirection: Plausible men, skilled in the use of logic, enabling them to convince skeptical legislators of the wisdom of measures of hidden import; orators of rhetorical powers to persuade the superficial and enthuse the emotional; of honeyed phrases to entrap the vain and conceited with gross or covert flattery. Others, too — of smaller calibre, yet able, on occasion, to eke out an argument with glittering sophisms, for want of solid reasons; smaller fry of smaller pretensions (to be had, therefore, at smaller price) who retailed the pettifoggers' and shysters' tricks, — not afraid to lie, or if need were, — to swear to a lie, in the real or imaginary interest of those who paid them. Not to forget those, who were enabled to reinforce their eloquence by bribes in the most varied shapes, — seductive smiles of wily Cyprians, dispensing favors at the beck of those fishing for big game, whose plethoric purses allow them the use of such costly bait; promises of preferment, influence, patronage; by the furthering of schemes known to constitute a member's hobby, or supposed to be so; and the more simple, but a little hazardous expedient of direct payment of money, in sums proportioned to the virtue of the members to be bribed, or the magnitude of the job to be accomplished. Thus the population of the town was swelled by a numerous lobby, termed, in legislative slang, the Third House, — more potent, probably, than either of the legitimate houses, for effective legislation in special directions.

Professor Ranhenfels was there. Much to the surprise of Victor; for the professor had never even hinted an intention to visit the capital. It was a surprise too, that he lodged in the house that Colonel May had selected for his headquarters. Leslie was at some pains to explain to Victor, that this courtesy had been extended to the professor, because he had been disappointed in obtaining suitable accommodations elsewhere. But greater, far, than his surprise, was Victor's delight over the professor's presence in the capital; for he anticipated valuable assistance from him in the discharge of his legislative duties, and Leslie had informed him that he would remain until the senatorial election was over.

Less unexpected but all the more unwelcome was the presence of Ralph Payton. To be sure, they had not offered him lodgings at the colonel's headquarters, as they had done for the professor; but Victor doubted not but that, as the colonel's successor in Congress he would be expected to be very active in the colonel's canvass for the Senate, which would necessarily require him to spend much of his time in the company of Colonel May and his family. He knew, too, that Nellie was quite as enthusiastic in her father's cause as her brother, and would thus be thrown much in Payton's company. The contemplation of the opportunities that would thus be enjoyed by his rival to press his suit for Nellie's hand embittered his life, and clouded even the brightness of the anticipated enjoyment of the dance that Nellie had promised him at the governor's reception.

It was well for Victor that the opening of the legislative session just then distracted him from the morbid fancies that disturbed his mental equilibrium. His first experience as a legislator impressed him profoundly. The presiding officer happened to be an able parliamentarian, of stately presence and dignified deportment. His voice possessed the rare combination of musical sweetness with resonant power, so that it reached without effort or shrillness, to the remotest parts of the chamber, commanding attention although the members, in

turbulent mood, engaged in noise and confusion. Victor would never forget the thrill of solemnity, — akin to awe — that electrified him on first hearing the speaker address him as one of the representatives of the sovereign people.

To his vivid imagination the speaker appeared the embodied spirit of the State constitution, giving voice to the will of the people in their sovereign majesty, — while he himself, in casting his vote, felt that the people were speaking their will through his mouth. It was a sublime moment to the young legislator.

His glowing enthusiasm was toned down somewhat by the shower of motions that followed the passage of the appropriation bill. It was moved and resolved, that the sergeant-at-arms supply each member, officer and employee of the House with one hundred three-cent postage stamps, and a like number of two-cent stamps, to be paid for out of the contingent fund of the House. Stationery, in liberal quantity, was voted to each member and officer, including clerks of committees and pages. Clerks were allowed to each standing committee, with per diem and mileage equal to that of the members. Quite a breezy debate sprang up on the motion, numerous seconded, to authorize the sergeant-at-arms to order, for the use of each member, during the session, three newspapers (named in the resolution), to be paid for out of the contingent fund. Numerous amendments were offered, substituting the names of other papers. To Victor's disgust, Mr. Becker approached, demanding of him in all seriousness, to suggest the naming of the *Beobachter* as one of the papers to be ordered. Of course, he indignantly refused; but his indignation turned to disgust on hearing a member from one of the interior counties making the same demand for an insignificant little weekly of his county, and a dozen or more similar motions from all sides of the House. Victor wondered whether he was dreaming, or whether the House was taking leave of its senses.

A similar grab-game came off in relation to the governor's message. Motions to print it, "with the accompanying docu-

ments" in fabulous numbers — five thousand, ten, fifteen, twenty, fifty thousand — chased each other in swift succession. Again Mr. Becker approached Victor, suggesting, in energetic whispers, that Victor move the printing of ten thousand copies of the message — or say, since it was just as easy to carry, twenty-five thousand — with the accompanying documents in the German language. "The *Beobachter* will get the printing just as sure as you ask for it," Mr. Becker urged, "and the translation will be a fat job for you, or for some of your friends, if you are too proud to do it yourself." But the obtuse editor failed to see the good thing within his reach, and Mr. Becker's little scheme fell through. And again Victor's sense of honesty, as well as decency, was shocked, by the passage of a resolution authorizing the printing of ten thousand copies of the message and accompanying documents in the German language, by the State Printer; and again he owned to himself that his chief was not far wrong, when, with a reproachful look, he grumbled: "We might have secured that plum to ourselves, if you had only consented."

The inauguration of the governor-elect, which took place in the presence of both branches of the legislature, assembled for this purpose in the hall of the House of Representatives, was witnessed by as many of the temporary and permanent residents of the capital as the spacious chamber could hold. A number of seats, elevated above the level of the floor, so as to command a fair outlook over all the chamber, had been reserved for the ladies, a bright bevy of whom, in elegant costume, were assembling in the lobby, affording, in the bright colors of their robes and gaudy headdresses, a cheerful contrast to the soberly clad visitors of the male sex. Many an eager glance strayed in the direction of their division of the lobby, from the seats of members, — and not exclusively from the rustics representing interior districts. For the capital had turned out an array of beauty challenging the admiration of the most fastidious critics. Victor's eyes, too, were bent in this direction, with a wistful, expectant look. If any one had

watched him at this time, it might have puzzled the observer to account for the swift changes of expression chasing each other over Victor's face. Eager expectancy, vanishing for an instant as Ralph Payton stalked into the chamber, beneath the shadow of sharp disappointment. This cloud passed away as soon as he saw that Payton was alone; a look of pleasant anticipation took its place when Leslie May appeared at the door, changing into an uneasy apprehension as the colonel followed, also alone. But a flash of exultant joy illumined his whole countenance as Nellie entered, escorted by Professor Rauhenfels. She took her seat with quiet dignity and looked about her with the air of a queen graciously accepting the homage that lay in the admiring glances she attracted from all sides. As her eyes encountered those of Victor, she recognized him with a gracious nod and pleasant smile, eliciting from him a vivid blush and answering bow.

The maneuver did not, apparently, escape notice, for his seat-neighbor to the right inquired of him, "Do you know the lady who has just taken her seat in the lobby?"

"I do," Victor answered proudly. "I have known her from her childhood."

"Could you manage to give me an introduction?" asked his neighbor to the left.

"With the greatest pleasure," said Victor, glad to find so convenient an opportunity for conversation with the young lady. "She is the daughter of Colonel May, — one of the candidates, you know, for the United States Senate. She will, no doubt, be highly pleased to make your acquaintance."

"And will you do the like favor for me?" asked the gentleman who had first spoken.

"It will give me great pleasure to do so," said Victor, rising. "If you have no objection, gentlemen, we will call on the young lady at once."

But just as they were about leaving their seats, Professor Rauhenfels stepped up to Victor, saying, with an air of mock

pomposity, "I am commissioned by her ladyship, Miss Eleonora May, to summon you into her presence that you may there give an account of yourself and your doings since your arrival at the capital. And hereof you are in no wise to fail, at your peril."

"It behooves her ladyship's loyal servitor to obey with alacrity," said Victor, playfully imitating the professor's solemn voice. "You will pardon me, gentlemen, for a few moments?" he added, turning to his colleagues. "I will return as soon as her ladyship has granted me absolution for my offense, whatever that may be. But before I go, let me introduce you to my friend, Professor Raubenfels." And after mentioning the names of the two members, he left them together to talk over the topic uppermost, just now, in the minds of most of the members of the legislature, — the senatorial election.

Nellie received Victor with a roguish pout. "Is this the way you treat your friends?" she said, shaking her finger at him. "Here you have been more than two days in the city, and have never called on me. And I really believe that you would not even now have deemed it worth your while to walk the distance from your seat to this lobby, if I had not sent your old master after you with strict injunction to bring you before me, dead or alive." The pout melted into a gracious smile as she shook hands with him and pointed to a seat by her side, which the professor had vacated.

"You see that the professor, who has proved a kind master indeed, had no trouble to fetch me; for here I am, and very much alive at that," said Victor, with beaming face. "But there was no occasion for the embassy; I had already started to pay you my compliments and inquire after your health, when your message reached me."

"Truly? Then I am sorry that I sent away the professor."

"I hope, not sorry, —"

"Coming to think of it, no. You must keep that seat awhile, and point out some of the lions here. Who, for

instance, is that gentleman with whom the professor is talking so busily, and that other one, listening so intently?”

“The three of us occupy adjoining seats in the House,” Victor informed her. “He on the right is Mr. George Washington Colly, of Pulaski; the other, Mr. Lafayette Jackson Morrow, of Newton.”

“Do you know anything about them? Of what party are they?”

“Oh, they are democrats to the core, both of them. Mr. Colly is, so he tells me, a country merchant — ”

“Married?” Nellie interrupted.

“He has not informed me; but I judge that he is single.”

“Where does he room?”

“At the City Hotel — ”

“Where you also put up?”

“Exactly.”

“How is he on the senatorial question? Is he safe for pa?”

“I fear not,” Victor answered soberly. “He is an enthusiastic admirer of our present senator, and I have found it impossible to shake his loyalty to him.”

“So!” mused Nellie, with her eyes on the group engaged in earnest conversation. “The professor seems to hold his attention. And how about the other?”

“I have hopes of gaining over Mr. Morrow,” said Victor; “although he, too, has expressed a decided preference for General Hart.”

“Indeed!” exclaimed Nellie thoughtfully. “Why do you believe, that you can win over Mr. Morrow?”

“Oh, because he is a very fair-minded man, who seems to be feeling his way cautiously,” Victor answered confidently. “I can argue with a man like him; and there is little danger that Colonel May will fail to command the support of any man open to reason.”

“Thank you,” said Nellie, rewarding the young man’s trib-

ute to her father with a gracious smile. "Can you tell me whether either of them came under instructions from their constituents how to vote?"

Victor did not know.

"Then will you be so good," she continued, "to hunt up brother Leslie—he is over there talking to the president of the Senate—and get me the information from him? He has a list of all the counties that have instructed, and for whom. And would you mind stepping up to the professor as you go, and get him to introduce these gentlemen?"

"Pardon me," replied Victor, the "gentlemen both have my promise to introduce them to you. Indeed, the professor interrupted us as I was in the act of bringing them here. May I do so now?"

"By all means," said Nellie, apparently much pleased. "Bring them at once!"

As he was leaving her, she called him back, adding in a whisper, "if they are still here when you return with the information about the instruction, just give it me by a nod or shake of the head."

The introduction was speedily accomplished, and Victor sought out Leslie. When he returned, he found Mr. Colly seated in the chair beside Miss May, rising, however, to make room for Victor, while Mr. Morrow was standing in front of the lady, deep in conversation with her. When Victor appeared, she accosted him with eager face.

"Just imagine, Mr. Waldhorst," she said, excitedly, as if she were communicating the most joyful news, "I have discovered a relative in Mr. Morrow. It turns out that his grandfather was mama's own cousin."

Just then the gavel of the president of the Senate, who was presiding over the joint session together with the speaker of the House of Representatives, called the meeting to order, and Mr. Colly, as well as Mr. Morrow, hurried off to their seats. As they took their leave of Miss May, she said to the latter, in beseeching voice, "Be very sure to call on mama, as soon as

ever you find the time, and do not fail to bring your friend Mr. Colly, with you."

Which Mr. Morrow gladly promised.

The ceremony of the inauguration had begun. The retiring governor had introduced his successor to the audience; the oath of office was administered by the chief justice of the supreme court, and the new governor was delivering his inaugural. Victor, still standing by Nellie's side, was debating with himself whether propriety would permit him to occupy the chair next to hers, when the appearance of Professor Rauhenfels settled the question for him. As he bowed himself away, he heard the professor say to Nellie, that Senator Essex, of Randolph, desired an introduction; to which the young lady nodded a gracious assent.

The governor spoke well. Victor was soon deeply interested in his speech. So, it seemed, was the whole audience; for profound silence prevailed throughout the hall, densely crowded as it was. Victor noted, not without serious misgivings, the defiant attitude assumed by the speaker toward the general government. An involuntary glance toward Nellie and the professor showed him that both of them were also listening with rapt attention, — one of them with evident gratification, the other with knit brow.

At the conclusion of the address, there was clapping of hands, stamping of feet, and rattling of canes, as well as loud shouts of applause, followed by a lively buzzing and humming of voices. Every one seemed to have something to say about the course of action pointed out for the State by the governor's address. Opinions, however, were clearly not unanimous, although the governor's partisans seemed to predominate.

The hammer of the presiding officer fell after the declaration that the meeting was adjourned; but the masses were loth to quit the hall. Victor naturally bent his eyes in the direction of Nellie's seat. He beheld her the center of a numerous group of admirers, of whom some had evidently just been, while others were waiting to be, introduced; for there was

Leslie, talking pleasantly to those about him, and there was Ralph Payton, regarding the young lady, the cynosure of all eyes, with a complacent air of proprietorship. Nellie herself, though her eyes sparkled with animation, was cool and collected, and nodded graciously as Payton presented this, or Leslie that gentleman, having a bright smile and a pleasant word for each. It put Victor, as he was slowly moving toward the group, in mind of a sovereign lady, deigning to accept the homage of her loyal courtiers.

A hush seemed suddenly to have fallen upon them. All eyes turned in the direction from which Victor was approaching. The gentlemen fell back on either side, thus opening an avenue of approach toward the young lady. Looking around for the cause of this commotion, Victor beheld, close behind him, Colonel May, who was walking with deliberate step and proud bearing toward his daughter, accompanied by General Hart, United States senator, candidate for re-election, and thus the rival of Colonel May. Victor had never seen a man of more imposing appearance than Senator Hart. Tall and of magnificent stature, proudly erect in bearing, of majestic, commanding physiognomy, he presented a strong contrast to Colonel May. The first impression of which Victor became conscious, was that of awe, followed by a chilling sense of inferiority, which instinctively put him on his guard, as if apprehensive of tyrannical abuse of the colossal will-power evidenced by that massive forehead. It afforded him quite welcome relief to turn from the icy features of General Hart to the genial face of Colonel May, illumined by the irresistible smile that always warmed Victor's heart on beholding it.

The two gentlemen stood before Miss May.

"My daughter," said the colonel, "General Hart has done you and me the distinguished honor of requesting an introduction. General Hart, my daughter, Eleonora."

The venerable senator bowed with courtly grace. "I am indebted," he said, while taking the chair by Nellie's side, "to my honorable adversary for this act of courtesy. For it



The venerable senator bowed with courtly grace.

is indeed a pleasure to become acquainted with you.” His voice, rich, deep and melodious, possessed a singular fascination. As he spoke, his eyes rested on the bright young face before him with an intensity that deepened the carmine on her cheeks.

“Sir, you are most kind,” she said, “Let me assure you that I, for my part, am deeply impressed with the honor that you are conferring on me — on papa, I mean.”

“Tut, tut! Don’t mention it!” he replied, with gracious condescension. “Your father is an aspirant for the high office now held by me; and on this floor, on which we both appear as candidates soliciting favor at the hands of the representatives of the Demos, we are equals. And you were right in ascribing, as you involuntarily did, to me, the desire of honoring you. For I accord all honor to a daughter who bravely does battle in her father’s cause.”

Again the color deepened on Miss May’s cheeks. But there was a sparkle of mischief in her eyes as she said: “Now, Senator, your gallantry overwhelms me. You surely do not take me for a politician?”

“If I did, young lady, you need not be ashamed — ”

“No,” she interrupted him. “But if I were a politician, I ought to be doing battle in my country’s, not my father’s, cause.”

“Ah, my dear Miss May,” the old senator continued, after another searching glance into her face, “yours is an exalted opinion of politicians. It were well for our beloved country, if they deserved the high compliment which your words imply. For our government is based upon the principle *Demos Krateo*. But they do not. The average politician thinks of country last, and least, if at all.”

“I hope, Senator, that you exaggerate!” exclaimed the young lady.

“I wish I did,” the senator replied: “or that I could truthfully believe I did.” The tinge of sadness with which he had spoken these words, disappeared, as he added, almost

playfully, "But does it not occur to you, that if you believe your father to be in the right, as you surely do —"

"You judge me truly, Senator!" the lady promptly assented. "I surely do."

"—that in serving your father, you are serving your country? For at your age one does not doubt the final triumph of right over wrong." Looking around at the group surrounding them, he continued, "Yes, yes; I suspect that you have been making sad havoc of my prospects for reelection among my younger friends!" with a slight accent on the latter adjective.

"Ah, Senator," came with a frank smile from the young beauty, "I suspect that you permit your proverbial courtesy to my sex to shape your statements, rather than regard for strict accuracy, whereby you would humble me. You overrate both my patriotism and my filial devotion. For—just imagine my indolence—I have not asked one of these gentlemen, though opportunity had offered, to vote for papa, or even against you."

Colonel May chuckled. "You see," he said to General Hart, "what a poor hand she is at electioneering."

But the general shook his head. A faint smile stole into his austere countenance, not distinctly visible as such, but lighting up his features into a pleasing expression. "*Qui s'excuse, s'accuse!*" he said as if in answer to the colonel's remark. Then to the lady: "I did not accuse you of having asked these or any gentlemen to vote for your excellent papa. I dare say that your electioneering is of a much more subtle character, than a mere clumsy, direct begging for votes would be. I could wish, for my sake, that your influence were limited to that. But a glance from your bright eyes, a smile from your ruby lips, are weapons more dangerous to my cause than political harangue or precatory prattle."

"Political harangue," said Nellie, with some animation, "is as distasteful to me, I suppose, as it is to most ladies; and my precatory prattle, as you are pleased to style it, is, I will

vouch, of no greater force than a girl's gossip elsewhere. But I hope, that our Southern statesmen and legislators are made of sterner stuff, than could be moulded by a woman's whim.” Indicating with a sweeping gesture of the hand the group of men around her, she added proudly: “Of all these gentlemen not one, I am sure, would betray his party, or become untrue to his conviction, for my sake, or for the sake of my father.”

“Nor for my sake, let us hope,” added General Hart, the severity of his features relaxing into a pronounced smile, “unless he can do so conscientiously; and for a little strain upon his conscience, I promise him absolution.” Then, the smile fading out of his face, he continued: “You have spoken bravely and well, young lady, and like a consummate politician, though you disclaim being one. But men have before now betrayed party and country, lured on to recklessness by a woman's smile not more fascinating than yours can be. The women of the South are enthusiastic, — their influence greater, perhaps, than that of their brothers and lovers. If ever that terrible scourge of humanity, civil war, engendered by rebellion or secession, should devastate our fair land — which the Almighty in His infinite mercy, may forefend — no small share of the responsibility will fall on the women of the South.”

“And of the glory, if God vindicate the right!” exclaimed Nellie, not defiantly, but as if in self-defense. But the words sent a cold chill to Victor's heart, nevertheless.

The senator bowed, as if he had nothing to say in reply, and rose from his chair. Nellie followed his example. “Colonel,” he said to his competitor, “let me repeat, that I appreciate your courtesy. And you, young lady, will you pardon me any words distasteful to you that I may have spoken?”

“Oh, General, there is nothing to pardon,” she replied promptly.

“Then give me your hand,” he said, extending his own.

“With all my heart,” she responded cordially.

“Nay,” he said, smiling, “if that be still at your disposal, I must leave it for you to bestow upon some more fortunate

mortal." He kept her hand a trifle longer, in his own, than was necessary for the conventional shake of new acquaintances at parting, while she retorted with a gay little laugh :

"Just at present, sir, my heart is wholly in my father's cause, which, as you have taught me, is my country's cause ; wherefore, on your authority, I am a patriot, notwithstanding my Southern nativity."

"And proclivity," the venerable senator added. "I am sure that you mean well, and wish, though I hardly dare hope, that you may think the same of me."

There was a mutual bow, a majestic wave of the hand toward the gentlemen around, and the senator, escorted by Colonel May, walked slowly away.

A buzz of lively conversation arose on the part of those who remained, though Nellie herself was, perhaps, a shade more thoughtful than usual. So at least thought Victor, who was watching her with keen interest. He pondered, uneasily, over the words that had fallen from the lips of the venerable statesman, who was Colonel May's rival for the suffrages of the legislature. Ralph Payton was extravagant in laudation of the keen retorts given by Nellie to the audacious insult of Southern ladies by that "insufferably conceited old senator." But instead of rewarding him for his fulsome compliments, Nellie turned eagerly toward Professor Rauhenfels, who was approaching with Senator Essex, asking him what he thought of Senator Hart.

"He is a grand old man," replied the professor, "to defeat whom will redound greatly to the fame of your father."

"And will he defeat him, do you think?" she asked with an eagerness unusual to her.

"As sure as Colonel May does not defeat himself," was the answer.

THE FIAT OF KING CAUCUS.

THE inauguration ball at the governor's mansion, preceded by the governor's reception, was a swell affair; so the denizens of the capital delighted to boast. Invitations had been issued on a lavish scale; no lady between fifteen and fifty had been overlooked. Few of those so favored failed to avail themselves of the governor's hospitality. A tacit understanding among the people of the capital had grown up to make the sojourn among them of the members of the legislature, most of whom were compelled to remain away from home all winter, as pleasant as possible, by enabling them to become acquainted with the inhabitants, their wives, and daughters. To this end it had grown into a custom to supplement the biennial inauguration reception of newly elected governors with an inauguration ball, and a laudable emulation among the fair ones to favorably impress the guests of the city induced them to adorn themselves with all the finery they owned, or could hire or borrow. So there was on the present occasion, as usual, a brilliant assemblage of beauty and fashion collected in the spacious apartments of the gubernatorial mansion.

Victor's ambitious aspiration had been realized: he was the escort of Nellie May to the reception and ball. It was on his arm that she leaned when her name, along with that of the Honorable Victor Waldhorst, was mentioned to, and repeated by, the governor, with the stereotype phrases of welcome. It was at his side that she promenaded through the various halls and chambers of the mansion that were thrown open on this occasion. It was in her presence that Victor was accosted by numerous gentlemen claiming acquaintance with him. At

every turn, or step almost, some representative or senator nodded to him familiarly and extended his hand for a friendly shake. It was surprising, (most of all to Victor himself), to how many gentlemen he had become known during the brief period of his legislative career. But few of them were known to him personally; but they all had a pleasant way of mentioning their names, and joking him upon his forgetting theirs, by reason of his devotion to his public duties. Gratifying as was this proof of his popularity in presence of Miss May, it became annoying as Victor found that they naturally stopped long enough to make it necessary for him to introduce the lady on his arm. She herself seemed greatly to enjoy these introductions; her face glowed with animation: her lips were wreathed in the most fascinating smiles, and her eyes twinkled with fun and humor, as she replied to the small talk retailed to her by the gentlemen introduced, with bright and witty sayings, ever original, pointed and appropriate. Even Victor, who had always admired her for her gay vivacity, marveled at her inexhaustible fund of sprightliness and humor.

While yet the seemingly endless presentations to the governor and shaking of hands was going on, the fine band, imported for the occasion from the metropolis, struck up a polonaise. Such of the visitors as felt inclined to dance repaired to the great hall used as the ballroom to which as many couples only were admitted as would comfortably fill it. The principal feature of the polonaise consisted of a figure, in which each dancer changed his partner every few seconds, until, every lady having paired off with each gentleman, the original couples were again brought together. At this point, the music glided into one of Strauss' enchanting waltzes, so irresistible to youthful feet in their dance-compelling rhythm. Victor and Nellie stepped into line at once; her right hand naturally slipped into his left, while his right arm encircled her waist. And they were carried away with the gay multitude of waltzing humanity.

Carried away — Victor at least — by the witching strains of music; transported with the joyous consciousness of holding Nellie in his embrace; thrilled with ecstatic delight by the touch of the divinely beautiful form he held close to his heart. Nellie danced like a fairy. Her nimble feet accented the musical rhythm as truly as did the leader's baton, so that Victor found it easy to keep time with her. And thus the two glided gracefully through the gyrations of the waltz, abandoning themselves to the delightful exhilaration of the poesy of motion. Once Victor yielded to the temptation to look into his partner's eyes. When he met hers, she smiled and whispered a compliment to his accomplished dancing. "I did not expect it of you," she added. From any other lips, these words might have annoyed him; coming from Nellie, he took them as gracious recognition, and they would have quickened his pulse and heightened his joy, if that had been possible. And on they tip-toed, — as if soaring through space, scarcely touching the polished floor, — moving, not with conscious volition, but swayed by the rhythmical harmony of the tuneful orchestra. He guided her skillfully through the surging crowd of awkward dancers without colliding; yet he saw nothing but her. The outside world was forgotten. The brilliantly illumined hall, with its festive multitude of gay humanity, had no existence for him, as he floated on, alone with Nellie, literally intoxicated with the bliss of holding Nellie's hand, of holding Nellie herself in his arm.

When the music ceased, Victor's waltz with Nellie had come to an end. All too soon; and Victor surmised, that the daughter of the prominent candidate for the United States Senate would be sought by too many gentlemen, — whether for her own sake, as the "bright particular star" of the evening, or as a compliment to her father — to allow her to accord more than one dance to any one of them. His apprehension in this respect was confirmed as he led the way to the buffet, where he proposed to capture an ice or a sherbet for his partner; they were interecepted by numbers of supplicants for her hand in a

dance, none of whom Miss May felt at liberty to refuse, for each of them was the formidable possessor of a vote at the impending election. But she staggered Victor by whispering softly: "I have never enjoyed a dance so much in all my life. I wish you would find out for me whether there is to be another waltz during the evening; and if so, be sure to take me for your partner. I shall make it a point to reserve the waltz for you."

There was not time to say more; nor did Victor make answer in words: but his eyes spoke a language eloquent enough to assure Nellie that he would waltz with no other partner.

It had been written in the stars, that there should be no more waltzing that night at the governor's mansion. The master of ceremonies turned a deaf ear to Victor's ardent pleading for just one more waltz; he gave it as his conviction, that of fifty persons present hardly one would enjoy a round dance. So Victor had to content himself with living over again in memory the rapturous moments gone by. His exaltation was such that he was in no mood even to quarrel with the master of ceremonies for denying him their repetition. Like the Moor of Venice, he might have sighed

" My soul hath her content so absolute,
That not another comfort like to this
Succeeds in unknown fate."

His joy abated not, though Nellie's smiles thenceforth were lavished all on the politicians, who claimed her society in right of introduction by her father, or brother, or even by Professor Rauhenfels, or himself. Until the time came when the festivities closed, and he claimed his privilege of escorting her home, he feasted his eyes upon her from afar, following her every motion with eager gaze, so far as permissible without attracting attention.

The walk to Nellie's lodging — all too short to permit of much conversation, — afforded him one more copious draught

from the beaker of bliss which the gods themselves might have envied him. Just before taking leave of him, in front of the entrance to her residence, she turned toward him with bright face, saying, in a voice of playful banter, "You have proved a devoted cavalier to me. Will you remember to be my brave and loyal knight to-morrow?"

"To-morrow?"

"Aye! You have not forgotten the grand tournament to come off to-morrow — to-day rather — in the capitol, have you?"

"You mean the caucus!" he exclaimed with animation. "Be assured, Miss Nellie, that no chivalrous knight ever championed lady fair more loyally, than I shall remain true to your colors! Happy I, that in serving my country, I may be serving my friends!"

"Then I shall think of you as my cavalier '*sans peur et sans reproche!*' Good-night!"

"Good-night!" said Victor; and after cordially shaking hands, they parted.

The caucus for the nomination of the candidate upon whom the democrats would unite as their choice for the Senate of the United States turned out a lively gathering of the Democratic members of both houses of the General Assembly. They constituted an overwhelming majority of the legislature in joint session, so that it seemed a hopeless undertaking for the republicans to put up a candidate in opposition. The know-nothings, who had never shown great strength in this State, outside of the large cities, were practically unrepresented. Hence the nomination by the Democratic caucus was looked upon as equivalent to the election; and although there were substantially but two candidates in the field, the friends of both were very zealous, and party feeling ran high.

General Hart possessed an advantage over Colonel May in the prestige arising out of his experience as the Nestor of the Senate; for although Colonel May had served several terms in

the lower house of Congress, and was looked up to as one of its most influential members, the general had represented his State in the Senate ever since its admission into the Union, and was recognized at home as the highly successful champion of its interests in the national legislature. He enjoyed the reputation of being an assiduous worker, studying closely and thoroughly every subject that came before the Senate to prepare himself for the debate thereon and thus acquired powerful influence in that body, which he brought to bear on every question affecting the welfare of his State. And his standing in the Senate naturally gave him great power at home, so that for many years he had substantially dictated the policy of the Democratic party of the State. It would thus appear that his chances of success ought to be much greater than those of Colonel May.

But the very power wielded by General Hart had made him many enemies, and thus became an element of weakness. He was not of a conciliatory disposition, but proud, and overbearing. His egotism, but for his excessive pride, might have passed for self-conceit, and had become proverbial. While the integrity of his character, his sincere devotion to the true interests of the people, and the firmness with which he resisted all encroachments on the inviolability of the constitution secured to him the enthusiastic admiration of the masses, who knew him only as their stout champion in the Senate, — his austerity had estranged many of those with whom he came into closer contact, so that in the course of time a faction had grown up of bitter personal enemies, implacable in their hatred of the great senator.

Colonel May, on the other hand, was a man of great personal magnetism. Though a strict partisan, firm as a rock in his adherence to the policy adopted by his party, yet his ardor never betrayed him into bitterness, or personal offensiveness. Aside from his political conviction and the line of duty conditioned by principle, he knew no party lines; treating all, whether adherents to his own party or opponents, with equal

courtesy and amiable good-nature. He thus attained a degree of popularity utterly lacking in the renown of his more famous rival, which went far to equalize their chances before the caucus.

But there was another element entering into the present political campaign that still more leveled the advantage that personal prestige might have given to the one or the other of the aspirants. Political feeling ran so high in consequence of recent events, that the personality of the candidates dwindled into insignificance before the stirring questions that awaited the action of Congress. The old party lines themselves were becoming obscured by the overshadowing issues springing up between the Federal and the State governments, or rather among the States themselves, as inclining to the one or other of the extreme sectional views. For some of the Southern States, — South Carolina in the lead — had verified their threats of attempting to break loose from the Union. Sympathies among the democrats were greatly divided. The governor of their own State had openly espoused the cause of the seceded States, and urged upon the General Assembly to give aid and comfort to the oppressed South, even if averse to immediate secession. A commissioner from one of the seceded States had demanded a hearing, to lay before the authorities a plan for concert of action against the encroachments of the Federal government on the rights of the sovereign States, and the governor had sent a special message to the General Assembly, urging them to invite the commissioner to address them in joint session. The General Assembly had not yet acted on this message. A premonition of the violence of the storm to be expected on its discussion excited the caucus, in consequence of a resolution moved by a member to pledge the democrats in support of the governor's recommendation, which threw open the whole field of discussion on this agitating subject.

General Hart was known as an uncompromising opponent to any agitation on the subject of slavery, and hence of every

measure resorted to by the South for the protection of its interests in this direction. His followers were, self-evidently, opposed to the course recommended by the governor. Colonel May, although a strict constructionist, resting the rights of the South on the rigid adherence to the constitution, was driven to assume the leadership of the partisans of the extreme Southerners, who, of course, favored the reception of the commissioner. After a stormy debate lasting several hours, the vote resulted in a small majority for the motion, and the caucus adjourned, without transacting any other business, to await the action of the legislature, and the address of the Southern commissioner.

Victor was greatly troubled by the course the caucus had taken. He had not participated in the debate, although he was decidedly averse to the reception of the commissioner by the legislature. He was eager to meet his friend Rauhenfels, to talk over with him the political situation, which, he feared, was beginning to assume a critical aspect, and pondered how he could make him understand the circumstances without violating his implied pledge of secrecy touching the doings of the caucus in secret session. Expecting to find Rauhenfels at the headquarters of Colonel May, he directed his steps thither, but found the door locked. Surprised at this unusual thing, he was about to leave when the door opened and Leslie appeared, welcoming him with a cordiality quite unusual in him. After again locking the door, Leslie conducted him into an inner room, where he found Colonel May and his daughter Nellie, Professor Rauhenfels and Ralph Payton closeted together.

“Your coming is very opportune,” said the colonel, shaking hands with Victor. “I am informed, that you had a lively time of it in the caucus this afternoon, and that you adjourned without doing anything, except to make trouble for the candidates.”

“How trouble for the candidates?” inquired Victor.

“Don’t pretend to be so innocent,” exclaimed Leslie, somewhat brusquely. “No one knows better than you do how the

caucus has complicated matters for father. Or say," he added regarding Victor with an eager searching look, "does it not bother you, that the democrats committed themselves to side with the governor, in this muddle? Because, you know, you voted the other way yourself."

"How do you know I did?" asked Victor sternly.

"Oh, come, Victor!" said Leslie, laughing. "As if I could not swear how you would vote on this question? But aside from that, we are as well posted as you are, on the doings in your secret conclave, although you did have the doors locked. There are keyholes, and windows and transoms, — besides leaky brethren, that are easily pumped. You need not flatter yourself that you kept us in the dark about the transactions of your caucus."

"We are glad that you came," said the colonel, "because our friend, the professor, insists that the action of the caucus has been very unwise, and I for my part would like to hear your view in the matter."

"I can only give you my impression as to the resolution you refer to," said Victor in a low voice, as if desirous to apologize for what that opinion might be. "I deem it in very bad taste. It is not compatible with my view of the dignity of a legislative body to listen to overtures from a foreign State, communicated in an irregular and illegal form. But I do not propose to judge as to its effect upon the candidates."

"In bad taste, do you say?" the colonel repeated reflectively. "Is this the most lenient construction that you can put on that resolution?"

"I should rather inquire of our young friend, whether that is the severest light in which he views it?"

It was Professor Rauhenfels who spoke thus, a sneering expression accompanying his words.

"Yes," said Victor unhesitatingly. "As yet it has done no further harm than to make the Democracy of our State appear in a false position, from which it may, and no doubt will, readily retrieve itself."

“ But how about the candidates ? ” Nellie spoke up. “ How do you think it will affect them ? ”

Victor made answer to Nellie's question ; but in doing so he looked not at her, but at the colonel. “ If the caucus follows up this resolution with one committing the party to secession, or even to a friendly attitude toward the seceded States, it will make the situation critical for them. ”

“ General Hart is opposed to secession, ” said Nellie, “ and if such a resolution receives the sanction of a majority, it will put him in the minority ; and will not that secure papa's nomination ? ”

Again Victor's eyes for a swift moment sought those of Colonel May before he fixed them on the eager face of the maiden. “ Would your father accept the nomination under such circumstances ? ” he asked, betraying as much anxiety as Nellie had shown.

“ What a question ! ” ejaculated Ralph Payton.

“ Why of course ; ” Nellie exclaimed.

But the eyes of all present in the room, including those of Professor Rauhenfels, were riveted on Victor's face, as he said, “ But what, in such case, about his election ? ”

“ The nomination means the election ! ” exclaimed Payton, confidently.

“ Unless there be treason in camp ! ” Leslie added.

“ Don't you think so ? ” the colonel asked quietly. “ Our party is so overwhelmingly in the majority, that its nominee is sure to be elected unless there be very great defection. ”

“ Perhaps that is so, ” said Victor. “ But then the nominee will be committed to the doctrine expressed in the resolution. ”

“ Which is good sound Democratic doctrine ! ” exclaimed Payton elatedly. “ What have you got to say to that ? ”

Again Victor was the cynosure of all eyes, as he replied looking not at Payton but at the colonel, “ That I hope it is a mistake. For if this were Democracy, I fear that I would not be counted a democrat. ”

“Does that mean that you would fly the track if such a resolution were adopted?” asked Leslie, rather warmly.

“Are you going to set yourself up as authority above the caucus, and above the party?” Payton inquired, speaking with a vehemence that imparted a touch of insolence to his voice and manner.

The colonel cast a frowning glance at the forward young man, and then turned to Victor. “I would not like to put it in that way, Mr. Waldhorst,” he said, in a friendly voice, as if desiring to apologize for Payton’s rudeness. “But it is really important for me to know, whether I can count on your support in the caucus for the nomination, and in the legislature for the election, if the party should fall in with the views of the governor. You will therefore pardon our solicitude in this matter, and believe us, that no rudeness is intended.”

“Why, father, it is surely an insult to Mr. Waldhorst to put such a question implying doubt,” said Nellie, with an expression of such perfect truthfulness in her face, that it made Payton wince. “Don’t you know, that you have not a more loyal and staunch supporter in the world, than our old friend Victor?” And with a smile that went straight to Victor’s heart, she added, “Am I right, Mr. Waldhorst?”

“God knows, Miss May, that no one is more keenly alive to the debt of gratitude which I owe to Colonel May, than I am, and that there is no man on earth that commands, in so high a degree, my unwavering confidence, my love, my adoration.”

“Well, I am very proud to know that,” said the colonel, good-naturedly. “But the point is, just now, whether I can count on your vote?”

“He is quite sure of that, is he not, Mr. Waldhorst?” Nellie said, looking at the young man with eager eyes.

The question startled Victor. It had loomed up in his mind, this same question, and paralyzed his very thought, like a hideous monster in a nightmare, driving him to this very place in search of help from his friend Rauhenfels, hoping to be

taught how to answer, or what were even better, how to not answer, this awful question, whether it were possible that he should vote against the wisest, truest, best of men, — his generous benefactor, his boyhood's friend?

As if in response to Victor's unuttered appeal, the professor interposed. "The point of inquiry," said he, speaking in a deep voice that impressed itself upon all within its reach, "would rather seem to be, will Colonel May make it impossible for him to do so, by giving the lie to the record of his past life? A senatorship is no trivial affair. It is important to the nation, in whose council he proposes to lift his voice; important to the individual who is to embody the divided sovereignty of both his State and his nation. And such is the quality of ambition, that it warps men's judgment; — aye, so fiercely burn its fires in minds of towering aspiration, that in the strain to reach one single, shining goal the structure of a lifetime sinks in ashes. Is Colonel May one of these? That, to my view, is the pertinent question. For though you may hide to yourself, for a while, you cannot avoid the issue attendant upon your becoming the candidate of a faction pledged to subvert the government. It will be the passing of the Rubicon that separates the illustrious patriot from the rebel and the — traitor!"

Nellie, stung to the quick by the closing word of the professor, turned upon him with a flush of indignation. "Sir!" she exclaimed, her eyes ablaze with anger, while yet a sneer of contempt curled her proud lips, "you are insolent!"

Leslie looked at Rauhenfels with a frown, but said nothing. Payton, however, assuming a menacing attitude, blustered out, "How dare you, sir, employ such language to Colonel May?"

Rauhenfels turned toward Payton. But if he intended a sharp answer for this young gentleman, it was checked by a deprecating wave of the colonel's hand.

The colonel smiled; a smile, the sadness of which betrayed to Victor that the professor's words had wounded him as

deeply as they had Nellie, but that he forebore to resent the personal attack. "You use a strangely harsh word, my friend," he said, somewhat more calmly than was his customary speech, "and, it seems to me, rather inconsistently. For the legal crime of treason consists, under our constitution, in levying war against the United States, or giving aid and comfort to their enemies. You surely cannot predicate treason, in this sense, of mere friendliness to the South. But if you refer to treason in its general sense, — that of attempting to shake off the yoke of tyrannical government — then the word has no terror for me. I deem it a flattery to be classed with such men as, for instance, signed the Declaration of Independence."

"I would be justified, Colonel May," the professor rejoined, his manner becoming more and more earnest as he proceeded, "to accuse you of quibbling, but for the fact that there has been nothing but quibbling by the politicians, on both sides of the question. Argument has been lost sight of: groundless assertions are in vogue. You, Colonel May, know full well, that secession means war; for no government on earth can idly tolerate its own disruption. And if in that war you are found in arms against your government, you will be a traitor, in the legal, constitutional sense; and no arrogation of the patriotism that has canonized the Fathers of the Revolution will protect you against the punishment due a traitor, — aye, nor even conciliate your conscience. You are attempting to cheat yourself into the belief that it is not dishonorable to be known as a rebel and a traitor to a tyrannical government, or one that you choose to stigmatize as such. Has not the shudder of your daughter at the bare mention of such a possibility, — has not the resentful insolence of this young dandy here, who deems himself called on to champion your honor, as if the mention of that word were a dire insult, taught you in what estimation the traitor is held, even by those who calmly contemplate treason themselves?"

"Speaking for my daughter," the colonel answered, re-

garding Nellie with a sad, yet fond smile, "I would bespeak for her the consideration due to the inexperience of her sex, and, if you please, to the nature, hitherto, of her surroundings. You would make allowance for the feelings of a child that has been, foolishly perhaps, indulged by her parents, and by society, and who is not quick to weigh how much truth there may be in a remark that to her unsophisticated ear is degrading to her father."

"But father," exclaimed Nellie, a vivid blush suffusing her cheek, "I beg of you to remember that I am not a babe! And I think it is for Mr. Rauhenfels to apologize, not for you."

"These are my sentiments exactly!" shouted Mr. Payton. But a frowning glance from Colonel May arrested any further words of approval he might have intended for Miss May.

"My child," he then said, turning to the indignant maiden, "Professor Rauhenfels was right to call our attention to the consequences that may attend my candidacy." Then turning to the professor, he continued, "I myself sincerely trust that your apprehensions are too gloomy. I cannot bring myself to believe that the people of this country are so lost to common sense and to common decency, as to undertake to coerce either South Carolina or any other State to remain in the Union, after the constitution that bound them has been violated. It is not the South, — it is the North that has broken the bond. The seceded States have but technically named what the Federal government had in reality already done. I strongly hope, — I am satisfied, that there will be no war; but if a war comes, it will be provoked by the North, — not by the South."

"There, Colonel May, lies the vice of your position," the professor responded. "I wish I could make you understand how radically wrong you are in your assumption of facts, and how erroneous your deductions if even your premises were correct. It is not true that the North, or what to Southerners is the same, the Federal government, has violated the constitution. As yet, any interference with the constitutional rights of the South, or of the States, is a phantom conjured up by



“ Well, my young friend,” said the colonel to Victor, “ you have not answered my question.”

the excited imagination of hot-headed Southern politicians, who, to use a slang phrase, squeal before they are hurt. What they complain of, and hold out to the Southern people as a deadly injury to their interests, namely, the forcible abolition of slavery, is as yet but the chimerical scheme of a fanatical faction. But do you not see, that secession is the one, — the only possible condition under which these fanatics might bring their project into realization? Reverence for the constitution is, to this day, so deeply rooted in the hearts of the people, both North and South, that they will tolerate no tampering with it, either by Northern or by Southern fanatics. Break it, as secession must do, and slavery is doomed. For it has no hold on the majority of the people, save as it is guaranteed by the constitution. In the war that must follow secession, the forcible emancipation of slaves will be too powerful a weapon against the South to be neglected by the Federal government. There will be nothing, then, to save this fated institution from annihilation; and when once extinct, it will be no more forever, on the North American continent at least. I am thoroughly sure, Colonel, that the immediate abolition of slavery is impossible in this country, unless the way be paved for it by the attempt to destroy the national government.”

“Well, my young friend,” said the colonel to Victor, who had listened to the discussion with the keenest interest, “you have not answered my question. Supposing that the caucus should do this thing, which our friend Rauhenfels is pleased to call treasonable; and supposing, further, that I should be a candidate on a platform friendly to the seceding States, to the extent, let us assume, of pledging the government to non-interference; what would be your attitude toward me in the legislature?”

“On that score you need have no apprehension,” said Leslie, with a keen glance at Victor, who had not been prompt with his answer. “Whatever may be Mr. Waldhorst’s private conviction in this matter, — he is a gentleman, taking pride in the most scrupulous faithfulness to his promises.”

“Yes,” said Nellie, proudly, “Victor has promised to wear my colors in this tournament, and I know him to be a loyal knight. You can depend upon him, at least, although he has not answered your question yet.”

“I would be better satisfied,” Payton threw in, “if he would pledge himself to vote for Colonel May. If he is sincere, he will not object to do so.”

“He is pledged,” Leslie added, still regarding Victor with a searching gaze. “By his honor as a man, — by his fealty as a democrat, — by his loyalty as a citizen. No words of his can add to the sacredness of his obligation.” Turning to Professor Rauhenfels, he said: “You will bear testimony to this.”

Before the professor could answer, Nellie again spoke up. “Why do you speak of testimony?” she said. “I pledge my own word, that Mr. Waldhorst is true to his.”

“Precisely,” came from the professor’s lips. And the deepening of the curves of the corners of his mouth gave warning that he was in no gentle mood. “The young lady no doubt, correctly estimates Mr. Waldhorst’s character for probity and honor. But if she accord to him his due meed of common sense as well, it may dawn upon her mind, as it should suggest itself to the mind of her brother, here, that to enable him to keep his word, Colonel May must keep his also. Waldhorst is pledged, as Mr. May emphasizes, by his honor as a man, by his fealty as a democrat, by his loyalty as a citizen — to what?”

“To vote for Colonel May!” exclaimed Leslie, interrupting the professor.

“To vote for an unflinching Jeffersonian democrat,” shouted the professor, “such as Waldhorst is, such as Colonel May has been up to this time; for an uncompromising champion of the constitution and its strict construction, such as Colonel May has put himself upon the record during his congressional career, — the shining exemplar whom Waldhorst has patterned after; for the aspirant to a seat in the Senate of the *United*

States, who has often taken, and proclaims himself ready again to take, his solemn oath to support the constitution of the *United States*. To this he stands pledged; and like Miss May I would stake my own word, that he is but too eager to redeem his pledge. What a sneaking, cowardly renegade, — what a perfidious, dastardly betrayer of the trust reposed in him would he become, were he to vote, instead, for a recusant apostate, who, if not ready to plunge the knife into the heart of the country that has honored and trusted him, yet stands by, refusing to strike down the patriotic arm uplifted for the blow, and blandly invokes — non-interference! Yes, Miss May, you may rest assured, that Victor Waldhorst's faith is not of the Punie kind, nor of the quibbling sort

‘ That keeps the word of promise to the ear,
But breaks it to the hope.’

He will vote for the true democrat, the loyal citizen, the champion of the constitution for whom he is instructed to vote; but he cannot do that by voting for the nominee of a faction that avows its intention to stand by the enemies of the Union.”

Leslie May, whose face had been reddening during the professor's speech, now turned upon him a look of angry contempt. “What kind of faith would you call that, sir,” he said, with cutting sarcasm, “which permits you to accept my father's invitation and hospitality — ”

“Faith did you say?” the professor interrupted, regarding Leslie with a look of genuine surprise.

“I said,” Leslie went on, “what kind of faith is that, sir, that permits you to accept my father's invitation and hospitality — ”

“And money!” the professor suggested, again interrupting. “Don't be mealy-mouthed about it, if you wish to lay bare my sins, which, I venture to guess, is your object in asking the questions.”

— “And money, since you yourself insist on it,” continued

Leslie, unable to suppress a shadow of annoyance at the interruption, "with the understanding that you would devote your time to assist him in the canvass; and now to do your best in coaxing and frightening away his firmest supporters?"

"You want to know, what kind of faith permits me to do that, do you?" said Professor Rauhenfels, his features brightening into an almost humorous expression. "I will tell you, young man. It is the kind of faith which one gentleman puts in the integrity of another. A kind of faith to which, I hope, you are no stranger. That kind of faith, sir, that would impel an honest man to pull away his friend from the brink of an abyss, even at the risk of being considered officious. In a word, *good* faith in the highest, truest, fullest sense."

"Bosh!" exclaimed Leslie, with perceptible impatience. "You are dodging the question, sir; and treating us to grandiloquent phrases. The point is, how dare you betray the interests of a man who has confided in your honor, and whose money you have taken under promise of furthering his interests?"

"So I did," remarked the professor. "I took his money, and I honestly tried to earn it. Let us see how we stand: Colonel May did me the honor to believe me—at your own suggestion, Mr. May, I have no doubt—capable of doing him some service, valuable enough (in his own estimation, mark!) to justify him in making me the offer to which you allude. Colonel May was, according to my sincere conviction, the best representative that our State could have in the Senate. His political views, under the existing condition of things, were mine. To further his prospects of election was my own desire and duty; I did so without any promise or pay, to the best of my poor ability, as you well know. But I am not rich enough to quit my avocation and follow Colonel May to the capital without compensation. And as your father, and, I strongly suspect, yourself, wished me to be here during the senatorial campaign, I accepted his invitation, his hospitality, and his money, in the interest, I am sure, of the country, as well as of ourselves."

“ But — ” Leslie was about to interrupt, when the professor silenced him by an imperative gesture.

“ But,” he continued, “ Colonel May has to-day intimated that he contemplates a change of his political course. This is a palpable breach of the contract between us. I consider secession as treasonable and wickedly absurd. Neither the price that your father has paid me, nor any price within the power of man to pay, could induce me to advocate the candidacy of a man pledged to such a course. And now, my dear young friend, no more insinuations of bad faith. If there is treachery in the camp, you know where to look for it. If you should ever regain your composure sufficiently to reflect calmly upon the situation of our friend Waldhorst, or even of myself, you will understand, that just now your father has no sincerer, more warmly devoted friend than Waldhorst; and that no service I may have performed for Colonel May in facilitating his campaign (and I am sure, that both he and yourself believe it to be considerable) deserves his gratitude more fully, than would my attempt to hold him back from the plunge he is contemplating, — the leap into the abyss that will make him a moral suicide.”

Whether Rauhenfels had more to say, remains unknown. For Leslie, whose discretion was succumbing to his impatience, interrupted him with angry words, spoken with sneering contempt. “ Keep your advice for such as have patience to listen to it,” he said. “ We did not hire you for a Mentor. Neither are you father’s guardian, whatever may be your authority over that boy yonder, who seems to have surrendered what little of spirit or manhood he ever possessed to his lord and master, whose nod and beck he obeys with the submissiveness of a well-trained spaniel.”

Victor started, as though he had received a heavy blow. But he was not quick at retort, and before he had uttered a word, Colonel May had arisen and was addressing his son with uplifted arm, and in stern and commanding tones demanded peace. Then, turning to both Victor and Rauhenfels he said :

“Far be it from me, to question the right of either of you, gentlemen, to your own opinion, and to determine your own course of action. Claiming the same right for myself, I must be guided by my own judgment. I cannot lift up my hand against my own State. As Decatur spoke of his country, so would I say of my State: May she always be in the right: but my State, right or wrong! Let us drop a discussion that can lead to no result. I am satisfied that my young friend Waldhorst will not give me his vote unless we succeed in defeating the resolution of sympathy with the seceded States. To that end let us now bend our energies.”

“Amen!” said Professor Rauhenfels.

But the fiat went forth from the caucus, and the resolution was adopted by both branches of the General Assembly.



CRUEL CONSCIENCE TRICKING CUPID.

THE caucus resolution had sounded the knell to Victor's dearest hopes. It sunk a chasm between him and the May family which he knew he could not overleap, — a chasm as broad as the decree of Fate, and as deep as his moral conviction. To vote against Colonel May would, he well knew, subject him to Leslie's sneering scorn, and to Nellie's anger and contempt. And the caucus resolution had made it impossible for him to vote for Colonel May.

There were moments when the arch-fiend, taking advantage of his anguish, whispered into his ear, Why not join the dominant faction of the party? And a dazzling light pierced the dismal blackness of his horizon for a brief moment, revealing before him a vision of supreme bliss: Nellie, smiling as she had smiled when last alone with him, when she had called him her brave and loyal knight — holding out, as it seemed to him, her hand, to seize which and claim for his own he need but gratify that other dearest wish of his heart, to serve and vote for the man whom he loved and adored above all others in the world! But like the darkness rendered more intense after a lurid flash of lightning, so the brightness of this vision left him wrapped in deeper gloom, when his manhood reasserted itself, and put the Satanic temptation behind him.

For it must not be. To vote for Colonel May, as pledged by that treasonable caucus resolution, would make a traitor of himself: Traitor to his constituents, to his country, to sacred Truth.

He had burned his bridges behind him. When the caucus had committed itself to the doctrine that the Federal government was powerless under the constitution to prevent its own

disintegration by the secession of the individual States, he had given notice, in moderate, but positive words, that he deemed further participation in the proceedings of the caucus improper, because incompatible with his sense of duty to vote for a man pledged, as its nominee would be, to assist, either actively or passively, in the disruption of the Union.

Victor's statement caused quite an uproar in the caucus. There was no lack of angry protest and warning prophesies of evil to the rash apostate. But amid the din of excited voices, Mr. Lafayette Jackson Morrow, Victor's seat-neighbor in the House, jumped on a chair, and cried, loud enough to secure general attention :

“ Fellow Democrats! All of you who believe, as I do, the real apostates from Democracy to be the majority of this caucus, are invited to meet in the other chamber, to consult as to further steps to vindicate the integrity of the Democratic party in the senatorial election!” Twenty-two members left the chamber at once, in consequence of this invitation, among them Victor; and others followed later; and before even those who remained had finished the business of the caucus by the nomination of Colonel May, as their candidate for the United States Senate, the bolters had organized, passed counter resolutions denouncing secession and expressive of the loyalty of the Democratic party to the Federal government; and had nominated, as their candidate, General Hart.

The contest that ensued in the legislature, among the three candidates and their adherents, was fierce and bitter. The two factions into which the democrats had split, made war on one another quite as stubbornly as on the republicans, their common opponents. These had nominated a candidate as a matter of party organization, and as a protest against the principles represented by the democrats. But after the schism in the Democratic camp this nomination assumed a more practical significance. There was not so much disparity, now, between the republicans and either faction of the democrats. And since it required an absolute majority of all the votes to elect,

the chances for success were about even. And so the balloting proceeded, without result. A second ballot was ordered. Before the roll-call, loud and passionate speeches were indulged in, eulogizing the respective candidates by their supporters, and decrying them by their opponents, without affecting the ballot that followed. Again and again the roll was called; and again and again no result was achieved. The joint session adjourned at a late hour to renew the struggle next day. The deadlock thus reached was the topic of conversation all over the city, and the next joint session was looked for with eager interest; but it brought no change in the situation. So the next, and again the next, — the only difference being in the attendance of the lobby, for the monotony of the unavailing voting began to wear out the patience of even professional politicians.

In this way over one hundred and fifty ballots had been taken, with slight variation in the vote. A few gains for the one or the other of the candidates raised a flutter of hope, now and then, only to give way to disappointment in the result of the next ballot. The lobbies were gradually deserted by the general public. The joint session felt compelled, at last, to make a rule to take but one ballot on each day, so as to gain time to attend to some of the ordinary business of legislation. These daily ballotings were had in a perfunctory manner. Argument had long been abandoned; no one thought of convincing any one else by speech-making. They hurried through the formality of calling the roll and voting, and then adjourned to go through the same routine on the next day.

Professor Rauhenfels had left the capital soon after the consultation at the colonel's headquarters; but the colonel himself and his son and daughter remained, of course; so did Payton. No one of these was ever absent at roll-call in the joint session. Victor had not ventured to visit or speak to any of them; nor had any of them approached him since the professor's departure. But his thoughts were as busy with them as ever. More even than the gloomy outlook in the political horizon did the proximity trouble him into which Miss May

and Ralph Payton were daily thrown by their common interest in the election. Yet he saw nothing in their conduct indicating a closer relationship between them, that was not fully explained by their common interest in the absorbing events concerning her father's election.

Meanwhile the deadlock in the legislature was assuming a serious aspect. The session had already lasted longer than the period usually consumed by a session, and not one-half of the business before them had been accomplished, aside from the senatorial question, which seemed no nearer its solution than at the outset. For still the daily roll-call in joint session disclosed the obdurate determination of each of the several parties to stick to their nominees without regard to consequences. Slight fluctuations in the votes had ceased to excite hope or fear, because, like undulating waves on a sheet of water, they were powerless to affect the general level, and vanished before account could be taken of them.

Once, indeed, a breeze sprang up which seemed to blow steadily in the direction of Colonel May. He had gained in votes for four or five consecutive ballots, drawn in almost equal proportions, from both of the opposing candidates. Victor watched with the keenest interest, what effect this crumb of comfort was producing on the colonel's friends. Payton seemed much excited, hurrying busily from one to another of the members. Nellie brightened up perceptibly. Victor detected her once or twice in a furtive glance at himself, and saw her turn to Leslie in eager whispering. Leslie himself remained cool and self-possessed, as did the colonel. The ballot then in process resulted in bringing a new accession of two votes in his favor. Victor calculated, that if there were further voting that day, there would be considerable prospect of success for Colonel May. He blushed, when he caught himself secretly exulting at this thought, small as the colonel's advantage was. But the joint session adjourned, and no one could tell what result the next session would bring.

On the evening of the same day, while sitting at his desk in

the House of Representatives, one of the pages notified Victor that his presence was desired in one of the committee rooms. He followed the page, and on being ushered in, stood in the presence of Leslie and his sister. So unexpected was this to Victor, that for a moment he was unable to reply to the warm greeting extended to him by Leslie, and when he did speak, his voice was constrained, and his manner awkward. But Leslie's words and cordial bearing were as winning as they had been of old. "I have come," he said, after shaking hands with Victor, "to apologize for my rudeness that evening when last we met. You forgive me, do you not?"

Victor's heart yearned for the reconciliation which Leslie proffered. But the insult at his hands had stung too sharply to be easily forgotten. "You do me too much honor, sir!" he said, bowing stiffly.

"Come, come, Victor!" said Leslie, in his most insinuating manner. "You and I have known each other too long as friends, to permit a few hasty words to separate us."

"No words of yours, Leslie May, have separated us," he said, a tinge of sadness audible in his voice. "And as to apologizing, it is not necessary. For, cruel as was your taunt, I can fully sympathize with you in your anger, and freely forgive what you said in the smart of your disappointment."

"Yes, Victor, I know you well enough to understand your great-hearted generosity, as well as your sincerity in this matter, as in all matters. So let us say no more about it.—May I lock the door?"

This request startled Victor. He looked at Leslie, then at Nellie, and his heart beat violently, for he divined that the temptation that was awaiting him, would try his very soul. Nellie had not yet spoken but her eyes rested upon his face with an expectant look, so trusting, so confiding, as to shame the resolute determination which he was summoning to his aid, in the instinctive endeavor to fortify himself for the coming ordeal. "If you wish, why not?" he answered simply.

“Now, since your evil genius has quitted you for the time being,” said Leslie, after locking the door, “I hope to find you accessible to argument and common sense. Let me say, first of all, that my bitter words, the other day, were meant not so much for you, as for that embodiment of mystical, outlandish abstractions, — your Professor Rauhenfels, who has clouded your usually clear judgment with metaphysical cobwebs that prevent you from seeing things as they are. I confidently hope to find you, now, your old reasonable self.”

“I will try at least to deserve your kind criticism,” said Victor soberly. — “What do you wish to say to me?”

“Before I come to the main point, let me also say, that we are not here with the consent of father, much less at his request. It was Nellie, here, that suggested this conference with you. She has such confidence in your good sense, and in your — well, in your loyalty to her and to me, as the friends of your boyhood, — that she thought you would permit us to remind you of the times we had together at the grammar class, and at the barbecue, and how bravely you defended the ‘Governor,’ as I used to call him, against any doubts of his being the purest and most generous man living — ”

“And would so defend him to-day!” Victor exclaimed warmly.

“Don’t I know it?” said Nellie triumphantly. “Victor has promised to wear my colors in the senatorial tournament. You will not forget that, Mr. Waldhorst?”

“Oh, Miss Nellie — ”

“But I told her,” Leslie interrupted, “that neither your friendship for her, nor for me, nor yet for even father, would be able to swerve you one inch from the path that duty points out to you.”

“I hope that I may be able to deserve your respect, at least,” said Victor with downcast eyes.

“And so I am going to appeal to your strong common sense,” Leslie went on. “Putting aside, now, all considerations for the relations existing between us, as acquaintances or

friends, I submit to you as a democrat, that it is in your power to do the party a great service; to save it, I may say, from defeat."

"How do you mean?"

"As matters stand to-day, the question of election lies between father and the republican candidate. General Hart is practically out of the race. Your vote for father, Victor, would, with the following it will have, secure his election at the next ballot."

"Just think of it, Victor," said Nellie, looking eagerly into the face of the young man, "it lies in your power to elect pa to the United States Senate! Do you remember how proud it made you to be told by him that you had greatly helped him to be elected to Congress? How deeply he will feel indebted to you, if now you give him the senatorship! And how the munificence of such a gift from you would endear you to brother Leslie and — to me!"

Endear him to her! What a precious guerdon to secure! Could *any* price be too high for that? He turned pale; beads of perspiration bedewed his forehead. All the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them, would fail to lure him, — would he bend the knee to the temptation in the shape of an angel of light? But while yet regarding Nellie's eager face, the image of Ralph Payton suddenly occurred to him, throwing a shadow over the bewildering suggestiveness of her smile. Slowly he turned his eyes toward Leslie, saying: "You are mistaken. I have no following, such as you suppose."

But Leslie answered with unusual patience, "Not I, Victor, but you, are mistaken in this matter. It is your excessive modesty that prevents you from seeing your power. But let that rest. Apart from the question of your following, does it not occur to you that you have a duty to perform as a patriot, — as a lover of that party on which rests the hope of our country? Ought you not to so vote as to help break the deadlock paralyzing the legislature? The time of the members is being fruitlessly sacrificed by this unavailing balloting;

the money of the people wantonly squandered, the welfare of the commonwealth put in jeopardy by this silly foolhardiness. It is obvious that if the members persist in their wayward caprice, no result can ever be reached. Common sense, then, plainly demands a yielding somewhere. By whom? Clearly by him who understands how foolish and wicked it is to persist against reason and hope. Did you not once tell me that, according to one of your German proverbs, 'He is the wiser who knows how to yield?' "

Leslie was unusually earnest in his manner. Victor smiled, with a smile that betrayed the agony of his soul. "Do you not see," he answered, soberly, slowly, "that on your showing mulish obstinacy would prevail over the yielding wise man?" "

"But if it be rational to yield, will not the triumph of the obstinate fool accomplish the wise man's purpose?" persisted Leslie. "It seems to me, that even Rauhenfels could not find fault with such a statement."

"Perhaps not; and perhaps you are right, — always providing that the effect of the fool's obstinacy serves the wise man's purpose. But let us not continue a discussion which can lead to no satisfactory result. I cannot vote for your father, so long as he does not disavow that resolution of the caucus, even if it were true, and made plain to my comprehension, that my vote would elect him."

It cost Victor a mighty effort to say these words. He wiped the perspiration from his brow.

Leslie grew red in the face.

"Can nothing move you?" he said, after a momentary pause. "Nothing that I have said? Nothing that Nellie has said?" "

"Nothing."

"Is it true, then, that you have sold yourself, body and soul, to this double-faced friend, this sneering Mephistopheles, who, while eating my father's bread, poisons the mind of his most ardent friend against him? For I happen to know, that it is only at his behest that you oppose our interest."

“You are wrong, Leslie; Mr. Rauhenfels has, himself, disproved your accusation.”

“Wrong!” Leslie repeated, in louder voice. “Was all your regard, then, — all the devotion and reverence that you so constantly and ostentatiously paraded for Colonel May, mere cant and hypoerisy? Do you mean to tell me, that you lied, when you promised to vote for him, — lied when you pledged yourself in primary meeting, in the party convention, and again in accepting the votes of the people, as a democrat? Out upon such cowardly treachery!”

“Oh, Leslie,” said Victor after a brief pause, in which he regarded his adversary with a steady gaze, “you ought to know that you stab me to the heart with your cruelly unjust words, — to the heart that has given up all to preserve its honor.”

“Fie on such honor! The honor of an assassin that has knifed his truest friend!”

“That he is!” exclaimed Victor, interrupting. “As such I have well-nigh worshiped him.”

“With the devil’s worship!” Leslie cried. “While basking in the sunshine of his favor, you fawned and cringed, and spared not plentiful protestations of devotion to his person and his cause, in order the more surely to betray them both.”

Nellie had been listening intently. A frown now gathered on her face. She uttered the single word: “Ingrate!”

It stung Victor more sharply than Leslie’s cutting invective. “Oh, Miss May,” he pleaded earnestly, “do not you misjudge me —”

“Address yourself to me, sir!” Leslie sternly interrupted him.

“Sir, it is your sister of whom I crave pardon for an act that in the doing inflicts agony on me a hundred times more bitter than any disappointment it may bring to either of you.”

“The twinge of conscience you may feel is anything but an excuse, sir!”

“Nor do I seek excuse,” Victor continued. “Pray, do

not misconstrue the torture I suffer into repentance of my course. It is my cruel fate that in the performance of my duty I must forfeit your friendship. But I am not ashamed of my deed."

"I dare say," Leslie interjected, "that you take pride in your emancipation from the restraints imposed by honor, gratitude and good-faith."

"Leslie May," said Victor, straightening up and regarding the brother with a defiant frown, "restrain your licentious tongue! Tempt me not too far! I have borne your taunts, your sneers and your insults and remembering what once we were to each other, forbore the fitting answer. But when you say, that I prostituted my honor —"

"Well?" sneered Leslie, as Victor briefly paused.

"You lie!"

Victor spoke the word boldly, but without passion.

Leslie raised his clenched fist, but dropped it, as Nellie softly touched his arm. The two men eyed each other for a moment, then Leslie, with a bitter, satirical smile, turned to his sister. "Can you unriddle me this riddle, — honor? Here stands a man (for such, no doubt, he deems himself) convicted of perjury, of having basely betrayed friend, party, — the most sacred trust confided in him by his country, — and now poses for injured innocence, unblushingly proclaiming his untarnished — honor! Bah! Such honor might Judas Iscariot claim, when he had earned his thirty pieces of silver."

There was a slight pause before Victor answered. Then, regarding his former friend with a steady eye, he said: "Your words are keen-edged daggers, Leslie May. But they afford me this comfort, that they lighten much a burden on my heart, — the burden of gratitude to you; for you have this day so heavily freighted the counter-scale, that the account between us is more nearly balanced. You will understand, some day, that I may have something to forgive, as well as my benefactors."

Nellie now spoke up, "Oh," she said, imitating, perhaps

unconsciously, the sarcastic tone of her brother, "you have something to forgive us, have you? Now, I am really curious to know what that can be. Is it, that when you came to Brookfield, an awkward, unmannered lad, you found a cordial welcome in our family? Is it, that papa gave you free access to his library, teaching you what books to read, and how to understand them? Or that his children received you in their midst, as though you had been one of them, and through their patronage secured to you admission to the most select circles of Brookfield society? Or is it, that papa initiated you into the intricacies of politics and statesmanship, honoring you with his confidence, withholding no secrets from you, as if you were his own, beloved child? Are these the things that you are going to forgive us?"

Victor made a gesture as if, overcome by her reproaches, he would speak, but Nellie continued:

"Or do you mean to forgive us, that we have been betrayed and undone by one whom we fondly trusted, to whom we furnished the very means and weapons with which he is now assailing his benefactor?" Then dropping her sarcastic tone, she added with genuine pathos, "Tell me, sir, what is it, that you are going to forgive us?"

Victor stood erect, pale, but more proudly than he had ever stood before Miss May, as he answered: "You, Miss May, I have nothing to forgive but the cruel injustice of your words just now. And I beg you in turn, to pardon what I say, not in idle boast, but because the torture you inflict upon me wrenches the words from my quivering lips: To keep unsullied mine own honor, I have yielded up the promise of heavenly bliss on earth, and now confront a dreary joyless future."

Leslie put on his sarcastic sneer and opened his lips for a reply; but Victor anticipated him.

"As for you, sir," he said, turning to the brother, "we are quit. You have this day taken payment in full for all the bounties you so lavishly conferred upon me. You have set a price upon that which I held priceless, — your friendship. If

honor has been forfeited in the relations between us, be sure, sir, that the loss has not fallen to me. It is not I that have betrayed a trust."

"Do you hear that, Nellie?" was the brother's retort. "Next he will recite to us an inventory of our own shortcomings toward him! Such is the logic taught him by his lord and master, that Mephistophelian trickster, to whom he has bartered his soul. Come, Nellie; let us go. We have done with Mr. Waldhorst."

As they started to go, Victor turned to the lady, saying, "Would you vouchsafe me hearing for one word more?"

"To my sister?" asked Leslie.

"Such is my desire, if she will kindly permit."

"Shall I remain?" he inquired of his sister.

"I almost fear to be alone with him," whispered Nellie.

"His face is portentous of a weighty purpose."

"Then I shall remain," Leslie replied.

"And yet," she mused, "what have I to fear? If he become too bold of speech or manner, I shall know how to bring him to senses. Go, Leslie; I would fain learn what it is that he has to say to me in person."

"All right, Nellie; but I shall remain within earshot of your call, if you should want me."

Leslie left the room. The young lady regarded Victor with an expectant look.

"Well, sir," she said, "I am ready to hear."

"I thank you for this act of kindness," he said, speaking with a tenderness he could not master, in spite of his mighty effort at composure. "There were happier days, Miss May, when it was my proudest boast that in your goodness you permitted me to think of you as a friend. My foolish heart, misled by your sweet graciousness, indulged in blissful dreams of yet a dearer name for you —"

"Presumptuous youth!" the lady interrupted proudly. "How dared you infer the slightest encouragement on my part of such folly?"

“Oh,” said Victor, with a bitter smile, “I know, now, that it was not intentional on your part. It was but my doting heart, so eager to hug the fond illusion, that nourished my aspiration. No Parsee ever worshiped with devotion deeper the bright Luminary of Day, than I my life’s glorious Sun. I beg you, in extenuation of my fault, to reflect that in my infatuation I prized a smile from your lips far higher than any woman’s beauty in the world.”

“Tell me,” she asked with unbending hauteur, “to which of any words of mine do you attribute such incitement?”

“Oh, not to any words,” he replied sadly. “All that you said to me, as I now recall it, a sister might have spoken to a brother. Not *what* you said, but *how* you said it, was the Siren’s song that lured me to my destiny. You but recall the words, — not the voice, whose melodious cadences thrilled my ear with ecstatic joy. You but recall the words, — not the sparkling eye, that eloquently proclaimed what the beggar speech was impotent to utter. You but recall the word, — not the warm breath that uttered it. You but remember that I held your hand, — not how that touch sent an electric thrill through my veins that like a magic spark set my very heart aglow.”

Nellie listened with rapt attention. In spite of herself, her haughty mien relaxed.

“My glorious paradise, like some resplendent, sun-painted image in the clouds, has vanished into somber gloom,” Victor continued. “The bright ideal, that but now refulgently lit up my pathway, is intercepted by destiny’s mighty arm, snatching from me my soul’s crowning desire. Should ever, in the future, your thoughts recur to me, then, Nellie May, think of me as one, whose love for you, was so unbounded and unselfish, that he elected rather to be worthy of you, than to possess you unworthily.”

The lady gazed on him in wonder.

But Victor continued: “My path in the future will be rugged and thorny; yet I shall pursue it. I shall even bear

the loss of your father's love, of your brother's esteem, — heart-woven friends though they were. And I will not chide memory when it taunts me with ingratitude; for I am patient, and God, in his infinite mercy, will grant me further strength. But Oh, Eleonora, who will save me from despair, when some foul fiend, in an unguarded hour, shall take advantage of my weakness, mocking my aching heart with jeering taunt: How cruel conscience tricked it of its due!"

"Victor!" exclaimed the lady, in a tone blending entreaty and wonder, as he slowly left her presence.

He paid no heed.

Leslie returned, and asked: "What did the knave want of you?"

"He is no knave, Leslie!" exclaimed Nellie gazing at the door through which Victor had disappeared.

"What do you mean?" asked Leslie, as they were leaving the room.

"He is a man."



PART THIRD:
DEMOCRACY RUN WILD.

XXXI.

A CATALEPTIC GOVERNMENT.

THE interval between the election of President Lincoln and his inauguration witnessed the anomalous spectacle of a government professing itself incompetent, as being unauthorized by the terms of its organization, to assert and vindicate its own existence. The monster Secession, a many-headed hydra, assailed the Union, striking its venomous fangs into the vitals of the Republic. From one after another of the sulking States came the audacious announcement, that it had severed the bond between it and the Federal Republic, thereby resuming its sovereignty as an independent State. In words of haughty bravado the Federal government was cautioned against exercising any authority within the borders of the newly proclaimed sovereignty. While yet sitting in the halls of Congress at Washington, participating in its deliberations concerning the new condition of things, Southern senators were planning a new Union, hurrying its organization as a political fact — a *fait accompli* — with the avowed purpose of rallying outright secessionists, stimulating the masses, and coercing recalcitrants and phlegmatics. Loud and boisterous preparations were going on for the creation of the new republic, with slavery for its cornerstone, to rival and eclipse the old Union in power and prosperity, its individual States cemented by the guaranty of peaceful disruption at the pleasure of any of its sovereign members. By way of casting an anchor to windward, the arms and ammunition of the Federal govern-

ment were transferred to Southern arsenals, forts and barracks, and taken possession of by the insurgents, together with the forts and arsenals themselves. The Secretary of War, while yet retaining his place in the cabinet as the President's adviser, earned for himself the plaudits of the South — the Southern press being naively outspoken in the matter, — by his zeal in this behalf. "We are much obliged to the Secretary of War," says one of their papers, "for the foresight he has displayed in disarming the North and equipping the South for this emergency. The Springfield contribution alone would arm all the militiamen of Alabama and Mississippi."

And all this without eliciting a single response from the government assailed. Fearful, indeed, must be the predicament of a chief executive, who, knowing it to be his duty to execute the laws, feels his inability to do so. Abhorring civil war, he sees it coming, — knows that unless it be met with energy and determination at the outset, it will devastate the country North and South; yet stirs not a finger nor raises an arm to throttle the infantine monster. He demonstrates with logic unanswerable that secession is a political absurdity, consistent only with the theory that the Union is held together by a rope of sand. Knowing that under the constitution the withdrawal of a State from the Union is a mere nullity, he is yet unable to say what shall be the relation between a State that claims to have seceded, and the government which claims that it has not seceded, because the States have no such power. To coerce a State to remain in the Union, is, so his constitutional adviser, the Attorney-general, informs him, making war on such State; and it were rank usurpation in a mere executive officer to declare war on a State of the Union. So he will leave it to Congress to decide, whether the law can be so amended under the constitution, as to enable the government to assert and vindicate its integrity against discontented rebels.

Meanwhile the arm of the government is palsied; its head in a state of dazed bewilderment; the cabinet divided, — some members advising energetic resistance to the contumacious

rebels ; others coquetting with them. The Secretary of State throws up his commission in patriotic anger, because the President declines to reinforce the poorly garrisoned forts in Charleston harbor. The Secretary of War (he to whom the South is indebted for the arms with which it proposes to resist any attempt of the government to defend its property) having accomplished much in the way of crippling the old Union, now relieves the cabinet of his presence, — ostensibly, because the President declines to withdraw the garrison from Charleston harbor. The Secretary of the Treasury tenders his resignation, deeming his position incompatible with his duty to his own State ; his successor does the same, because the President has not stopped the collection of the customs at the port of Charleston, while the Secretary of the Interior will presently resign, “ because he has heard that troops have been ordered to Charleston.”

Congress is in no better predicament. The republicans, indeed, are a unit, knowing distinctly what they mean to accomplish. But the democrats are in a panic, — demoralized, to say the least. Crittenden, for his part, has not lost faith in the virtue of compromise: he hopes to lure the hot-headed Southrons back into the Union by so amending the Federal constitution as to secure to them all the territories South of the Missouri Compromise line. But Congress is stubborn, and will not hear of it ; even the members from the Cotton States flout at the offer. In vain does the President urge, with what influence he can bring to bear, the adoption of this compromise, as the only possible means of averting the threatened disintegration of the United States. In vain do petitions, memorials and addresses pour in from all parts of the North, twenty-two thousand strong from Massachusetts alone, including the Mayor and members of the Board of Aldermen and the Common Council of the City of Boston, praying for the adoption of the Crittenden Compromise. The Senate will not so much as listen to the bill, much less vote on it, save in the shape in which a republican senator derisively puts it, — by moving to substitute for it the platform of the republican party.

Virginia, proud in the days gone by of the sobriquet accorded to her of ‘Mother of Presidents,’ is slow to catch the Southern fever of secession, shuddering perhaps, over the prospect of being made the theater of fratricidal war that must ensue, should the old government wake up to a sense of its power. But she is prompt to denounce coercion as an insult to the dignity of a sovereign State, and emphatic in demanding that the Federal government shall maintain the *statu quo*; but turns a deaf ear, nevertheless, to the Commissioners from Mississippi and Alabama, who would persuade her to take a leading part in the formation of the new Union. Instead, she invites the several States to send Commissioners to Washington, to essay the saving of the Union by a solemn Peace Convention. Though Crittenden has failed — signally — to impress upon Congress the wisdom of mutual concessions by the belligerent sections of the country, yet may there not be some virtue in the admonitions of a solemn Peace Convention, meeting under the auspices of grand old Virginia? Peace-loving citizens, frantic with apprehension of dire civil war, breathe more freely at thought of the oil that a solemn Peace Convention may pour on the troubled waters, blessing the hopeful Commissioners that assemble at the national capitol, to the number of one hundred and three-and-thirty, representing more than one-half of the self-styled sovereign States, and fervently pray that the God of Peace may speed their patriotic purpose. Herculean, indeed, is the task set before them: No less a one than to prevail on Congress to so amend the constitution as to induce the Southern States to remain in, and those of the Cotton States that had already seceded, to return to, the Union. Courageous men, they; of a hopeful turn of mind, to undertake to convince a Congress that means not to be convinced; or else statesmen of the calibre that have faith in the magic of compromise in spite of the Crittenden experience, and who cannot understand how any one will persist in his own opinion, if offered a sufficient consideration to change it. Patriotic citizens they were, willing to go great lengths in sacrificing their

convictions, if peace can be had in exchange. It becomes manifest, soon, that the convention has been called at too late a day. For events have moulded opinions into full-grown prejudices during the last few months, — prejudices ranged on geographical lines, invisible as such to the sections themselves, though too palpable, unfortunately, each to the other. They will have a committee to report, — not later than the day after to-morrow (for time is very precious, the thirty-sixth Congress having but four weeks longer to exist) — what the convention may deem “right, necessary and proper to restore harmony and preserve the Union.” Which committee wrangles for a week or ten days to find a formula suitable to their own views, and then report to the convention, which will wrangle for other ten days among themselves, to find that they cannot unite a majority of the States represented upon the proposition they wish to lay before Congress. What can Congress do with a project that does not even command the assent of the convention itself (having received the votes of only nine of the nineteen States, — three withholding their votes at all, seven voting nay), now, having but four days left within which it can do at all? One thing plainly appears, — it is not in the mood to appreciate the wisdom of the convention as embodied in their patriotic report. The Senate, in courtesy, has it referred to a select committee but will never directly vote upon it; the House will not even permit its speaker to lay it before them. For Congress itself is in no better plight: it, too, wrestles in vain with the insoluble problem, how to find a formula that will satisfy an excited, frantic, clamorous people. Peace, it would seem from the fate of the Peace Convention, and of the Crittenden Compromise, as well as of the deadlock of the parties in Congress, is not to be had for any price short of war, or of the nation’s death by inanition.

The eyes of the nation, therefore, turn with anxious expectancy to the President-elect. Fears of violence entertained on the occasion of counting the electoral vote, prove to be un-

founded. Muttered threats, that the new President shall not reach the seat of government alive, induce the venerable General-in-Chief of the United States army, who is not so tender of the constitutional rights of the enemies of his government as is the President, to make such military arrangements as shall cool the ardor of mobocratically inclined assassins, should such infest the crowd of spectators at the inauguration. Cannon planted at both ends of Pennsylvania avenue, armed cavalry lining every curbstone along the line of march of the procession, are sufficient to convince the boldest ruffian, that rioters would make but poor headway, though there were many in the immense throng minded that way. And so the President-elect, who has safely reached Washington despite the conspiracy to assassinate him on his way through Baltimore, is installed. The venerable Chief Justice of the United States, — he, whose celebrated decision of *Scott vs. Sandford* so thoroughly vindicated the constitutionality of slavery, and demonstrated the impotence of Congress to interfere with it — administered the oath of office. “Whose black robes, attenuated figure and cadaverous countenance,” says an eye-witness to the ceremony, “reminded one of a galvanized corpse.”

Never before, perhaps, had inauguration ceremony been so impressive. At the eastern front of the capitol, upon a platform built out from the steps of the portico, are seated such of the senators and representatives as have remained at Washington; the diplomatic corps, the judges of the Supreme court, and the higher officers of the army and navy. Close by the gaunt form of the President-elect, stands the retiring President, — tall, dignified, reserved; deeply grieved, — so the attentive observer notes, — at the part his party and position have compelled him to play in a national drama which is now approaching a crisis. Douglas, too, is there, leaning forward to catch every word of the inaugural address, nodding emphatically at those passages that most please him, holding, the while, the President's new silk hat. Another senator is

there, also; from Texas, he, standing against the doorway of the capitol, looking down with folded arms and Mephistophelian contempt at the crowd and the ceremony. To him, — so his supercilious mien would indicate — the Southern Confederacy is already an accomplished fact. He shall live to see it the saddest of fictions.

And now, that a new president stands at the helm of the ship of State, the nation turns its eyes toward him in painful suspense, asking itself, What will he do?

Victor Waldhorst, the editor of a metropolitan newspaper and member of a legislature with which he is not in sympathy, is deeply anxious. The assurances given by the President in his inaugural, do not satisfy him. They are full of promises to the South. He reiterates the assertions made by him before, that he will not, directly or indirectly, interfere with the institution of slavery in the States where it exists. He quotes the fourth resolution of the republican platform, which he accepts as a law binding upon his party and him, and to which he will firmly adhere, holding inviolate the right of each State to control its domestic institutions according to its own judgment exclusively, and denouncing the lawless invasion by armed force of the soil of any State as among the gravest of crimes. He has no objection to a constitutional amendment classing slavery as one of the institutions so protected, believing, as he asserts, that such is implied by the existing constitution. He deprecates secession: grows pathetic over “the mystic chords of memory, stretching from every battle-field and patriotic grave to every living heart and hearth-stone, all over the broad land,” which, he predicts, “will yet swell the chorus of the Union, when again touched, as surely they will be, by the better angels of our nature.”

But he cannot doubt the right of the people to rid themselves of a government of which they have grown weary, — their constitutional right to amend, or their revolutionary right

to overthrow it. Such being the program of the new President, what comfort brings it to the heart of a Union-loving patriot?

To Victor Waldhorst the outlook appears gloomy enough. To be sure to him the darkness of the prospect is deepened by his own sorrow: for he has suffered disappointment and sore grief. The bright sun that had illumined his future with a halo of glory is eclipsed by the black cloud of adversity. So his usually buoyant mind is now attuned to sinister forebodings. He sees in the President's inaugural an unwillingness to deal with secessionists as with traitors, or to invade the soil of any State with armed force. Is this to be the end? Victor finds but too much ground to fear so. For, propitious as had been the attitude of the late President toward the rebellious States, — permitting them to possess themselves of the forts and arsenals, of the arms and ammunition of the Federal government, — the present executive seems hardly more active in foiling their purpose. Under his administration the military officers of the United States, graduates from West Point, where they had been educated at the nation's expense, are permitted to resign from the United States army, avowing their purpose of offering their swords and what of military proficiency is theirs, to the new confederacy, until more than one-half of them, including the most talented, gallant and brave, have gone, — resigned or deserted, — carrying, in some instances, entire companies — even regiments — of the regular army with them, into the service of the seceded States.

Victor Waldhorst reflects with a heavy heart that the South is fortifying itself with an energy and an enthusiasm that carries along the undecided and wavering with irresistible impetus, promising to involve the border States, and to swell the Southern Confederacy to such power, as will enable it to successfully defy the old government, should it ever awake from its lethargy. No wonder to him, that Southern Commissioners solicit "an unofficial interview" with the Secretary of State, to talk over the matters in difference between the "two gov-

ernments," which, however, the secretary declines. Nor is it surprising, that on the next day these gentlemen send a sealed communication to the secretary, in their official capacity, demanding the appointment of an early day on which they may lay before the President their credentials as accredited agents of the Confederate government, "to negotiate for a speedy adjustment of all questions growing out of the political separation of the seven States that had formed a government of their own."

Yet there is a grain of comfort in the reply of the secretary, who "has no authority, nor is he at liberty, to recognize them as diplomatic agents," and informs them that his "official duties" do not at all embrace domestic questions, nor questions arising between the several States and the Federal government, but are confined to the conducting of the foreign affairs of the country. Plainly, Mr. Seward believes in no Confederate government, as yet. He has not yet lost faith in his prophesy that "all trouble will be over in three months."

There is a gleam of hope too, in the thorough accord that exists between the President and his cabinet. The Secretary of War is mindful of the start which the South is daily gaining by its aggressive course, and is deeply apprehensive that the Confederate government may, by its very audacity and boastfulness, achieve recognition from the powers abroad and the people at home, as an independent *de facto* government. But he is mindful, too, of the superior power and resources of the North, which, in a prolonged war, are sure to win.

Is there, then, to be war?

Virginia is deeply anxious to know. She has called her people together in a convention, and they resolve "that the uncertainty which prevails in the public mind as to the policy which the Federal executive intends to pursue toward the seceded States is extremely injurious to the industrial and commercial interests of the country, tends to keep up excitement which is unfavorable to the adjustment of the public peace." So they will send a committee to the President of the

United States, to find out what he is going to do about it. And Victor finds in the answer of the President another gleam of encouragement. Oraacular enough is this answer. He will "hold, occupy and possess" the property and places, — meaning the military posts — of the government, in its possession when it came into his hands; and if it be true that, with the purpose of driving out the United States authorities from these places, an unprovoked assault has been made on Fort Sumter, he will hold himself at liberty to repossess, if he can, like places taken before he assumed the government. In such event he will, too, perhaps, cause the United States mails to be withdrawn from all the States which claim to have seceded. He believes that the commencement of war against the government would justify — "possibly demand" — such a measure. Whatever else he will do, he will not attempt to collect the duties and imposts by an armed invasion of any part of the country; though he will, to the best of his ability, repel force by force.

Such is the answer which the President makes to the envoys from Virginia. Comfort enough it ought to bring to Virginia, if she be honest in her desire for peace. She knows now that there will be no war unless the South force it on. To so much the President stands committed. But let Virginia, and her sister border States that have not yet taken the plunge into secession, note this, also: that he means, to the best of his ability, to repel force by force.

Very different is the effect which this answer, taken in connection with the President's inaugural speech and the attitude assumed by him since that time, makes upon different individuals, and on different sections of the country. Victor Waldhorst, for instance, is the victim of emotions contending in his breast: Fear, that the nation may not truly estimate the price which it is willing to pay for peace; Hope that the President has come to understand that forbearance has ceased to be a virtue.

Miss Nellie May, too, hovers between alternate fits of de-

pression and buoyancy. Her father has been elected to the United States Senate—a fact in the newness of which she abundantly rejoices, as the consummation of her proud ambition. But her father does not believe that the State which has elected him to the Senate of the United States, ought to secede; and he has an abiding faith, that the seceded States, if let alone, will presently resume their old places in the Union, under guaranties which shall remove, for all time, the danger to its peculiar property. And Nellie has such faith in the statesmanship of her father, that she dreams of still higher honors that a grateful South will heap upon him, should he succeed, as she knows he is going to, in his patriotic ambition to reunite the States upon a foundation more solid than ever. But Nellie is fully convinced, too, of the immense superiority of the chivalrous fighting material possessed by the South, as contrasted with the mercenary, calculating Yankees, and longed for just a battle or two, to enable her knightly Southrons to cover themselves with glory. And she is sorely afraid that the rascally politicians, both North and South, will dicker and chaffer about terms, and the Yankees, she knows, are going to outwit her generous, gallant countrymen, and to cheat them out of the golden opportunity to show their spirit and prowess. For it has been dinned into her ear until to her it has become gospel truth, that the North will not fight.

Ralph Payton, for his part, is eager for the fray. He is one of the “*Knightly Southrons*” of whom Miss May is proud. And he is going to cover himself with glory, and bask in the sunny smiles of patriotic Southern maidens, who shall look upon him as their deliverer, or at least as one of their deliverers (for he is not so vain as to undertake the job all alone) from the yoke of the detested oppressors. The reward in store for him is none the less alluring, though the patriotic Southern maidens are embodied to him in the person of Miss Nellie May. Miss May, indeed, is largely responsible for the enthusiasm that is upon him. He understands, as plainly as if Miss May had told him so (though she had not by any words of hers)

that his suit for her heart and hand would prosper poorly if she could not look upon him as a hero, such as, in her glowing imagination, every Southern gentleman must be. Yes, Ralph Payton was eager, — most eager when in the company of Miss May — that there shall be war — not a protracted, devastating war, but just an engagement or two, to impress upon the dull North how terribly in earnest the South can be when standing up for her rights, and to demonstrate to patriotic women of the South the superiority of their countrymen over miserable Northern mud-sills.

The politicians of the border States are in a high fever of excitement. They discuss eagerly, angrily, fiercely, whether to join the Southern Confederacy, or make terms, such as they can now dictate pretty much as they please, with the old government. For the tradition that the North will not fight has reached others, beside Nellie May and Ralph Payton, and the events of the last few months have tended to encourage, rather than to refute, such a belief. It is now a glorious time for the magniloquent Gascons, who fight in anticipation with a valor that shall challenge the admiration of mankind. They will die in the last ditch, rather than submit to Northern tyranny, they boast; and though *they* may not be in earnest about it, yet their gallant countrymen shall literally fulfill the tragic prophesy. — Hot-headed Southern orators lash themselves into a frenzy of wrathful indignation over the tyranny of a President who talks about repelling force by force, and who claims for the Federal government the forts, arsenals and navy yards in the seceded States, which they would like to keep for themselves, the more effectually to wipe out the tyrannical old Union. Sharp is the warfare between the friends of the Union and the friends of secession, and doubtful the issue. Secession leaders see the necessity of still greater sectional excitement. So they will essay what virtue there is in the shedding of blood. “Strike a blow!” says one of the agitators. “The very moment blood is shed, old Virginia will make common cause with her sisters of the

South." — "Unless you sprinkle blood in the face of the people of Alabama," shouts another, "she will be back in the old Union in less than ten days."

And so it was deliberately resolved to "strike a blow," and to "sprinkle blood" in the face of the people of the South. And South Carolina, having been in the lead in the matter of secession, feels it incumbent upon her to take the lead in the bloody work also; and she orders General Beauregard to open fire on Fort Sumter.



THE TORPOR BROKEN.

W HATEVER of glory, or otherwise, there be in having struck the first blow at the old government, has been achieved by, and will forevermore belong to, South Carolina. Not so plain is the record as to the individual that may be entitled to the distinction of having fired the first gun in the bombardment of Fort Sumter. It will remain a subject of contention for many years; as much as a third of a century will pass away before an officer, high in command, once, of the Southern forces, shall make careful inquiry among the survivors of that battery stationed on Cumming's Point, and settle the question forever, by certificate over his own sign manual. Whoever the man will be, he cannot receive the token without vividly recalling the sublime scene, — when, at the word of command issued in a voice of hardly suppressed agitation, he touches off the gun: With a flash and a boom the frowning engine of destruction spits forth its deadly charge into the early dawn of the April morning: With lightning eagerness the whizzing, shrieking messenger of defiance seeks out the devoted little garrison on yonder island, — marking its pathway from Morris Island to Fort Sumter with a profusion of angry sparks, in a graceful curve, whose beauty fascinates, even in that moment of supreme significance, the gaze of the excited soldiers, until the explosion of the shell, visible for some seconds before it is heard, rouses them to a recognition of the grim work before them.

That fiery streak traced by the burning fuse has been seen, even before the report of the gun has reached their ears, by the twenty or more thousand excited Southrons gathered at Charleston Harbor, who greet the explosion of the shell with

triumphant exultation, and again and again renew their frantic demonstrations, as battery after battery opens on Sumter, pouring an incessant shower of bombs and balls on the doomed fort, from Sullivan's Island, from Fort Moultrie, Cumming's Point and from floating batteries.

As yet there is no response. In gloomy silence, its shadowy outlines dimly visible to the unarmed eye, Fort Sumter gives no token of being garrisoned or armed. What does it mean? The masses at Charleston Harbor wonder and speculate. It occurs to them that Major Anderson is a Southerner, hailing from the gallant State of Kentucky, and may not wish to make war upon his countrymen. Yes; some one remembers that his wife, too, is from the South, the major having married her in Georgia, where her folks still reside.

Grey morning peeps over the Eastern horizon, and presently proclaims, with rosy blushes, the advent of a day that will impress itself on the memory of Americans, both North and South. The fort is vividly outlined, now, against the morning sky, and the grim artillerists have given their guns the accurate bearing upon it. Fearful is the havoc wrought by ball and bomb: a heavy piece of artillery is seen to topple from its bed in the uppermost tier of the armament, and fall crashing on the rampart below, while the bursting of shells within the very gates of the fort attest the gunners' skill. The sullen silence of Sumter continues. It is commented on by the bombarding forces. It gives rise to animated discussions among the eager spectators at Charleston Harbor. There is jubilant exultation there: Major Anderson will not fight. Jeering taunts are flung at all of those who persist in the silly notion that the North are going to fight at all. The I-told-you-so faction is clearly in the ascendant. Still, there are those too, who shake their heads, as if to say: Wait! the end is not yet. And others, who bow their heads in shame and deep sorrow, to see the flag there, plainly visible now in the broad daylight, floating above that fort, defied and derided, and not a hand raised in its defense, — not a shot fired to avenge the insult!

How often they have sung, with patriotic pride and swelling heart, that

“ The Star-spangled Banner in triumph shall wave,
O'er the land of the Free and the home of the Brave! ”

But speculation suddenly takes a different tack when, at the hour of 7:30, a puff of smoke is seen to arise from the walls of the fort, a ball comes whizzing and ploughing into the water so near to the shore of Morris Island as to dash the briny spray at the very feet of the gunners, and a sullen roar is heard to thunder forth the proud defiance of Major Anderson. At last! An involuntary start, as if heaving a sigh of relief, betrays how eagerly the men welcome the grim challenge. For they are brave soldiers, these Southern hot-heads, and it is an odious thing to war with an enemy that does not strike back. They fire now with increased rapidity; and the point of discussion has come to be, how long will the little garrison hold out?

Not many days, so much they may rely on. Perhaps not many hours: Before the morning is over, every piece of the upper tier of guns has been dismantled, demolished or disabled, as the eager watchers at Charleston Harbor note with wild enthusiasm. In the afternoon the fort is battered with red-hot cannon-balls that do fearful execution setting fire to the combustible outbuildings. Half of Major Anderson's force is required to put out the fires; the other half keep up a faint show of resistance. At nightfall the firing from the fort ceases entirely, giving rise to the erroneous rumor, that it has surrendered, — contradicted, next morning, by a renewal of the perfunctory cannonading from the fort.

At nine o'clock on the morning of the second day the barracks are again on fire, and most of the garrison are needed to combat the flames, so that the guns can be served but feebly. Presently it is found necessary to sink the store of powder and what of loaded shells remained, lest they take fire and blow up the fort together with the garrison. Yet

Major Anderson keeps the Stars and Stripes flying proudly over the crippled fort, holding out to the very last minute in which his government might send reinforcement.

He waits in vain.

It is now that Colonel Wigfall (late senator from Texas, he who stood watching with contemptuous mien the inauguration of President Lincoln, but now of the Confederate army) is moved with admiration of the gallantry displayed by the intrepid defenders of the fort; and he undertakes to treat with them, — unauthorized, it appears later, by the Confederate general. Gaining admission under a flag of truce, he is received by Major Anderson, whose dirt-begrimed, smoke-blackened face he is hardly able to distinguish from the soot-covered cannoneers surrounding him. The terms he offers are generous, — honorable alike to the victors and the vanquished, — attesting as well the magnanimity of the one as the undaunted bravery of the other. General Beauregard is, at first, inclined to disavow the unauthorized treaty of Colonel Wigfall, as exceeding in liberality the recognition due to a defeated, though gallant, foe. But finally, after much hesitation, he confirms the terms. The garrison, with side-arms and baggage, are to march out, with colors flying, drums beating, fifes playing, and at their departure to fire a salute to the flag waving over the smoking ruins of Fort Sumter, that shall wave there no more until four years of desolating war shall have swept over the land.

The bombardment has been terrific and incessant for some four-and-thirty hours. More than twelve hundred solid balls and shells had struck the fort on the first day; yet not a single life was lost, either on that day or on the next, on either side. But, though bloodless in immediate effect, that bombardment has roused the Demon of War. It broke the torpor in which the government had been enthralled. Its echo, reverberating throughout the land, quickens the nation's heart-beat, awakens the phlegmatic from their indifference and the lethargic from their apathy. President Lincoln appeals to the war-power of

the nation ; he calls for seventy-five thousand militia-men “ to suppress unlawful combinations for resisting the law,” and convenes Congress in extra session for the Fourth of July. The people respond to this call in a burst of patriotic enthusiasm : instead of seventy-five thousand, three or four times that number of volunteers offer their services, while capitalists and bankers tender, unsolicited, the necessary means to carry on effective warfare. Congress, too, will not be backward in voting men and supplies largely in excess of what the President deems necessary “ to make the conflict short and decisive.”

Nor is the South less wrought up. Its women especially, are in downright earnest, stirring up public sentiment to fever-heat, inciting a spirit of chivalry in the brave, driving even the pusillanimous into the ranks, in response to the call for one hundred and fifty thousand volunteers, with which Jefferson Davis has overtrumped President Lincoln. There is talk, too, of issuing letters of marque to invite enterprising privateers to destroy the shipping interests of the North ; to which the Federal President opposes the threat that they shall be treated as pirates.

Two of the border States respond to the proclamation of President Lincoln by promptly seceding from the Union and joining the Confederacy. The legislature, of which Victor Waldhorst is an unsympathetic member, having already provided for a convention to pass an ordinance of secession, which, when in session, this body had flatly refused to do, now undertakes to accomplish this purpose by direct legislation. The governor is in perfect accord with them. He has sent a dispatch to President Lincoln, informing him that his requisition is “ illegal, unconstitutional, revolutionary, inhuman, diabolical, and cannot be complied with.” Such audacity pleases the General Assembly and convinces them of the governor’s sincere intention to “ take the State out of the Union.” So they enact a number of laws to that end, — arming the governor with practically unlimited power, annexing the death penalty to conviction of horse-stealing, and of enticing slaves

to run away from their masters. Since the most determined opposition to secession is shown in the larger cities, the power over the police force is taken away from the metropolis and its authorities entirely, and lodged in a board of commissioners appointed by and solely responsible to the governor. A new militia law is passed, requiring the enrollment of every able-bodied male between the ages of eighteen and forty-five, to be commanded by officers appointed by the governor. The State treasury is not in a plethoric condition; so the legislature provides for the necessary expenses to organize and equip the new State militia by applying to this purpose the money that had been appropriated for the public schools and the maintenance of the Asylums for the Insane and the Blind. Such and similar are the means resorted to by the State authorities to accomplish the severance of the State from the Union, after the convention elected by the people had emphatically refused to pronounce for secession. The Confederate Congress appropriates a million of dollars "to aid them in the effort to maintain . . . the constitutional liberty, which it is the purpose of the Confederate States in the existing war to vindicate."

Victor Waldhorst is struck with amazement at what he deems the unwarranted usurpation of power by the legislature. He, together with a small number of his colleagues from the metropolis, had remained at his post of duty, protesting against the ruthless violation of the constitution, until the tyrannical majority, impatient of even the slight restraint imposed upon their high-handed doings by being reminded of their lawlessness, silenced all opposition by the application of the gag-rule. Convinced, at last, that his presence at the capital was of no possible utility, under existing circumstances, he seriously debated with himself the question, whether duty required of him to join one of the volunteer companies forming, in the larger cities all over the State, for the defense of the Union.

The question was a momentous one for the young legislator. Aside from the danger, which Victor certainly did not under-rate, and the personal discomforts and hardships involved in

the life of a soldier, of which he entertained a perhaps exaggerated opinion, there was still greater terror for him in the thought, that having once enlisted he would cease to be master over himself or his actions and be subjected to the absolute disposition of his superior officers, — whether tyrant, coward, or hare-brained dare-devil. Nothing but the clearest conviction of paramount duty would ever induce him to subject himself voluntarily to such bondage. He reflected, that he might render more efficient service by resuming his post as editor of the *Beobachter*, than by carrying a musket; but his conscience naggd and pricked him with the unceasing prompting to sacrifice his ease, and if need be, his life and liberty to the cause of his country.

While in this state of anxious doubt a letter reached him from the metropolis, which put an end to his hesitation and definitely determined his course of action.

If I have not mistaken your calibre, — wrote his friend, Professor Ranhenfels, — you are just now the right man in the wrong place. What are you doing up there — what *can* you do, — among a body of nincompoops, who imagine, in their phrenetic zeal, that they are carrying the State on their shoulders straightway into Jeff Davis' camp? You know from Cicero, don't you, that "*silent leges inter arma*," and if you didn't get the information from the old Roman, why I suppose that, having cut your eye-teeth by this time, you have discovered as much for yourself. So what good is there in law-making when the tocsin of war resounds throughout the land? And what is perhaps more to the point, of what use are *you*, just now, among a set of madmen? Do you propose to undertake with better success, what, according to Schiller, the gods themselves have given up as a bad job, — to contend against stupidity?

— I, my young friend, have swapped off my Hegel for a copy of Hardee's Infantry Tactics. Go you and exchange the pen for a sword; the sword is mightier than the pen, if

you know what to do with it. Uncle Sam will soon need all the brawny arms he can get. Above all things, however, he will want brains for the armies. Contribute your mite. Begin by offering your arm to carry a musket. Study tactics; practice discipline; learn to command; promotion will be sure and swift. Look at me: four weeks ago I was a high private in the rear rank; to-day I wear an eagle on my shoulder straps, in recognition of my services in checkmating our fire-eating governor. Shall I tell you how that was accomplished by the use of a little brains?

Well, you see, among my acquaintances is an old class-mate, Jean Jacques by name, who is as hotheaded a partisan as any they can have in the rebel ranks, — only he is on our side of this quarrel. He asked me one day what I thought of the militia encampment, which the governor had located just outside of our city. “Do you know what it means?” he added.

“Yes,” I answered. “It means a recruiting depot for Jeff Davis’ army.”

“Camp of Instruction, the governor calls it,” says he. “Instruction in Infantry Tactics.”

“A transparent make-believe,” says I, “the real object is to entice young Hotspurs into the Confederate army.”

“Well said, Professor,” says he. “So much is pretty plain to a man up a tree. But what I’m driving at, is, Why is the camp located right here, close to the city?”

Then I began to smell a goodly sized mice. “Uncle Sam has an arsenal here,” says I.

“I should smile,” says he, with a sly wink. “With a hundred and fifty thousand stand of arms stored in it, and ammunition accordingly, and such.”

“Which the rebels are sorely hankering after,” says I. “For the double purpose of arming themselves, and unarming the Federal volunteers.”

“Ah,” says he, “the governor is a sly fox. But some people can look through a millstone, when it has a hole in it, as far as he. Now what bothers me is, that Uncle Sam is per-

fectly well aware of the meaning of this clumsy move on the military chess-board, and might just as easily turn it to his own advantage; but doesn't stir a finger."

"But," says I, "you are a member of the safety committee appointed by the President with full power to act in just such emergencies." (I don't know whether you are aware of the existence of this committee; it is composed of seven reliable and determined Union men, two of whom are personal friends of mine. The commander of the troops at the arsenal is among them; and they have the unlimited authority over all the military in this department.)

"There are seven of us," says he, with a bitter smile, "and the proverbial safety in a multitude of counsel is, in our case, the safety of the enemy. The committee is divided. Captain Lowe, Colonel Pith and myself are agreed that the camp should be bagged at once, before the mischief is fully hatched. But the two lawyers of the committee say that it would be clearly unlawful to interfere with the perfectly legal and legitimate exercise of the governor's function in organizing a camp of instruction of the militia of the State."

"That is so," says I; "but it is a mere pretense."

"Or course," he assented, "and it makes me mad to see how our wiseacres are letting the rebels get the better of us, with their eyes open, too. There's a safety committee for you!"

"Don't they propose to do anything at all?" I asked him.

"Oh yes!" he replied with a bitter laugh. "They are going to get a writ from the circuit court of the United States, — injunction, or prohibition, or something, I dare say they don't rightly know what themselves — to stop the rebels from taking the arsenal! That's the kind of fighting that suits the lawyers. I wonder why they don't get a writ of injunction against Jeff Davis and his Confederacy at once? There's as much chance of its being obeyed, as there is that our foxy governor will keep his hands off the arsenal, when he's ready to take it."

“But there are Mr. Colt, and Mr. Houel,” said I. “What do they say about it?”

“Oh,” exclaimed Jean Jacques wrathfully, “they are so d—d conservative, that they side with the lawyers.”

The two last named gentlemen I know well. Seeing the danger of our situation at once, I determined to show it to these friends, being fully aware that I could make them understand, even if the lawyers should prove invincible in their cast-iron conservatism. With the arsenal in possession of the governor’s partisans, and the police force under his control, the city would be absolutely at the mercy of the secessionists, which would seal the fate of the State. What effect that, giving them the command of the Mississippi river, might have on the final issue of the Union cause, is fearful to contemplate. So I determined to act promptly, and my plan was formed on the spot.

“Your Committee of Safety,” says I, to my friend Jean Jacques, “is posted, I suppose, as to the military force that might be brought to bear against the camp?”

“Perfectly,” he answered. “I tended to that myself. There are the two companies of regulars under command of Captain Lowe, that are now garrisoning the arsenal; four regiments of volunteers, mostly Germans, of which one is commanded by Colonel Pith, one by Colonel Scheffel, including the corps called Lützow’s Jaeger, which has been drilling all the Spring, and two other regiments, including your own, fully armed and equipped, among them four batteries of artillery under command of experienced officers that have served in Europe. Then there are four full regiments of homeguards, that have been sworn into service to protect the city. All these have been under instruction in the manual of arms and the elementary principles of forming into rauks, moving in bodies, marching, etc.”

“Are the regiments complete in numbers?” I asked.

“There are upward of eight thousand men in all,” he informed me. “But none of them are veterans, to be sure, except some of the officers.”

Says I, "is there any danger that these home-guards will take fright and fire at their own men in case of a scrimmage?"

He laughed. "There is no telling what raw recruits will do in case of a scare."

It is but fair to him to say, that he seconded my plan very effectually. To his prompt and energetic action under my direction, much of the signal success that crowned it is due. If the Union is to be saved, — and I have an abiding faith in its future — you may ascribe a large slice of the merit to his activity. How the *coup* was brought about, is best described perhaps, in a report of my friend Jean Jacques, made to me a day or two after the conversation detailed, and of which I send you a copy: .

"Acting on your suggestion, I had no difficulty in persuading Captain Lowe to visit with me, in disguise, Camp Jefferson. Our masks were perfect. The captain looked irresistibly droll as a portly negro wench, carrying a basket full of doughnuts and ginger cakes, while I shoved a little hand-cart with an ice-cream freezer imbedded in a tub full of ice. I had shaved off my mustache for the occasion, tanned my face with a cosmetic wash to the color of a bright mulatto, put on a flat nose and a kinky wig, and passed as the son of the cake-vender. The false-face of the captain fitted him to perfection; and though he is a Connecticut Yankee, he counterfeited the broad dialect of a Southern negro so closely that no one would have suspected his nativity. In this disguise we visited every part of the camp. Our only trouble was that we were kept busier selling our cakes and ice cream than we liked, for it interfered with our opportunities of observing what was going on and listening to the conversation of the soldiers and officers.

"It was a lovely May afternoon when we were there, and the camp was crowded with visitors. The beauty and fashion of Upper Tendom were in the ascendancy. Ladies in elegant toilets beamed upon the militiamen in their gay uniforms, their eyes outsparkling the diamonds they wore in profusion, their faces more radiant than the bright May afternoon. Say what you please about these fair secessionists, — they are certainly most captivating sirens, and I do not blame the young hot-heads for coveting their smiles.

"What we saw and heard there leaves no doubt, that our

worst surmises were but too well grounded. Not only is the leading sentiment in the camp that of enthusiastic sympathy with the South and the Southern Confederacy, but no secret is made there of the intended capture of the arsenal. Among other things we saw was the unpacking of several pieces of artillery, which had been taken apart and packed in separate boxes labeled "Marble." The outspoken devotion to the Southern cause of the captain of the steamboat 'Cygnet,' on which the boxes had been shipped, explains how it was possible to bring these cannon (as well as other arms and ammunition) from the United States Arsenal at Liberty and to transport them to the camp through the crowded streets of the city without exciting suspicion. Captain Lowe recognized them at once, as property of the United States.

"Well, the evidence we collected was so convincing as to the treasonable designs of the leading spirits in the camp, that our report at the next meeting of the committee brought both Mr. Colt and Mr. Houel over to our side. We stood five to two, then, and pretty soon one of the lawyers — Mr. Broadly — also gave in. He said, that in so momentous a matter it was highly desirable that there should be unanimity among the members of the committee, and that if the others voted for the taking of the camp, he would not stand out alone against it. This put Grover on his mettle. He had been pacing up and down the room in great perturbation of mind, while Colonel Pith and Captain Lowe discussed the plan of attack. Most of us thought that it would be best to surprise the encampment during the night, so as to avoid as much as possible all attempts at resistance on the part of the militia, and thus reduce the chances of bloodshed. But Mr. Grover was of a different opinion. He presently grasped the little black skull-cap he was wearing, dashed it to floor with an energetic fling, and exclaimed:

" 'Do the thing in open day, gentlemen, and not like a sneak-thief in the night; there can't be more than a thousand men in the camp; half or more of them are mere recruits, and the balance may have learned to parade on holidays and go through the manual of arms to the admiration of their wives and sweet-hearts, having seen no more of real service than our home guards. If they get no notice of our intention until we march upon them, there can be no trouble. But again I say, let us act openly, not as if we meant to *steal*, the camp, and I am with you.'

“ Captain Lowe at once sided with him. He said that as far as fighting went, he would undertake to whip the whole of the militiamen with his two companies of regulars. But he recommended that the whole of the available military forces be massed against the camp, so as to impress not only the officers in command there, but likewise any mob of secessionists in the streets of the city that might feel inclined to interfere, with the utter absurdity of resistance.”

Such was Jean Jacques' report to me. I suppose you have read the account of the affair as it was described in the papers. As is usual for the press, they gave a confused and garbled statement of what happened at the camp and on the march with the prisoners to the arsenal, colored to suit their respective prejudices; not one of them had any real insight into the inception of the decisive move or into its absolute necessity for the safety of the Union cause in our State.

— So much for the part I took in this master stroke of strategy. The surrender was substantially unconditional. There were curses, both loud and deep, and gnashing of teeth; but not a drop of blood was spilt nor a skin scratched in the business proper. Our raw troops with one deplorable exception, behaved like veterans, the exasperating taunts, the maledictions and insults notwithstanding, that were plentifully heaped upon them by the disappointed aspirants for martial glory, as these were marched off to the very arsenal they had so confidently counted on taking by storm. Quite interesting was it to witness the behavior of the different individuals in submitting to their capture: Rage, more or less open or heroically suppressed, of the hotheaded Southern partisans, baffled of a promising scheme in furtherance of their interest; disappointment, sad and deep, of the warm-hearted Southern patriot, to whom severance from the Union meant prosperity for his section of the country, and who therefore saw a calamity in every check to its accomplishment; the profound regret of those among them who refused to believe the plans of their leaders to be disloyal and looked upon the interference

by the Federal government as an act of high-handed oppression. One incipient warrior, — the captain of a neatly uniformed metropolitan volunteer company that had attracted and filled with admiration the lady visitors to the cantonment — posed for the honor of a tragic hero in melodrama. “Never!” he exclaimed, in a deep bass of hollow pathos, when our friend Jean Jacques politely requested him to hand over his sword, “Never! No venal hireling of that tyrannical despot, Lincoln, shall vaunt a true man’s sword, save as a sheath for its blade!” And drawing his weapon with a majestic frown, he struck it with such violence flatwise against a fence rail, that it broke to pieces. “Thus,” he added, throwing the hilt at the feet of the officer, “be ever the fate of tyrants!”

—The tragic phase of the affair, distorted and garbled as usual by the press to suit the bias of the respective partisans, came about naturally enough, and in spite of the utmost care and precaution taken by our commanders to prevent just such scenes as gave a foretaste of the horrors of civil war. In the hope of avoiding any attempt to rescue the prisoners on the part of the mob of angry secessionists, and impressing the prisoners themselves with the absurdity of any hope of escape, each of the captives was flanked by two Federal soldiers, and sandwiched between two ranks, so that each of the captives was in effect surrounded by a guard of seven men, effectually cutting off all intercourse between them. In this order they were marched through the streets of the city toward the arsenal. But the preparations consumed much time, requiring frequent halts of the head of the column while the rear was being formed. There was, of course, a vast concourse of people attracted by the military spectacle, and the news of the capture of the camp, which spread like wildfire all over the city, creating the wildest excitement. The streets were literally covered with a surging, jostling, pushing crowd of human beings, — boys, mostly, and men, though not lacking for women, too, — pressing and being pressed against the military, who found it, at times, exceedingly difficult to main-

tain order in the ranks. Doors and windows of the houses along the line of march were peopled with eager spectators. The trees, even, about and near the camping grounds, were bearing a plentiful crop of venturesome boys and men, excited and wrought up by the unwonted military spectacle. The capture had been planned for an hour at which, it was thought, but few if any visitors would be there. Some, however, had arrived; among them, notably the captain of the steamboat *Cygnets*, that had carried the cannon, now mounted, significantly enough, on several of the main avenues of the cantonment. He had been invited, it transpired later, with his family, to witness a dress parade, and partake of lunch in the general's tent; and he had brought his wife and daughter, the latter a lovely maiden of fourteen.

Matters had progressed entirely according to program, without accident or mishap of any kind, until the last of the prisoners were being marshaled into line, and the rear of the column was about to leave the grounds. By this time the crowd had become so dense and unruly, that Captain Lowe, who had ordered one of his companies of regulars to bring up the rear, found it necessary to send them on ahead to clear the street, fearing to intrust the task of driving back the multitude, that had now assumed the character of a mob, to any but thoroughly disciplined soldiers. I thought the captain was right; for there was no telling what havoc might have been made in a collision between the mob and undisciplined recruits armed with muskets and bayonets. But it turned out to be a sad mistake. It so happened that the last company in the column, was composed of inexperienced workingmen and artisans, most of whom had never handled a gun in their lives, and who had been sworn into service as home-guards but a few days before. They had not been intrusted with the guarding of any of the prisoners, and were to be followed in the march by the regulars, who had been sent forward. As soon as they had marched on, the crowd that had forced its way into the camp grounds, closed around the company of recruits,

hooting, jeering and deriding them. The officers succeeded in keeping their men from resenting the insults heaped upon them, and hoped for the return of the regulars. But just as they were leaving the grounds, a missile was thrown into the ranks of the recruits — not a bomb, dealing death and destruction generally, but a comparatively harmless piece of dirt, meant for a practical joke rather than an assault on that massive body of military. But it demoralized those undisciplined recruits, most of whom believed themselves attacked by the mob and gave way to a morbid feeling of panic. At this critical moment the report of a gun was heard, — or of a pistol, it has not been definitely ascertained which nor by whom the shot was fired — and the panic was complete. Some one in the ranks shouted “fire!” and the men turned round and discharged their muskets point blank into the dense mass of people. The effect was terrific. Hardly one of the charges fired at such close range that did not find its lodgment in some human body. It afterward appeared, that there were more dead and wounded than men in the company that had fired. You know that I am not overly tender-hearted; but I hope to be spared such another sight of carnage and butchery, including among the victims women and children. One of the most affecting incidents was the death of the steamboat captain’s lovely daughter, whom I saw in a sitting posture leaning against the trunk of a tree, a crimson spot in her white robe indicating where the minnié bullet had pierced her heart. Even in that awful moment of consternation and terror I saw a man stop to gaze on the exquisite beauty of that childish face, so tranquil in its deep sleep. Did he think of the precious offering her father was called on to make for the sake of the cause he had espoused?

— One of the consequences of the taking of the camp is, that this city at least is thoroughly alive to the fact that Uncle Sam has shaken off the torpor into which the impotence of the last administration had thrown the government. Those of the sympathizers with the South, who had been taught by their

orators and politicians, that no resistance would be made to the secession of the Cotton States, are beginning to realize their mistake. A panic fully as mad as that which wrought the fearful holocaust on the tenth of May has seized upon the people of this city. The absurdest rumors gain ready credence. The wealthy inhabitants of the West End are in a state of unreasoning alarm, fearing a general massacre at the hands of the brutal soldiery. "The Dutch are coming!" was whispered about, there, striking terror into the hearts of the timid, and causing anxious alarm among those better informed. For you are aware, I suppose, that three-fourths of the volunteers on the Union side and nine-tenths of the home-guards are German-speaking citizens; a circumstance arousing at once the wrath of the secessionists and giving color to the rumor, that the enraged soldiery were planning to sack the West End. There was a general exodus from that part of the city. All who could do so, sought safety in flight. Steamboats and railroad cars were crowded with fugitives. Carriages, wagons, vehicles of any description were in such demand, that some of the wealthier householders offered five, ten, — in some instances twenty-five — dollars an hour for the use of one. Truly, Victor, Pan is a mighty god, and unreasoning fright makes abject fools of men! For the German home-guards were almost equally apprehensive of dire vengeance from the secessionists; only they, belonging generally to the poorer classes, had no means of leaving the city, and sought safety in remaining together under arms. War is surely upon us and we are beginning to learn its lessons. Get ready yourself!

— I have been out at Busch Bluff. They are all well there, so far as physical health goes. But the capture of Camp Jefferson has roused its inmates also, from the even tenor of their way in a most remarkable fashion. That old Auf dem Busch should feel stirred up, when I explained to him the real meaning of the thing, is natural enough. He was for enlisting in

the war at once ; but I succeeded in convincing him, that his proper place was with the home-guards, where, for the purposes of defense, his services would be equal to those of any younger man ; while a more vigorous constitution was required to undergo the hardships and privations of service in the field. But Woldemar and Pauline are the ones whose behavior constitutes an unbroken series of comedies. The former has been going about with a hang-dog look ever since my return from the capital, in strange contrast with his usual self-sufficiency ; but yesterday he took my breath away when he announced in my presence, his resolution to enlist. You recollect how he used to sneer and smile in his superior way at the idea of calling a scrimmage between the North and South a war ? I remember one occasion when he quoted from a modern dramatist :

“ ’Twill be a war as ’twere in Donnybrook.
I long to see these rustie cavaliers
Set in the field, and hear their officers
Command with hay and straw for right and left.
What service might a thousand soldiers render
In such a struggle ! ”

And now to think that he has actually submitted his precious person to the arbitrary control of some such officer ! Can the fact that Leslie May is a prisoner of war have anything to do with his sudden fit of patriotism ? For Leslie May *is* a prisoner of war. It was just after I had related the rather romantic episode of his capture that I noticed what strange effect this news produced on Pauline, and that Woldemar announced his determination to enlist. Your sister was a perfect blaze of color, and though she said nothing, her sparkling eyes hung on my lips as I was leisurely describing the brave bearing of young May when he was arrested, as if she would drink in my words. The hot-headed youngster, by the way, was the only one of the seven hundred and odd prisoners we took at the camp who refused to be liberated on his parole.

“You may deprive me of my birthright as an American citizen,” he said (and I could not but admire his manly dignity as he said it), “but it must be by your own act of tyranny; for I will not cowardly yield it up, nor forswear my right to take revenge for the outrage you have perpetrated this day.”

—Our friend Ralph Payton was also among the prisoners (he wore a captain's uniform). He was not so refractory as Leslie. I wonder whether we did him a good turn in relieving him of further duty of fighting for the Confederacy, or whether he will burden his soul with perjury to find favor in the eyes of Miss May. For she will scorn him, don't you think, if he stays at home?



THE WAR FEVER IN A WESTERN TOWN.

AFTER an absence of some years, Colonel May — now addressed as Senator May — had returned to his home near Brookfield, with the ladies of his household. The presence of the family at May Meadows was one of the themes talked over in Mr. Burden's bar-room, as well as elsewhere about town. The guests at Burden's were now entertained by the gossiping chit-chat of a lively young bartender; for Bob Rountree had turned his back upon the Dutch Store, and was devoting his talents to attract customers to the groggery, of which he made a real little paradise to lazy bummers and gossip-loving idlers. Just now the return of the May family to the old mansion furnished abundant material for talk, and Bob had much to say, particularly when the Honorable Ralph Payton, M. C. elect, happened to be present, about the ravishing beauty of the senator's daughter, whose fame as a society belle in Washington circles eclipsed, according to Bob Rountree's account, even the brilliant reputation of her father as a leader in Congress. It was known, of course, that Mr. Payton was a frequent visitor at May Meadows, and Bob Rountree hinted slyly, that the close political connection between the senator and the congressman from this district might lead to relations more intimate still: who knows? Whereat the Honorable Ralph Payton was wont to smile complacently.

A little later on Leslie May also joined the family. For he had been released by the military authorities, who were sorely puzzled to know just what to do with the unaccommodating young rebel, who persisted in his refusal to take the oath demanded from him, that he would abstain from hostilities toward the Federal government, nor would he even give his parole to

remain neutral until regularly exchanged. The State had not seceded, nor declared war against the government, and the young militiaman's presence at Camp Jefferson had been perfectly lawful; no overt act of any kind could be proved against him, that militated in the slightest degree against the law of the land. On what pretense, then, could he be held prisoner? The Committee of Safety knew well, that the writ of habeas corpus had not been suspended, and that no Federal or State court would, if applied to, deny him his freedom. So the committee deemed it wise to avoid an airing in public of their authority; and rather let the refractory captive go.

His advent into Brookfield was hailed with pleasure, not only by the old and young people — male and female — of the town (for he was very popular among them all), but also in the groggery. Contrary to his previous habits, he was now a frequent visitor there. So was the Hon. Ralph Payton; for though the earlier friendship between him and Bob Rountree had cooled considerably after the trial of Victor Waldhorst; yet his candidacy last summer had brought him into closer contact with the bar-room, and thus revived the old relations between them. And Bob Rountree had developed into so glowing an admirer of the candidate for Congress, was so eloquent in lauding the statesman-like qualities of his friend, and supplied him with such generous quantities of "soft sawder," that the young congressman found Burden's a pleasant place to spend a leisure half hour at, now and then, — even after the election — to talk over matters and things in general; mostly, now, the chances of war, and what Congress, and particularly what he himself was going to do at the coming extra session. It happened sometimes, that Mr. Payton and Mr. May (Jr.) would meet at Burden's. Not by preconcert, however. On the contrary: Leslie had permitted himself, once, to hint, that he deemed the visiting of a tippling house by a member of Congress an impropriety. Payton would surely have resented such words if spoken by any one but the brother of the senator's daughter; as it was, he contented himself by retorting,

that he thought himself in good company with the son of a United States Senator, — a remark, which the young bartender applauded as a good hit, turning the laugh against Leslie. The eyes of the latter sparkled for a second, as if intending a sharp reply ; but he, too, refrained from offensive words, turning the matter off with the good-natured quip, that he had been licensed by the supreme court to practice at the bar, — a privilege not shared by the congressman.

For Leslie had a purpose in visiting the bar-room. A purpose, not recognized as a purpose at all until it sprang into conscious existence on being taken prisoner at Camp Jefferson. Until then, the idea of forcible resistance to the separation of any State from the Union was to him, as it was to many in the South, simply preposterous ; and when the conviction flashed upon him that the government was employing its military force to prevent secession, his hatred of puritanism and cant was centered against the government of the United States, which, in his estimation, was guilty of tyrannical usurpation of power in suppressing and violating the sovereignty of the States. He had left the metropolis with the determination to resist, to the utmost of his power, such despotism. He threw up his practice of law, just then beginning to be remunerative, to recruit for the Confederate service. His success exceeded his own expectation. For Brookfield and the surrounding country was in as high a state of excitement as other parts of the State ; and Leslie May, when he had a purpose, could talk pleasantly, and sway men's minds with a jest or a smile that would have meant nothing in any one else. And he added to his personal popularity the prestige of a name that connected him with one of the oldest families of Virginia.

Events of war-like character chased each other in rapid succession throughout the State, keeping the excitement at fever heat. A Confederate army was known to approach from the South, which had been raised by the Confederate Congress for the special purpose of wresting the State from Federal control, marching directly toward the capital. But the Federal forces

reached the capitol long before the Confederates, spreading consternation in the halls of the legislature. The members, trembling with fear of the treatment to be expected at the hands of a soldiery they had vilified in unmeasured terms, sought safety in flight, although the commander of the Union forces had, immediately on reaching the city, issued a proclamation guaranteeing that no citizen or officer should be molested in any way so long as he kept the peace and obeyed the law, but threatening condign punishment for every offense against Federal authority, and particularly for any molestation of citizens on account of loyalty to the Union.

The governor himself having fled, along with the terrified legislature, as well as most of the executive officers, it became necessary to organize a government for the protection of life and property. So precipitate had been the flight of the members of the legislature, that they had not found time to close the session in parliamentary form, but left the journals unfinished. Rattling what of valuables were within easy reach, not forgetting to deplete the treasury of its last dollar, they boarded an extra train of the railroad, and steamed out of the city, to be seen there no more in their official dignity.

Before addressing himself to the pursuit of the enemy, the general in command of the Federal troops installed Colonel Raubenfels as military governor, leaving his regiment with him to cover the city and to enforce whatever measures might be deemed necessary for the protection of the loyal element of the population. This appointment, however wise it may have been in a military point of view, did not contribute to the conciliation of the rebel element of the State. Muttered imprecations and threats marked the indignation of the Southern sympathizers at what they denounced as an insult to American freemen: placing in authority over them a foreigner, — one of those hated Dutchmen that were abolitionists by instinct, whose very name they could not pronounce without a grimace of contempt.

Leslie May was not slow to take advantage of this wide-

spread feeling of resentment to augment his list of volunteers for the Confederate service. He skillfully supplemented the general bitterness of feeling against a military governor, by ridiculing the person of Rauhenfels, whom he caricatured as a crazy book-worm, gone mad over German metaphysics, and preaching the perfect equality between the negroes and white men. And the roll of the company he endeavored to raise filled up with astonishing rapidity.

Not so noisily demonstrative, perhaps, but quite as earnest in their convictions, were a number of loyal citizens at Brookfield and in the surrounding country. While the *Ozark Argus*, enlarged, now, to the respectable size of seven columns to each of its four pages, denounced the "outlandish military Dictator" in the most violent terms, the opposition paper must self-evidently defend, though with ill-grace, the administration of the military governor. With ill-grace: because the editor of the *Brookfield Standard* shared the feeling against military interference with the civil administration of the State government.

Meanwhile May Meadows took on the appearance of the lively times of old. The presence there of Nellie and Leslie May alone served to add animation to the household, although Leslie had abated somewhat his habit of teasing, and Nellie's blithesome beauty had taken on a touch of soft refinement, subduing slightly her natural vivacity, but in nowise diminishing the charm of her winsome ways. Mrs. May received the homage due to a lady of her distinction — as wife to a United States senator — with all the dignity of a lady descended from one of the first families of Virginia; a little loftily, perhaps, in the estimation of the sturdy Western sovereigns who had so often cast their suffrages for Colonel May; but with the air of such genuine Southern hospitality as dispelled all suspicion of patronage.

The senator maintained his old courteous, urbane self, with a smile and a pleasant word for each of his numerous constituents who cared to shake hands with him and to con-

gratulate him upon his promotion to the United States Senate. To the ladies of his household he displayed his usual cheerful temper; no casual visitor would have detected the slightest trace of care or anxiety in his conversation or behavior. Nellie alone suspected at times that he felt somewhat keenly the increased responsibility conditioned by his new dignity, and wondered not that he should feel a little anxious in looking forward to the new theater of action awaiting him at the approaching extra session of Congress.

But the center of attraction at May Meadows was Nellie May. That the young men should be dazzled by her beauty, and take advantage of her hospitality to enjoy her society, was not a new experience, either to her or her people. Still, it was something of a novelty to find herself popular with her own sex. Not only did her schoolday friends press upon her their claims anew, among them Hettie Shannon and Emily Matlack, who gushed over their "dearly beloved friend, after an absence of so many years," but newer acquaintances among the fair denizens of Brookfield, — and many who had no claims either as friends or acquaintances — eagerly sought the privilege of being on visiting terms with the reigning belle. Her drawing-room was as much resorted to by lady callers in the day-time, as in the evening, by gentlemen, or rather by gentlemen *and* ladies, for in the first flush of her popularity, the ladies enjoyed the company usually assembled at May Meadows as much, almost, as did the gentlemen, though Nellie May monopolized the homage of the men, as acknowledged queen of her circle. Conversation was always lively there, for the hostess possessed the rare tact of encouraging others to talk. Timid young maidens and bashful swains sometimes marveled to find themselves possessed of hitherto unsuspected conversational talents, when Nellie had succeeded in drawing them out on subjects that were familiar to them.

The honorable Ralph Payton was, of course, a frequent guest at May Meadows. Not only in the evening. For he had many, though sometimes rather transparent excuses, for

visits during the day — consultations with the senator on political, or with Leslie on military matters — never omitting, however, to visit Miss May on such occasions, if she was visible. There was a rumor that the young congressman was the accepted lover of Miss May; but just how it originated, or what truth there was about it, was not clearly established. But since the young lady did not take the trouble to contradict it — not, perhaps, aware of its existence — and as Payton himself, on all occasions encouraged it, there was ample excuse for the jealous chagrin of aspiring swains, who regarded the beautiful heiress in the light of a much coveted prize, and for the secret rejoicing of marriageable belles, who saw in her a most formidable rival. Still, nothing that took place in the drawing-room circles could be fairly pointed to as a confirmation of the rumor. Assiduous he was in his attentions, — so much was patent; but he could boast of no familiarities allowed him, no preference shown him by the charming hostess. Awkward and bashful Orlando Jones was smiled upon as sweetly by her as was he. She dispensed her drawing-room courtesies impartially; even Mr. Danforth, the newly arrived Yankee storekeeper, was made to feel as much at ease as any of her most honored guests of Southern proclivities.

In this one respect perhaps, the young congressman was at a disadvantage, even. Miss May had caught the war fever in a form characteristic of the women of the South. She was enthusiastic in her conviction of the gallantry and soldier-like qualities of the Southerners and firm in the faith, that any passage of arms with the North must result in a glorious victory for the South. And, like most of her country-women, she admired chivalry for its own sake: to her the crowning glory of manhood consisted in the undaunted courage to assert one's rights, and, if need be, to defend them with a strong hand, regardless of any cost save honor. And Payton, counting on Miss May's enthusiastic hero-worship, and her devotion to the Southern cause, had been eloquent in picturing to her the deeds of valor to be performed by chivalrous Southern

knights; and he had counted well. In listening to his brilliant rhapsody her eyes had sparkled, as he had seen them sparkle once before — on his first visit to her at Washington; and she had smiled on him as she had smiled at that time, as if she were proud of him. And her smile had inspired him with real enthusiasm and the determination to take up arms in earnest in defense of her beloved South. But now he was under a cloud. For the honors that beckoned to him at Washington had taken firm hold of his imagination, and he had determined to sacrifice to them the tempting opportunity to distinguish himself on the field of glory.

When Leslie, on returning from the metropolis, had suggested to him the plan of raising a regiment for the Confederate army, he reminded him of the proclamation of the President calling a session of Congress for the Fourth of July, and of his paramount duty to serve the country in the council of the nation, rather than in the army. Leslie had been skeptical on the subject of duty, and tried to dissuade him from a course that might expose him to the reproach of lukewarmness in his courage; whereat the young congressman showed a proper spirit of resentment, quoting the example of Senator May, who had likewise announced his unalterable determination to attend the extra session, which he deemed a high duty to his country.

“And have you forgotten,” he exclaimed, as Leslie sneeringly suggested that there might be a difference between the case of an experienced statesman, who had been the acknowledged leader of his party for years, and whose counsel was looked for and demanded by the nation, and that of a tyro, who would hardly have time to learn his parliamentary A B C during the entire extra session, — “have you forgotten that I was compelled to take an oath — my simple promise was not accepted, as you well know — not to take up arms against the United States?”

“Oh, you took an oath, did you?” Leslie remarked, smiling sarcastically. “Well, I did not. Though I would not lay much stress on an oath taken under compulsion. To you,

I suppose, it comes handy to pose for a persecuted martyr. And for fear that that one oath you took might not be strong enough to curb your military ardor, you must needs go to Washington to take another 'to support the constitution of the United States,' etc., which will keep you out of harm's way until the scrimmage is over."

"What do you mean, Leslie May?" Payton blustered out with frowning brow. "I hope you do not impugn my courage?"

"There is no occasion for that between us two, Ralph Payton," Leslie replied quietly, with a look, however, that in no wise tended to reassure his friend. "But I do admire your prudence, which, you know, is sometimes the better part of valor. Only, it may not be so easy to convince sister Nellie, when she comes to hear of your conscientious scruples, of the high moral quality of your courage."

Payton was too wise to resent the sarcasm of Leslie's mood, but endeavored instead, to conciliate the brother of the lady in question. "I hope," he said, "that you will not influence your sister's judgment to my injury in this matter." Then he added, in a beseeching voice, tender in its pathos of self pity, "You cannot know how hard it is for me to be denied all opportunity to show my devotion to the cause of the South by fighting for it."

"Don't fret about my influencing Nellie," said Leslie, reassuringly. "Nellie will not permit any influencing by me or anybody else." But the smile that accompanied his words told Payton even more plainly that in Leslie's opinion his sister would need no prompting to resent her admirer's lack of enthusiasm.

A gay and lively company had assembled in the parlor at May Meadows. News had reached the town that the Confederate army on its way to the capital had arrived within a day's march of Brookfield; while General Lowe was marching with

a considerable force to intercept the Confederates ; and expectation stood tip-toe.

Senator May moved about among his guests with easy self-possession, unaffected, apparently, by the excitement of those around him. When pressed for an opinion, as he was by most of his visitors, he gave it as his judgment that the State would not, as it should not, secede ; that the Confederacy would go to pieces, — not because of military weakness, for that the South possessed much the best fighting material, and had the advantage of enthusiasm under the present condition of things, which would go far to neutralize the numerical strength of the North — but because the real interests of the South lay in the Union, — a fact of which the Southern States would soon convince themselves. Meanwhile every advantage gained by the Confederate armies would strengthen the cause of the South, enabling it to dictate so much more effectually such better terms for the reconstruction of the Union as would secure the South in the undisturbed enjoyment of its property rights, and remove the bone of contention between the two sections.

“ But what will become of us in the interim, until the belligerent powers have settled matters to their notion ? ” demanded Mr. Huffard, who was one of the company. “ It is all well enough to hope better things for the future ; but meanwhile, the two armies may meet here ; and it is a question that I would not give odds on to guess which is going to whip, and which of them would be more tender of *our* property rights.”

“ Why, Mr. Huffard ! ” Payton interfered. “ Can you doubt, for a moment, who are our friends ? The army under command of General Ciper has been organized for the express purpose of protecting us against the tyranny of the Federal government.”

“ Oh, oh, Mr. Huffard ! ” echoed pretty Emily Matlack. “ Surely you do not mean to doubt our friends, and take sides with the Yankees ? ”

“ Oh, no, Mr. Huffard ! ” the fair Hettie Shannon chimed in. “ Indeed you know better than that. Why, you told us

about the tyrannical Dutch Dictator yourself, and that he and his minions must be driven out of the State. Now, didn't you, Mr. Huffard?"

The editor of the *Ozark Argus* laughed, and said, with a polite bow of acknowledgment toward his fair interlocutors, "I am sure, ladies, that I am obliged to you for your good opinion of me. Mr. Danforth, there, will agree with you, I suspect, in acquitting me of undue partiality for the Yankees; and our friend, here, the congressman, ought to know, if anybody, whether the Southern cause has a stauncher defender than myself; or whether he had a truer friend than the *Ozark Argus* during the canvass last summer. I trust he does not mean to spurn the ladder on which he climbed into office. But that is neither here nor there. My anxiety is, what is going to happen to us if the neighborhood of Brookfield become a battlefield?"

"There isn't going to be much of a battle, anyway," said Payton. "Let the riff-raff of hirelings, that have sold their carcasses to the Yankee government, once get sight of a corps of determined soldiers fighting for a principle, and they will skedaddle like a herd of sheep at sight of the wolf. They won't fight at all, unless they outnumber us ten to one, as they did when they took Camp Jefferson. Any smaller odds than ten to one we would have fought, — and licked, too, or driven to ignominious flight."

Among the guests of the evening were a number of young men who had enlisted in Leslie's company of volunteers, invited by Nellie herself; for she delighted to honor the brave men who took up arms in defense of their country. One of these, who had been an attentive listener, now put the question to Payton:

"You say, we; were you, then, one of those taken at that capture?"

"Unfortunately, I was," Payton answered.

"There was nothing to be ashamed of in being overpowered, was there?" queried the young man.

“Ashamed of?” Payton repeated with emphasis. “I should think not. They were ten to one against us, with whole parks of artillery, and regiments of cavalry. But if they had been twenty to one, and every one of them a walking arsenal, none of us would have run.”

“Ah! how brave!” exclaimed Miss Matlack.

“How glorious!” echoed Miss Shannon.

Nellie caught sight of Leslie's contemptuous smile, and blushed.

“Why, then, unfortunate?” his interlocutor persisted.

“Because,” Payton answered with defiant swagger, though he blushed likewise as he spoke, “because the cowardly tyrants made me swear on the Bible not to take up arms against the United States government.”

“What a pity!” whimpered Miss Matlack.

“How cruel!” echoed Miss Shannon.

“But it seems to me that that ought not to trouble you,” Mr. Huffard suggested. “You are going to Washington for the extra session; at least that is the current opinion about it. If you do, you will be out of the way of any fighting, at least as long as the session lasts; and by the time it is over, the politicians will have the matter in hand again, and will patch up a peace.”

“Yes, I will go to Congress,” said Payton, with aggressive positiveness, an angry expression flitting for a moment over his face; “I will go to Congress, though that Dutch Dictator send an army of his hirelings to stop me.”

“Leslie,” said Nellie to her brother, “what is there about this Dutch Dictator that Mr. Payton speaks of?”

“Why, don't you know,” Mr. Payton hastened to answer instead of Leslie, “that he is that rascally Professor Rauhenfels, who forced that silly cub, Waldhorst, to vote against your father.”

“Yes, so I learned,” Nellie remarked. “But why should he send an army to stop you from going to Congress?”

Payton paused for an instant, and Leslie spoke.

“I suppose that Ralph knows,” he said, “that Victor Waldhorst is the governor’s aide-de-camp, or private secretary, and might naturally wish to take revenge upon his old enemy (from grammar-class times, you know) by clogging his career to glory in the particular sphere he has chalked out for himself. For you know, don’t you, that Ralph is as touchy on the matter of honor, almost, as Victor Waldhorst? He thinks that his career as a soldier is closed to him, because he was a prisoner at Camp Jefferson.”

“And were not *you* a prisoner at Camp Jefferson?” asked Nellie.

“Aye, but that is a grey horse of a very different color,” said Leslie, laughing. “I am not a congressman, you know; and while the pathway to glory or death is open to me, poor Ralph’s only chance to distinguish himself is to hie him to Washington, take father’s place as leader in the House of Representatives, and demolish the Lincoln government by dint of parliamentary strategy.”

Payton frowned darkly. “You are singularly sarcastic and unfair, Leslie,” he said, taking his eyes off Nellie’s face, which he had uneasily regarded during Leslie’s speech. “I did not say, that the dictator would send an army to stop me from going to Congress. I only said, that if he did, he would not stop me.”

Mr. Danforth had been an attentive listener, but had not, so far, taken part in the conversation. He now said, not addressing anyone in particular, but obviously with the view of smoothing over things for Mr. Payton:

“It will undoubtedly be a good thing for our town if Mr. Payton carries out his intention. With him in the House, and Mr. May in the Senate, Brookfield will be well represented in Congress.” Then, fixing his eye on Senator May, he continued: “But I am like Mr. Huffard. I have some apprehension as to the way in which we will be affected by the two hostile armies in case they meet anywhere near here.”

“Oh, I am sure we need give ourselves no uneasiness on

that score," said the senator. "It may, certainly, become a source of some annoyance and trouble; but we should remember that both the contending armies are composed of our fellow-citizens, who will be as careful of the rights of non-combatants as if we were friends."

"I don't agree with you, Senator," said Mr. Huffard. "Once they cry 'Havoe, and let slip the dogs of war,' passion and fury will rule, instead of justice and discretion. We have as yet no disciplined soldiery on either side. And even if no harm come to us from the soldiers themselves, there are always thieves and depredating marauders following an army for the sake of plunder and spoliation. And then," he added, lowering his voice and looking about to ascertain whether any of the servants were within earshot, "there is a kind of property that might take itself off of its own accord, if the Yankees offered inducement and shelter."

"Speaking for the Yankees," said Mr. Danforth, with an assuring smile, "I believe that I am justified in announcing that nothing of the kind suggested by you is intended, or need be feared."

"Granting, that there will be no open confiscation of slaves," said Mr. Huffard, "how will even the Yankee government prevent the abolitionists that are rushing into the ranks of its armies from running the underground railroads on a lavish scale? And what of the marauders?"

"Why, as to them," said Mr. Danforth, "the people will be able to protect themselves. Captain May, here, has a company of youngsters under his command that would make short work of stopping them in any little scheme of plunder or thieving."

"Oh, Mr. Danforth!" almost shrieked Miss Matlack. "Youngsters!"

"Why, I am sure they are gallant heroes, every one of them!" Miss Shannon added.

"At least they expect to be," said Leslie, exchanging a pleasant nod with some of the members of his company that happened to be present; "for as yet they have had no oppor-

tunity to earn their spurs." Then turning to Mr. Danforth, he added: "But you are mistaken, sir, if you expect us to remain at home here, guarding our hen-roosts and posing at parades for the amusement of idlers. There are old men enough to serve as home-guards; and if need be —"

"There are women too," exclaimed Nellie, resolutely, interrupting her brother, "who, on occasion, can handle a revolver. Let no man capable of carrying a musket stay at home for our protection. I would blush to furnish an excuse for any coward to shirk his duty to his country."

Payton winced under Nellie's enthusiastic and spirited words; but he joined heartily in the applause that rewarded her for the patriotic sentiment to which she had given utterance. Leslie noted with much pleasure the glances of grateful appreciation with which his volunteers regarded the fair speaker. Even the ladies shouted: "Bravo! Well spoken!" and the features of Senator May brightened with pride as he looked upon his daughter.

Payton, who had been furtively watching Miss May all this while, now saw her cross the room, meeting the octoroon girl Cressie at the door, who had been beckoning and nodding to her mistress in the endeavor to catch her eye without attracting general attention. As Nellie approached, the girl whispered something into her ear, at which she was noticed to change color. By this time the attention of the whole company was drawn to them, and a dead silence ensued.

"You may as well come in and tell us all you know," said Miss May, as she noted the expectant faces of her guests. "What was it that Xerxes told you?"

The slave girl was evidently under the pressure of some excitement, but spoke calmly enough, in almost pure English, remarkably free from the ordinary negro dialect. "Xerxes himself saw nothing," she repeated. "He met Dandy Slick at the Frog Pond; and Dandy, so Xerxes said, told him, that he had seen more than a hundred thousand soldiers all in grey uniforms —"

“That is the Confederate army under General Ciper!” shouted Payton, interrupting the girl.

“Go on,” said Leslie, drawing closer toward Cressie. “Where did he see them?”

“Xerxes did not tell me,” said the girl; but added of her own accord: “I suppose it was on Kickapoo Prairie, while standing on the bluff at James’ Fork.”

“What makes you think so?” asked Leslie.

“Because Dandy told Xerxes that he had been fishing at Winslo’s Run,” said Cressie.

“Well—and what else? Go on!” urged Leslie.

“He told Xerxes—so Xerxes said to me—that he got frightened at all the soldiers, with their cannons, and muskets, and he ran away as fast as his legs would carry him, through the woods, toward Brookfield. And he almost ran into the bayonet of a soldier in a blue uniform; and pretty soon this soldier marched him off for a prisoner over to the Boonville road, and there,—so Xerxes said that Dandy told him—he saw more than another hundred thousand soldiers, all in blue uniforms, marching—”

“When was this?” Leslie interrupted her.

“He did not tell me,” answered Cressie. “But it must have been in the middle of the afternoon; because Xerxes just got back from the Frog Pond—”

“What on earth was he doing at the Frog Pond?” Leslie again interrupted.

“I don’t know, he did not tell me. But I suspect he went there after some rushes to fix his chair with. And it’s a good nine miles from Winslo’s Run to the Frog Pond.”

Leslie looked sharply at the octoroon girl and then at Nellie.

“What do you think of this cock-and-bull story?” he asked the latter. “Cressie, I suppose, is to be trusted, and maybe Xerxes. But what about this Dandy Slick? I have never heard of him before.”

“Nor I,” said Nellie. “He must be a new arrival.”

“Oh,” said Mr. Huffard, “he belongs to Jake Boyd. He’s

as lazy a scoundrel as you'll find, even among the darkies of this region. It is likely enough that he's been out fishing, for that's what he spends half his time at. And if he got home from Winslo's Run in less than half a day, he was mightily scared, you bet. But you may back a scared nigger against a second class race-horse, any day."

"Did Xerxes tell you anything more?" asked Nellie.

"Bring him here at once," shouted Leslie, before Cressie had answered the last question.

When the girl had withdrawn, he turned to his father, asking him what he thought of the matter.

"There's no doubt on earth, but that it is General Ciper's army," Payton volunteered.

"And what about the blue-coats?" asked one of the volunteers of Leslie's company. "If they have met, there must have been a battle before now."

"Why, yes!" Miss Matlack exclaimed with animation. "Now, I am sure, that I heard the roar of cannon about sundown. I thought it was thunder at the time: but it must have been cannonading."

Before the return of Cressie with Xerxes there was a lively interchange of opinion among the ladies and gentlemen, whether cannonading had been heard, or could have been heard at Brookfield, if there had been an engagement. Mr. Huffard ridiculed the idea that the armies could have met in the time indicated. He begged the ladies and gentlemen to remember that niggers were constitutionally addicted to lying, and if Dandy Slick had even stumbled across a scout, or a corporal's guard of skirmishers, he would naturally magnify them into an army.

Even after the negro Xerxes had been examined and cross-examined with all the astuteness that Leslie could bring to bear, the company separated without having learned whether an action had taken place, or was to be expected; or whether the whole story of Dandy Slick was a fabrication, or the hallucination of a badly scared negro.

XXXIV.

AFTER THE BATTLE.

THE population in and about Brookfield were much divided in political sentiment. The majority undoubtedly sympathized warmly with the South. Many of them were pronounced secessionists, eager to separate the State from the old Union and to join the new republic, strong in their faith in the glory and prosperity of an empire based upon the cherished institution of slavery made sure and safe from let or hindrance. Others, and not a few, adherents to the doctrine of State sovereignty, saw in the attempt on the part of the government to coercion submission, tyrannical interference with their rights and liberty, and felt it to be the duty of freemen to resist. Among those, too, whose sympathies were on the side of the Union, there was a difference in motive. Of the zealous, conscientious fanatics, who hailed the war as a scourge employed by Providence to punish the South and bring about the abolition of slavery, there were not so many in the Southwest; the predominant element among the loyal population were indifferent on the subject of slavery — some opposing it on principle, others as unwise in policy, quite a large proportion favoring it as an economic and beneficial institution — but all condemning secession as a political heresy, equally illogical in principle and unwise in practice, whether the war resulted in restoring or in wiping out slavery.

So it was that the meeting of the two armies was looked forward to with the keenest interest — hope and fear shared about equally between both sides, the former, perhaps, predominant in both. And when, on the day after Cressie had startled the guests at May Meadows by Dandy Slick's wild story, news came to Brookfield that a battle was being fought, it roused

the people to the highest pitch of excitement. Rumors of the events transpiring at Winslo's Run chased each other, — vague at first; contradictory, exaggerated, during the whole day. So eager were all to hear of the issue of the battle, that when night came, few of the men, or women, either, felt disposed to retire to their beds, or having done so found oblivion in sleep. They gathered in little groups on the Square, conversing in eager whispers, — wondering, hoping, fearing. Mr. Burden's dram-shop was crowded with gossips, waiting for and discussing the news; indulging in wildest speculations, — giving ready credence to the absurdest reports, and dilating, with blanched cheeks, on the fate of the town and its inhabitants, if the Federals should whip the Confederates, or vice versa.

Leslie May's company of volunteers (who had neither been sworn into the service, nor received arms) had been ordered to assemble at May Meadows, with such weapons as they could lay hands on, to hold themselves in readiness for such services as emergencies might render necessary.

For the negro population was most excited of all. Not the fewest of them expected immediate liberation, if the Lincoln soldiers should gain a victory over the Confederates, and naturally awaited events in feverish anxiety. It was chiefly the fear of trouble from this source that made the volunteer companies, including those on the Union side, so welcome just now.

Just before the break of day the dull tread of a marching army was heard approaching from the direction of Winslo's Run. No beating of drums, no playing of fifes, nor fanfaronade of any kind: only the sullen, spiritless tramp, tramp of weary men marching. On reaching the Square of Brookfield, the general called some of his officers for consultation; and presently a bugle signal was heard, repeated all along the line of the moving column, and there was a halt. Hoarse words of command, distinctly audible in the deep stillness of the morning dawn, preceded a brief bustle and commotion among the men, and in a minute or two two hundred fires blazed up along the

roadside and in the adjacent fields, — fence-rails and here and there an abandoned outhouse furnishing abundance of fuel. Sentinels were posted to guard against a surprise, while a part of the men busied themselves cooking coffee, and the rest lay down in full accoutrement, knapsacks serving as pillows, to snatch some little sleep before the anticipated order to resume the march. In less than half an hour most of the men were sleeping soundly on their arms.

For the battle had been a fierce and bloody one. The number of slain, wounded and prisoners reached many thousands. The Confederate army, recruited in the main from the seceded States, but swelled, in its advance toward the capital of the State, by companies, even whole regiments of volunteers eager to vindicate the cause of the South, was met and opposed by the Federal army under command of General Lowe. General Ciper thought to brush aside the handful of Union men, or, if need be, annihilate the obstinate fools. This seemed not a difficult thing to do, judging from the information upon which he was called to act, and which placed the opposing forces at a number of raw and undisciplined volunteers not exceeding one-fifth or one-fourth of his own strength. This information was, in its general outlines, substantially correct: only it left out of account the battalion of regulars that had garrisoned the arsenal under the immediate command of General (then Captain) Lowe, and the regiment of volunteers that had been drilled by veteran officers during the whole of the winter and spring preceding their enlistment, — composed chiefly of several companies of Turners and the corps styling itself “*Lützow's wilde Jäger.*”

There had been a council of war when the strength and position of General Ciper's army became known to the Union forces, and it had been resolved, with great unanimity, to contest the enemy's advance on the capital, notwithstanding the disparity of the forces. This being decided, General Lowe did not wait to be attacked by the enemy, but stole a march on them during a dark and stormy night, surprising the unwary

troops at early dawn in their camps. Dividing his forces, he sent one corps under command of General Seele to attack the enemy's left wing, while with the rest of his troops, including the Turners and the Lützow's Jägers, he himself made an onslaught on the main body.

The men under General Lowe's immediate command fought like lions, driving the Confederates from one position after another, until the superior numbers of the rebel army began to tell. The division under General Seele was, at first, even more brilliantly successful; his artillery did terrific execution among the startled and bewildered rebel soldiers, driving them forth from their tents in wild confusion. But this very success had proved disastrous to the Union side. A considerable number of General Seele's men — raw, inexperienced, undisciplined — could not resist the temptation to rush into the deserted tents for plunder, thereby throwing the whole column into disorder. In vain did the officers make frantic efforts to restore order and reduce the unruly mob to subordination and obedience: in the time so occupied, the Confederates rallied, and in a well sustained charge routed the whole Union force on this part of the field, capturing their artillery, killing great numbers, taking many prisoners, and scattering the rest like chaff before the wind. For the panic that seized the demoralized masses was as extravagant and irrational as had been their morbid greed for plunder; and the rout became so complete as to put an orderly retreat out of the question. The men ran, like frightened hares, in senseless terror, throwing away their weapons and accoutrements, and leaving guns, gun-carriages and horses on the field. As an effective military organization this part of the Union army was practically annihilated. The captured arms were of the greatest importance to the Confederates. Many of the lately arrived volunteers being poorly equipped, — their arms consisting of shot-guns, ordinary rifles, scythes, bowie-knives and the like; to these the muskets and ammunition found scattered all over the ground evacuated by the flying Federals were most welcome booty,

adding largely to the efficiency of General Ciper's army. The cannons, of which several batteries, fully equipped and ready for action, fell into their hands, were immediately moved to the left, and used against General Lowe's division.

They had fought bravely, and with marvelous success, until the fearful odds against them began to wear them out. Fresh troops from the enemy's rear kept pouring in to take the place of those driven back. General Lowe looked anxiously in the direction from which he expected General Seele to appear with his artillery to support him. Long he looked in vain. There,—in the very nick of time,—for he felt that he could not hold his position much longer—a regiment came in sight, with artillery too,—but it was in the possession of a Louisiana regiment, and it was used against his own men with tremendous effect. It was then that the undaunted spirit of this truly great commander shone forth a bright example to his brave soldiers. Though confronted with fearful odds, now increased by the victorious troops that had so obviously vanquished General Seele's division,—though wounded severely, so that it was with difficulty that he kept his seat in the saddle,—he fired his weary men with new energy. “Come on, brave men!” he shouted, spurring his horse, and waving his sword on high, “Come on! I will lead you!”

His words and heroic example did wonders, arousing anew the enthusiasm of his soldiers. With a shout of defiance for the enemy they charged with such impetuosity as to carry everything before them. The rebels were driven back once more.

But it was the last charge ever led by gallant General Lowe. He fell at the head of his command, pierced by a bullet in his left side—a loss far greater to the Union cause than the gain could have been had there been a victory.

But there was no victory. The fighting continued until nightfall with doubtful success on either side. In the afternoon General Seele succeeded in collecting a part of his scattered troops and leading them back into the action, retrieving

in some slight degree, their character as soldiers, so shamefully forfeited in the morning. Under cover of the darkness, General Seele retreated with what was left of the Union army toward Brookfield. The losses to the Union forces had been heavy: nearly one-fifth of their entire number had been killed, wounded or taken prisoner; and besides a vast amount of small arms their most effective artillery had fallen into the enemy's hands. But a heavier blow than all these was the death of their ablest leader; this was in reality an irreparable loss.

To offset these reverses, the advance of the Confederates toward the capital had been checked; for the Confederate army, too, had decamped during the night, leaving the battlefield in a different direction, so that it had really been a drawn battle, — a battle, at least without a victory on either side to compensate for the terrible sacrifice of human life and limbs. For the losses of the Confederates were heavy too, — heavier perhaps, than those of the Federals.

The general and his staff had found accommodation at Mr. Smith's Hotel, where they had ordered an early breakfast. Mine host, of course, was eager to find out how the battle had gone, and plied the general and his officers with questions, but got very little satisfaction. Mr. Huffard, too, paid his respects at headquarters, hoping to collect material for a stunning sensational report in the next issue of the *Ozark Argus*, but met with no better success. Neither did Mr. Farmer, although he hinted very broadly that the *Brookfield Standard* was doing yeoman's service in the Union cause. The general pleaded fatigue and pressure of business, and persistently avoided all reference to the events of the previous day.

In passing out, Mr. Huffard met a man in the uniform of a Union soldier, bearing the insignia of a subaltern officer on the sleeves of his coat. Something in his face struck Mr. Huffard as if he ought to know him. A question touching his identity was on the editor's tongue when it suddenly occurred to him that this was the *en-devant* overseer of Colonel May, — Gregory Jeffreys. So he omitted the question, wondering, how it

was that Jeffreys found ready admittance to the general's presence.

He was announced to the general as Sergeant Jeffreys, Company I, Fifteenth — Volunteers. Once in the presence of the staff officers he assumed a rigid posture, standing at the door as stiff as a ramrod, heels together, feet turned out equally, eyes fixed straight to the front, — having evidently mastered the “position of a soldier” as taught by the drill-master in the first lesson. He saluted by touching his cap with his right hand, extending his arm to the right with the prescribed flourish, and then dropping it, so as to touch with his hand the seam of his trousers.

“Sergeant Jeffreys,” the general addressed him, “you have intimated that you have important information to impart touching the safety of the loyal population of this place. I am ready to hear what you have to say. Speak!”

“There's a right smart chunk o' well-to-do-country 'round 'bout yere,” said Jeffreys, his eyes staring at an imaginary point in the floor, “about fifteen paces to the front” as prescribed in the regulation.

“Well?” urged the general.

“There be some nobby 'ristocrats close by; 'n thy're all on 'em cantankerous secesh.”

“Well?” the general repeated, as Jeffreys paused.

“'n some on 'em own an ungodly sight o' niggers.”

“What of that? Go on.”

The eyes of the posing sergeant wandered for a moment from the regulation angle, as he cast a furtive glance in the direction of the general's face. “I were think'n', 'at some o' them thar niggers 'ud be mighty handy to hev 'bout the camp. They'd be mighty glad to work fur hard tack 'n' water, so's they'd git a chance to git away from thar masters.”

A cloud gathered on the face of the general. “You sent word that you had something to communicate touching the safety of loyal citizens,” he said sternly. “As yet you have

suggested nothing but stealing slaves from non-combatants. Is this all you have to say?"

Again, the eyes of the model soldier sought, for a brief moment, those of the general, while he stated, a little pompously. "I'm a truly P'y'l man, General; 'n' I hate rebels. A good many P'y'l men 'round yere hate rebels; an' they hate Kernel May, 'at's now a senator, 'n' a red-hot rebel 's 'e is. An' I sorter guess 'e's wuth more'n a crack regiment to the secesh."

The general began to grow impatient. "What do you mean by all this?" he asked sternly.

"If Kernel May, 'at's now a senator, 'ud be 'rested fer treason," Jeffreys hinted, with a malicious grin, "an' made a prisoner o' war on it, 'ud be a good thing fur the Union and fur the P'y'l people; an' it 'ud keep 'im out'n a sight o' mischief. An' 'is niggers 'ud be handy to dig ditches and 'trenchments."

"Stuff and nonsense!" the general exclaimed angrily. "I will have you arrested, if you keep on talking such humbug."

If the general had seen the defiant, resentful look that Jeffreys shot at him, it might have entailed unpleasant consequences on the sergeant; it would have caused him to be watched more closely, at least, than would have been to his liking. But with a peremptory "Leave us now," the general had turned away, and Jeffreys added, without change of posture or inflection of voice:

"I cud take a corporal's guard 'n' fetch 'im 'n' all 'is niggers, an' it 'ud be wuth 's much 's if we'd a won yeste'day's battle."

Instead of replying to this last suggestion, the general commanded sternly:

"Sergeant Jeffreys!"

The sergeant saluted.

"About — *face!* Forward — *march!*"

The sergeant dared not disobey an order so peremptorily given, but marched out of the door.

One of the subalterns in attendance on the general's staff, Sergeant-Major Obenaus, acting adjutant to Colonel Scheffel, was seen to approach his colonel, and after a few whispered words he left the room immediately after Jeffreys.

When the door had closed behind his adjutant, Colonel Scheffel, who, though a naturalized American citizen and an ardent supporter of the Federal government, stood on terms of hostility with the English language, addressed his commander in the vernacular of the fatherland. But General Seele remarked, with a glance at the other officers present, "We do not all understand you, Colonel!"

"Der sershe-ont iss not fallen on his hedt!" he repeated, in such English as he had mastered. "Dem nigkers, Tsheneral, kin help us, so goot as white men. Und dey pelongs mit our site."

The major of another regiment, who was also present, said: "I fully agree with Colonel Scheffel. I see no reason why the negro, on whose account this war is being carried on, should not be made to do his share in overthrowing the rebellion. The slaves constitute a formidable element of the strength of the South, which they are using against us. For every woolly-head that works on a plantation, or even serves in the household, a white man can be spared for the ranks of the army."

The general turned sharply round. "They are the property of the South, Major, not our property."

"Bropery?" shouted the colonel. "Dey be no bropery. Godt maked dem, like me und you."

"Exactly so," the major coincided. "But granting them to be property, then why are they not contraband of war? Why should we not confiscate them as readily as we would confiscate an enemy's horses, guns, or ammunition?"

"What?" exclaimed the general, "confiscate negro slaves? Confiscate the property of non-combatants? And, for aught we know, the property of good loyal citizens?"

"Goot l'y'l citissens got no selehfs!" proclaimed the colonel.

“The one whom the sergeant referred to is a rebel,” the major remarked. “He distinctly said so; and he seems to be well acquainted with the people around here.”

“Yes,” the general assented. “And don’t you see that that fellow simply wishes to wreak vengeance upon some one against whom he has a spite? The idea of making ourselves the tools of a sneaking hound, to do his dirty work for him! You noticed, did you not, how he let the cat out of the bag when he offered to take a corporal’s guard, and fetch him and all his niggers?”

“But, General,” the major persisted, “if our cause is served, by carrying out any course of action, even the nefarious scheme of a dirty scoundrel, ought we, for that reason, to forego an advantage to our cause?”

“Suppose, General,” said another of the officers, “that the slaves of this rebel — colonel, I believe he called him — ”

“’at’s now a senator,” the major mimicked.

“— Senator, then — were known to be on their way to build a fort or throw up earthworks from which the rebels might attack us; would you hesitate to confiscate them?”

“The case you put is not in point,” the general replied. “If the owner used his slaves for such a purpose, he would not be a non-combatant; neither would the slaves be property to be confiscated, but active enemies to be treated as such. Besides, what guaranty have we, that that scoundrel did not lie about the owner of the negroes being a rebel? On general principles, I am inclined to believe the reverse of what such a sneaking scamp asserts.”

“On general principles,” said the major smiling, “I would believe the owner of any considerable number of slaves to be a rebel, until he proves the contrary.”

“Especially,” added the other speaker, “if he has been elected senator by the legislature of this State.”

“Even then he should have the opportunity of proving his loyalty, before we proceed against him on the authority of so transparent a traducer,” replied the general warmly. “And

just at present we have not the time to bother with questions of this kind. Besides, gentlemen, you know that it is the President's policy to conciliate the people of the slave States, rather than irritate them by any action on our part which might give color to the rebel cry that we intend a general abolition of slavery."

The matter dropped here, for the officers did not wish to press a subject, on which their general had expressed so decided an opinion. Colonel Scheffel alone seemed to be put out by the general's decision, but refrained from carrying on the discussion himself.

The sergeant-major who had followed Jeffreys out of the room, overtook him before he had quitted the hotel porch. The latter started when his follower touched him on the shoulder, and addressed him in an easy, off-hand way.

"I would like to know something more about this Colonel May that you have mentioned to the general," he said, "But let us step aside; there is no need that anybody should overhear us."

"An' who may you be?" Jeffreys inquired, looking the new comer over from head to foot.

"My name is Obenaus," said the other suavely. "I am acting adjutant just now, in the Second Infantry. Colonel Scheffel appointed me temporarily, because the regular adjutant is disabled. The colonel can't write English, whatever you may think of his talk, and so I do his writing for him, and talk to his officers. So much for who I am; now I'll tell you what I want."

Jeffreys, naturally suspicious, was, at first, exceedingly reserved. But Sergeant Obenaus was a man of plausible speech and engaging manner, who knew how to melt away the distrust of the kindred spirit he had met, and readily wormed out of him such information as he desired concerning the circumstances of Senator May. The two had soon reached a

secluded place, where they were not likely to be overhead by any human being.

“If you are the man I take you for, we can do a big job for the country and not forget ourselves the while. Do you catch on?”

“Can’t say that I do,” said the sergeant, pretending not to understand the drift of his new acquaintance.

“Come, don’t be as big a fool as you look,” suggested the adjutant, administering a neighborly poke in the ribs of Jeffreys. “You want to get even with the senator, and I am not the one to blame you for it. I take it for granted that he has insulted you in some way that an American gentleman cannot forgive, nor pass by without doing something to get even with him. I want to get even with him too,” the adjutant added, smiling encouragingly. “That is, you know, I should like to relieve him of some of his superfluous wealth, and add it to mine, so as to make things more even. Not that I have any wealth to be added to; but I would like to have some to begin with. Now you want something, too, besides helping loyal people. What is it?”

Jeffreys did not possess the moral stamina to resist the seductive wiles of Sergeant Obenaus. It was not long before the latter was in full possession of the overseer’s grievances, extending even to the spite against Miss May, and the cause of it.

“Ah! Now this is an adventure in my line!” exclaimed the adjutant, rubbing his hands in high glee. “You shall have that saucy yellow wench to flog at your leisure, and I’ll attend to her mistress.”

The two walked slowly back to their respective regiments, as they discussed the details of the plan to “get even with” the rebel senator, to serve the cause of loyal Union men, including themselves, and have a jolly lark in the bargain.

“Leave it all to me,” said the adjutant finally. “I will get my colonel to send me out foraging with a squad of men, — say five or six — any greater number would be awkward and

dangerous. All you need do will be to pilot us through the place and point out where the valuables are kept."

"I kin do that," said Jeffreys, complacently. "Ye might blindfold me, an' I'd find my way to the desk an' the iron box whar' they keeps thar' cash, 'n' thar' ear-bobs 'n' dimens 'n' sich. It's lucky 'at the kernel fetched home 'is family, as I've hearn say, cause 'is wimen folks 's got an ungodly sight o' rings, 'n' pins, 'n' sich, 'at we kin pounce on."

"The cash box is the main thing, however," the adjutant urged. "Do you suppose they have much cash at home?"

"If he ain't gone to Washington," said Jeffreys, "fur I hearn say 'at 'e's gwine tuh Congress — 'e'll have a right smart chunk o' money layin' tuh hum."

"Are you quite sure, that there are no other white men to encounter in the house?"

"'is cub of a son 's way off to the city, I reckon; or if 'e aint, 'e's somewhar' playin' soger. 'e's a cantankerous devil, is that son o' the kernel ('ats' now a senator) an' it's lucky ef 'e aint tuh hum."

"No others?"

"I can't count on anybody else, leastwise ef they don't have company. They're the plagiuiest fools fur company ye ever hearn tell on."

"They shall have plenty of company when we get there," said Obenaus, facetiously. "Are they pretty? The ladies, I mean."

"Purty?" Jeffreys repeated, with a scornful expression, and such a sneering inflexion of voice as indicated his decided opinion to the contrary. But then, as he found the matter not quite so clear on reflection, he added: "Well, ya-as; I reckon 'at some folks, mebbe might count 'er fur a beauty. Ev'ry one to 'is taste, as the old woman said when she kissed the cow. An' the madam — well, when she's got 'er duds on she struts like a silly peacock, prouder 'n a dozen o' 'em, 'f ye like peacocks, she'll take yer fancy in 'er Sunday go-to-meetin' duds."

“ Will they make much of a fuss when we honor them with our visit? ”

“ The old un, I guess, ’ll be faint’n’, or possumin’, or squealin’; but the young un’s game. She’ll fight like a wild-cat. We’d better stop up ’er mouth soon ’s we cum ’cross ’er. I’ll tend to that. I’ve got ’er on the chalk any how, fur some of her old tricks. It’ll be a fust rate chance to git squar’ with her.”

“ Better leave ’er to me,” said the adjutant, winking jocosely. “ Maybe she would like to have her mouth stopped with a kiss. I know just exactly how to manage young ladies.”

“ ’f ye know what’s good fur ye,” Jeffreys cautioned his newly found friend, “ ye’ll not kiss ’er ’thout ye got ’er hands tied, or me holdin’ on to ’em. ’f ye do, she’ll put a mark on yer face, so’s to know you by when she meets ye agin.”

“ Scratch? ” suggested the other, chuckling complacently. “ You pique my curiosity to meet this lovely she-rebel. It will be rare sport to tame her.”

“ Mebbe yer’ll find your hands full,” said Jeffreys, contorting his face into as near an approach to a grinning smile as he rarely indulged in.

“ I expect to,” said Obenaus, “ and my arms too. — But let us separate here. Be sure to meet me in the Square in half an hour. I’ll be marching with my squad, and you can join us there.”

The night had been one of unrest at May Meadows. The inmates were eagerly waiting for tidings from Winslo’s Run. Senator May hoped for a decisive victory of the Confederates, which might put Congress into the mood of treating with the seceding States, and enable him and his party to bring the Northern hot-heads to terms, so that the country might be restored to peace and harmony on a basis securing to each of the belligerent sides their rights and interests.

Leslie May was enthusiastic in predicting a Southern

triumph. He fumed and fretted over his hard luck that condemned him to inactivity while glorious fighting was going on almost within sight and hearing in an action that might, perhaps, decide the war, depriving him of all opportunity of winning a name as a soldier. For a while the young Hotspur actually contemplated the project of marching his volunteers — unorganized and unequipped as they were — over to the field of action and there offering their services to General Ciper. His father finally persuaded him to abandon the ridiculous notion, chiefly by reminding him of the important services confidently expected of the company at the present critical condition of things at home.

Nellie May, for her part, was so sure of the glorious success to be achieved by her gallant countrymen, that she actually regretted the absence of her father and brother from the field of glory. She thought of Payton, too, in connection with the engagement. Was it not hard for him to be debarred the glorious privilege of distinguishing himself on the field of honor? To be sure, his course proved him to be a man of high moral calibre. It was noble for him to renounce glory and renown for the sake of patriotic duty. Were he only a little less punctilious in responding to the call of his country for his wisdom in the nation's council — he might be there, reaping the honor and glory accorded to the soldier who stakes his life in the defense of his country. A puzzling thought troubled her in connection with this subject. She remembered how Victor Waldhorst had grown in her estimation when he sacrificed his hope and aspiration to highest earthly bliss, on the altar of sacred duty, — how, for the first time in her life, she had been awed into the recognition of a will stronger than her own, — of a purpose more exalted than the gratification of passionate desire, of one who held his manhood higher than her favor. Well she remembered how her anger at his stubborn persistency changed into regard for his manly firmness. She wondered why Payton's self-sacrifice to duty had not a similar effect upon her. To the question, *Why?* she found no answer; but

the fact remained: a distinct consciousness, that her ardent admirer had not gained in her estimation by his moral scruples.

It was long after midnight when she went to bed; though not to sleep. Strange fancies chased each other through her fevered brain. Strong was her faith in the prowess of Southern soldiers, and firm her conviction in the right and justice of the Southern cause. But her intelligence did not permit her to disregard the possibility of temporary defeat, in the vicissitudes of war, on either side. What if the army now fighting under General Ciper should meet with a repulse? What if Lincoln's hirelings should, in the flush of victory, rush upon Brookfield, and glut their vengeance on the enemies of their cause? Would not her father be one of the first, — conspicuous as was his position, and well known as were his views — to fall a victim to their wrath?

The members of the embryo company of volunteers, whom Leslie had summoned to May Meadows, were as keenly eager as their captain for news from the scene of action. After spending the greater part of the night in discussing the military situation, relieving their restlessness time and again by protracted lessons in drilling, they accepted, long after midnight, Leslie's suggestion to quarter themselves for the hour or two remaining before morning, in the barn and hay-loft, where they were soon fast asleep.

Neither Leslie nor his father found it possible to follow their example. A little before the break of day Nellie rose from her restless couch and joined the gentlemen, inquiring for news from the battlefield. Leslie offered to run over to the town to ascertain whether further tidings had been received there; whereupon, the father, averring that a walk would much refresh him and relieve him in his harrowing suspense, offered to accompany him, if Nellie were not afraid to remain alone.

“I am not at all afraid, Papa, for myself,” said the courageous girl. “I have that little bull-dog, you know, whose

bark, if not his bite, will be a protection to me. But I wish *you* to be careful. Promise me that you will not expose yourself unnecessarily; and that you will return home at once, if any blue-coats show themselves."

"Why, of course," said the senator. "I can safely promise you that, for I would return at any rate to let you know any news I may learn. But what has come over my brave daughter's spirit, that she should give way to faint-hearted solicitude for her prudent old father? It is not like you to be afraid of shadows."

"Well," said the girl gently, "I am not exactly afraid, you know. But it is not wise to court danger, is it? And — well, I suppose I am a little nervous on account of the sleepless night and the excitement."

"I hope to be able to bring you such news as will enable you to recover your spirits," said the father. "Meanwhile I would suggest that you have Cressie, or some other servant, within call, if you should want her. Good-bye, for a while, my darling!"

"Good-bye, Nellie!" the brother also said. "We will be back in a jiffy!"

Nellie, when left alone, felt heavy at heart. She followed her father's advice, and called Cressie.

The two maidens sat alone on the veranda. The intense stillness of a summer night had given way to the faint audibility of the indistinguishable sounds preceding the buzzing of insects, the twittering of birds and the lowing of kine, of a balmy summer morning in the country. Presently, too, the sober grey of dawn glided into the rosy harbinger of Aurora, to be again supplanted by the brighter rays of Phœbus as he climbed upward from the horizon. Subdued voices, now and then, reached the ears of the listening maidens from the direction of the negro quarters, where the field hands were getting ready for the day's work.

"Cressie!" said the mistress, softly.

"Yes m'm?" said the servant, in sympathetic response.

“What do you think our hands would do, if the Yankees won the battle they are fighting?”

“I’ve heard some of them say, that they expect to be free when the war is over.”

“But before the war is over, — now — what would they do if the Yankee soldiers got the better of ours?”

“Maybe some of them will run,” the octoroon suggested, with downcast eyes.

“I fear they would, Cressie,” said Nellie, and then relapsed into silence.

After a pause, “Cressie!” she repeated.

“Yes m’m?” very gently.

“Do you wish the Yankees to win in this war?”

“I?” said the octoroon looking timidly at her mistress. “It makes no difference what I wish. And it will make no difference to me whether they win or not.”

“Would you leave me, Cressie, if they gave you your freedom?”

“Not if you do not wish me too.”

“Oh!” mused the mistress; “I believe you, Cressie. You are faithful. But if you were free, it would be perfectly right for you to leave us, — me.”

“Only if you made it right for me to leave you; only if you wished me to.”

“But if you were perfectly free, — as free as I am — and a man came along, — a man that you loved, Cressie, — and asked you to go with him?”

A far-away look came into the octoroon’s eyes as she said, smiling sadly, “The man, whom I love, will never, never ask me to go with him.”

Something in the girl’s voice, or in the look, perhaps, that accompanied her words, or perhaps the pathos of the words themselves, made a deep impression on Nellie. She regarded her servant with a new interest, which for a moment drew her thoughts away from the engrossing subject on which they had dwelt. But her attention was suddenly claimed by the look of

terror which crept into Cressie's face, and the half-smothered cry of alarm that escaped her.

“ Oh, see there! ”

Nellie looked in the direction indicated by Cressie's eyes, and saw what for the moment filled her with superstitious fear as uncontrollable as that of her servant. What she saw, coming in swift realization of the newly entertained dread that even in its high improbability had impressed her with awe, might well excuse her blenching cheeks. Six men, clad in the blue uniform of Yankee soldiers, were marching, with muskets shouldered, straight toward the house, led by a seventh, who marched at their head, a pace in advance of them.

What could these soldiers want, at this early morning hour, at the house of her father? Her busy imagination pictured direful possibilities, of all of which her father was the centre. And for a moment it was doubtful whether maid or mistress was more thoroughly enthralled by unreasoning terror. For Cressie, too, was horror-stricken by what she saw: not the soldiers approaching, nor yet their leader in the blue uniform. But there, a little to the right of the negro quarters, stalked Jeffreys, peering intently in the direction of the cabins, — the man whose face, when she last had seen it, had been distorted with a rage all the more intense for being baffled of its purpose, boding ill to the victim that might fall into his unrestrained power. That face had graven itself on her memory, for she had been conscious that she herself was, however innocently, the cause of his anger. There now was that face, grinning with a diabolical malice. Cressie shrank back involuntarily, seeking instinctively to hide from those baleful eyes, which, she felt, were in search of her.

Nellie quickly recovered her self-possession. The military bearing of these men, approaching in steady, measured step, betokened them to be disciplined soldiers. She reasoned that no harm could come to her father from *them*. With this thought her fears vanished, and curiosity soon possessed her.

“ What can these men want here? ” she said, not noticing



Nellie saw what for a moment filled her with superstitious fear.

either the seared look on Cressie's face, or the man who occasioned it, but still regarding the steadily advancing squad of soldiers.

"Oh," the octoroon answered, as if the question had been addressed to her, "I am sure that *he* can mean nothing but mischief."

The emphasis on the word "he," as well as the deep alarm betrayed by Cressie, caused Nellie to look at her, and then in the direction indicated by Cressie's eyes. "Ah!" she exclaimed, coloring slightly with surprise and vexation, "it is Jeffreys!" Then turning with an air of comforting assurance to the frightened girl, she added, "See, Cressie, it is well for you that these blue-coats are coming; they will be a protection against a ruffian. The worst they can do will be to run you off. But we have not come to that yet, I hope. At any rate, do you remain at my side, so long as that Jeffreys is about."

The soldiers had by this time arrived opposite the veranda, and Nellie arose. She recognized in their leader a subaltern officer, as he commanded the squad to halt and right face, and then saluted the young lady by touching his cap and gracefully flourishing his right arm.

"If the ladies will kindly permit," he said with a bow of meek deference, but in a tone the bold assurance of which contrasted perceptibly with his ostentatious show of deference, "I shall first put my men at ease, before I give myself the pleasure of waiting on the ladies."

Then he pompously commanded: "'tention — Company! Support — arms! Shoulder — arms! Present — arms! Shoulder — arms! Order — arms! Rest!"

Having thus complied with military etiquette, he ascended the steps to the veranda and addressing himself to the young lady standing before him, again bowed.

Something in this man's boldness and coarseness, notwithstanding all his outward show of obsequious politeness, warned Nellie. Acknowledging his bow with a slight nod, she looked at him, waiting for him to speak.

“It makes me unhappy, fair lady,” he began, his eyes resting on her face with a wolfish glitter, his lips puckered into an affected smirk, “that I am fated to perform a very disagreeable duty; disagreeable far more to me, I assure you, than to you and yours. But I take comfort in the conviction, that a lady of the high refinement and intelligence with which you are gifted, will not visit her resentment upon a poor subaltern, who, in the discharge of his stern duty, but executes the orders of his superior. May I be assured, dear lady, of your forgiveness under the circumstances?”

“It seems to me, sir, that if you are carrying out the orders of a superior officer, it ought to make no difference to you whether I forgive you or not,” said Nellie, coldly. “And you seem to forget, that I have not yet been informed as to the nature of the duty you wish me to forgive.”

The grin with which Sergeant Obenaus regarded the young lady while she spoke, was probably meant to express admiration. “Ah,” he said, “I was not mistaken. Even before I heard the music of your voice, and before I had occasion to admire the simple directness of your speech, I knew that I was dealing with a superior woman. And this makes it all the harder for me to do the harsh thing —”

“Perhaps, sir, it were better that you attended to your duty, whatever it may be,” she interrupted him. “Your soldiers seem to be waiting for orders.”

“Noble sentiments for a lady to utter in your circumstances!” exclaimed the adjutant, fairly beaming with irrepressible admiration. “It is a vast pity that so grand a character should be subjected to the harassments sometimes incident to civil warfare. And since you are so well aware what it must be, will you then have the kindness to lead me into the presence of the master of the house?”

Meanwhile Jeffreys had sauntered up to the veranda, a fiendish grin of triumphant malice distorting his face as he saw Cressie, who on his approach had crept behind her mistress in an agony of terror.

He intercepted Nellie's response to the request of Sergeant Obenaus with a chuckle, and the remark, "Yer needn't wait fer 'im; 'e ain't yere, I guess, no how; an' 'tnight be sorter onpleasant, I guess fur 'is darter to wait on ye on sich an arrand. I guess I'll show ye round myself."

"So sorry, Ma'am," remarked the adjutant, "to miss the pleasure of your company for a while, and the comfort of your assurance or pardon for our intrusion on this painful occasion. But I shall give myself the happiness of a renewed interview later on." And with another bow to Miss May he turned to accompany Jeffreys.

But Jeffreys was not quite ready to conduct his companion through the house. "Hold on a spell," he said; "yere's that 'ere wench, 'at I been tellin' ye on. Let's make sure o' her afore we go further. She'll be a handy thing to have 'bout the camp, don't you think?"

"Why, yes," the adjutant assented; "she'll make a fine piece of furniture indeed. Are you quite sure that she is really a contraband?"

"You bet!" the *ci devant* overseer replied. "An' she's spry, I will say, ef I do owe 'er a floggin' fur 'er contrariness. Let's make sure on 'er. She's a nigger, — leastwise she's a colored wench — an' she b'longs to a rebel, an' she's got to be confiscated." And he stretched out his hand toward the trembling girl, saying, in a tone of mock tenderness, "Come me bute! You and I know each other, don't we?"

Nellie's eyes flashed. "Stand off, sir!" she exclaimed, with imperious gesture and commanding voice. "Touch that girl, sir, and I will shoot you like a mad cur!"

"Magnificent!" shouted Sergeant Obenaus, clapping his hands. "So must Joan of Are have looked at the head of the French army. Is it not sad, that so much beauty and heroic valor must go unrewarded on account of the stern necessities of cruel war? You make me, indeed, blush for what duty compels me to do; and again I must humbly beg your pardon." And seizing the hand of Nellie, he attempted to carry it to his lips.

But Nellie in disgust had quickly jerked away her hand.

“Ah,” he said, somewhat taken aback by her prompt action, “I understand! Mademoiselle desires a warmer salute! And indeed her regal beauty entitles her to be gratified.”

With a motion so sudden that she was powerless to prevent it, he seized both her hands, one in either of his, and forcing her arms behind her, he attempted to embrace and kiss her.

But he had underrated the strength and agility of this daughter of the South. Maddened with indignation at the insult offered her, the intense loathing which her assailant's touch produced, gave her strength beyond her sex. With a frantic effort she flung off the miscreant, and in the next instant there was a blush on the adjutant's cheek — a decidedly novel experience, certainly, to the valiant soldier, — planted there by Nellie's energetic hand.

The adjutant's discomfiture was aggravated by a malicious chuckle uttered by Sergeant Jeffreys.

“Didn't I tell yer,” he jeered, “'at she's a perfick wild cat to fight? But ye know'd better an' now ye got it. Kiss'n' 'er, eh? Well, how do you like 'er kiss'n'?”

But here the exemplary temper and gallantry of Sergeant Obenaus gave out. Nor was he in a mood for joking.

“Quit your silly trifling,” he said, with a decided frown, “and help me tame down this piece of contrariness. If you will lend a hand, I guess we will have her quiet enough presently.”

“Let's confiscate t'other one, fust,” Jeffreys insisted. “She's someth'n' wuth totin' to camp; an' what's the use o' this un'?”

“Let some of the men take care of your wench,” the adjutant urged angrily, “and do you come here and assist me. Catch hold of her right hand, while I seize the other, and we'll have her bound in a jiffy.”

“An' then,” sneered Jeffreys, “what'll ye do with 'er when ye got 'er tied?”

“Do you never mind,” snapped the adjutant. “This high-flung young she-rebel has got to be taught the consequence of trifling with a loyal soldier.”

“Well, I guess a smart dressin’ down ’ll be a wholesome less’n to the sassy minx,” said Jeffreys, as he moved forward, apparently to obey his comrade’s command. Nellie stepped backward toward the hall door, and in doing so produced her revolver from her dress pocket. The men gave an involuntary start when they saw the glittering weapon in her hand and heard the ominous click.

“Stand back, ruffians, both of you!” rang out in clear, fearless voice, her eyes ablaze with anger, her lips curling in scorn, her face eloquent with indomitable resolution. “Loyal soldiers, indeed! But that I know you for immoderate liars, I should rejoice in your boast of loyalty. Such loyalty would turn the nation’s stomach, and there were no need of Southern armies to rid us of you. But you lie! You are neither loyal, nor soldiers. I have no love for your Yankee government; but this I know, that you foully asperse it by claiming to act in obedience to its behest. You are not commissioned to insult women and steal slaves. Poltroons! It will take more than two of you to finish your work of insult and outrage, and more than a squad of your blue-coats to get away with our slaves.—And such as *you* have come to meet our gallant boys in gray, and aspire to the honor of being thrashed by them! Go home, and tell your government, that the foulest insult that has yet been offered to the outraged South, is the sending among us of an army of such rascallions as you, wearing the uniform of soldiers, and following the profession of freebooters and highwaymen!”

Cressie had not taken her eyes off Jeffreys. In an unguarded moment, the latter was listening in a dazed sort of way, to the invective poured forth by her incensed mistress, she darted past him like a frightened doe, running in the direction of the barn, where men were sleeping that might protect her mistress and herself, if only they had notice of what was going on. But Jeffreys, watching his prey with cat-like alertness, ran after and quickly overtook her, not, however, before she had uttered one piercing scream. In vain, it seemed;

for the sleepers in the barn gave no token that they had been awakened. Jeffreys effectually prevented further outcry on Cressie's part, by roughly grasping her throat and choking her, while with his other hand he closed her mouth.

Obenaus, when Jeffreys had thus unceremoniously left him, bethought himself of the soldiers, and summoned them to his assistance. Nellie, raising the hand in which she had the revolver, motioned them back.

"Keep away, men!" she exclaimed. "You do not wish to be shot, do you, by a woman? You may overpower me, I know. But the first man that approaches, dies! And think a moment: Did you enlist to help a miscreant insult a woman? He may be your superior officer. But has he authority to command you to do the cowardly thing he has called you for? As you are men, — as you are Americans: respect a woman's distress! As you are soldiers, shame not your profession by making war on a woman!"

Nellie's appeal staggered the men. In spite of the peremptory orders of Sergeant Obenaus they moved not, but stood looking at each other in puzzled uncertainty what to do. At last one of them spoke up: "This is not a regular order. Such a command is not mentioned in the School of a Soldier."

"But he is our sergeant; we must obey him!" said another.

"I heard the Judge Advocate say, that we must obey only the lawful orders of a superior officer. This don't seem to me to be a lawful order."

"I'll be d—d if I charge against a woman, command or no command!" said a fourth.

This last remark found favor with the men, and for a while it seemed as if Sergeant Obenaus would have to fight it out single-handed with the young lady, in which case the final issue was by no means a dead certainty in his favor. But a new actor appeared on the stage and completely changed the situation. For Cressie's outcry had been heard, though it had not awakened the sleepers.

FRIENDS AND FOES.

THE road by which Winslo's Run was reached from Brookfield ran in a Southwesterly direction, while May Meadows lay to the Southeast of the town; so that Senator May and his son did not become aware of the proximity of the Federal army before they reached the Square. The first intimation they had of it was the arrival of a number of ambulances in the Square, from which severely wounded men were being removed and taken to the extemporized hospital into which the courthouse had been converted. For General Seele had received information that the Confederate army had withdrawn from the battlefield about the same time the Federals left there, moving in a Southerly direction, so that no immediate pursuit was to be expected, and he had therefore ordered a halt, in order to give his men a few hours of much needed rest. The ambulances containing the most desperately wounded of yesterday's battle moved in the rear of the main body and had just reached the town.

"See, Pa," said Leslie, as they approached the courthouse, "that looks as if they had been whipped! See, those soldiers running to and fro are all Yankees. Those wounded men are all Yankees, too. They must have been traveling all night to reach here at this time; at least a good part of the night. That means that they have been whipped, does it not?"

Senator May was not so sanguine, nor so ready with his inference. "It may just as well mean that they have been victorious. For, if defeated, would they make a hospital of our courthouse? And I see no Confederates. If they had been victorious, they would not have permitted the enemy to escape unpursued."

“But that would hold just as good for the other side,” Leslie replied in an eager whisper. “If the Yankees had been victorious, would they have marched ten or twelve miles in the dead of night, carrying their wounded with them? And see, these men do not look as if they had been winning a battle. They are as glum as mourners at a funeral.”

“Their task is a sad one,” mused the senator. “See, some of the poor fellows they are carrying will soon be beyond rejoicing over victory, or grieving over defeat.”

They were very near, now, to one of the ambulances from which the inmates were being removed to the interior of the courthouse. One of the army surgeons directed the transfer. “Handle this fellow gently,” he said to his assistants. “He must be suffering intensely, although he is bearing up with great fortitude.”

Senator May looked at the face of the wounded man — pale, and gaunt, with mouth firmly compressed — and he started. “See!” he whispered excitedly, “is not this he that was our young host down at Busch Bluff?”

Leslie looked and recognized Woldemar Auf dem Busch. “So he is,” he said. “But he has changed so that I should hardly have recognized him, if you had not pointed him out to me. To think that *he* should have volunteered as a soldier!”

“They are sterling people, these Auf dem Busches,” said the senator, “although this young fellow was rather opiuiated. They are sadly in error about the political interests of our country; but you see that he has had the courage to fight for his conviction, and may have to die for it.”

When Woldemar Auf dem Busch was placed on the stretcher, he opened his eyes, and for a second they dwelt on Senator May. As soon as the latter saw that he had been recognized, he spoke, in as cheerful a voice as he knew how to assume, his features beaming with a sympathetic, encouraging smile, saying:

“Why, my young friend, this is a sorry plight I find you in. Can you give me your hand?”

The surgeon interfered.

“Whoever you are, sir,” he said gently, but with a peremptoriness that commanded obedience, “you must not interfere with our work.” Then he added, in a whisper not audible to the patient, “his life may depend on absolute quiet. Do you understand?”

Woldemar raised his hand, slowly and with obvious effort, regarding the senator with an appealing look, which the latter promptly interpreted by the question:

“Can I do anything for you?”

“You are very kind,” said the sick man, in a distinct, though low voice. “If you would look after my father—”

“What—is your father here?” the senator interrupted him in undisguised surprise.

“He is badly hurt. If you would kindly see him! It would do him so much good.” With a feeble smile, the pathos of which touched the senator, he added: “He thinks so much of you. Almost—as much—as of Professor Rauhensfels.”

“Where is he?”

“Perhaps Doctor Behr will kindly find out,” said the patient, with an appealing glance toward the surgeon. “I do not know. He was badly hurt. And I—”

“He is all right,” said Doctor Behr cheerfully. “When I have made you comfortable, I will take this gentleman to see him and they can talk over old times together. But just now we must be getting you into a more comfortable place; and you must not be too garrulous.” He nodded to the bearers of the stretcher to proceed, and looked at Senator May as if he expected him to say something.

“I will meet you here in fifteen minutes,” said the senator, “and I will be under great obligations to you if you will take me to Mr. Auf dem Busch, Sr.”

“Dr. Behr, this is Senator May,” came in feeble accents from Woldemar’s lips. “We used to call him Colonel before the war.”

While the doctor and senator were shaking hands, the man on the stretcher was carried into the courthouse hospital.

Leslie had not shown himself to the wounded man, but hailed some of the acquaintances he met, to extract from them such information as was to be had touching the outcome of the battle, and the probable movements of the Federal army. It was pretty well known by this time that neither side had gained a straight-out victory, and that the losses on both sides had been heavy. The death of General Lowe was hailed with undisguised satisfaction by the rebels, and even Leslie put on a brighter look as he said: "I knew the general. He was my captor at Camp Jefferson. The Yankees will never be able to fill his place."

On rejoining his father, the latter requested him to repair at once to May Meadows, to bring the news to his mother and sister, and added that he himself would be detained for a time in town.

"Be sure to allay any apprehensions that Nellie may have for my safety," his father enjoined on him, as Leslie started for home."

His thoughts on the way were busy with the events that had transpired, and dwelt on the issue of yesterday's battle and the prospect of his joining General Ciper's army. That Woldemar Auf dem Busch had voluntarily become a soldier, was to him a stunning surprise. That the old gentleman had done so he had not yet learned; it would have been still more incomprehensible to him. The transition of his thoughts from the Auf dem Busches to Pauline Waldhorst was natural: It was some months since he had last seen her, — on that day when they had met the philosophers at tea. When he recalled the scene of her meeting with his sister Nellie, he unconsciously accelerated his pace. Her image loomed up in his mind as that of a charming woman, of whom he had resolved to think no more. It vexed him, that in spite of his resolution his thoughts would wander back to her. "I do believe I am growing sentimental!" he muttered. "Bah! What is Wol-

demar Auf dem Busch's sweetheart to me?" Yet he wondered how Pauline had taken it when Woldemar enlisted for the war. And he wondered how she would take it if Woldemar should happen to die. Again he wondered how Pauline would behave toward him if they should meet again — whether she would resent his conduct toward her? He wondered, too, what his sister Nellie would say, if she knew that he had won Pauline's heart, and then thrown her over?

While his thoughts were thus busy, he nearly reached May Meadows, and Cressie's cry of distress broke rudely in on his meditations. Running in the direction whence the cry proceeded, he reached the spot just as Jeffreys had overpowered Cressie and was dragging her away toward the negro quarters. So intent to secure his prey was the brutal overseer, that he did not become aware of Leslie's approach, and the latter dealt him a stunning blow that sent him sprawling to the ground. Cressie, thus released, sped swiftly back to the house, while Leslie was about to inflict summary chastisement on the prostrate overseer, wearing the uniform of a Union soldier. But at this moment he caught sight of the group of soldiers near the veranda, where his sister stood, revolver in hand, in an attitude showing clearly that she was on her defense against the man standing near her, — a subaltern Yankee officer, Leslie supposed him to be.

"Marauders!" was the thought that flashed through Leslie's mind. He gave a vigorous yell, calling on the men he knew to be sleeping in the barn, and rushed up to the house.

Sergeant Obenaus heard the yell, and saw Leslie approaching at full speed. It was plain enough to the sergeant that this man, whoever he might be, was bitterly in earnest. Resolute action seemed urgent. Addressing himself to his squad of soldiers, he commanded energetically: "Company! Charge! Ready! Aim —"

This order was quite a different thing from that to charge on a woman, and the soldiers promptly obeyed.

But Nellie, however intrepid in facing personal peril, was

seized with deadly terror on seeing her brother about to be shot down. She flew from the veranda, passing the commander, and before the word "Fire!" was uttered, she stood in front of the muskets leveled at her brother.

Leslie had approached to within a few paces, and covered the sergeant with his revolver.

Nellie's action had again startled the soldiers. They could not fire at Leslie without killing her, and it is doubtful whether they would have obeyed the command to fire, at this moment, if it had been given. But Sergeant Obenaus never gave the order. Simultaneous with Nellie's action in throwing herself before the soldiers' muskets, was the report of Leslie's revolver, and Sergeant Obenaus fell.

From the barn a number of men now rushed to the scene, and before the bewildered soldiers, whose attention was centered on their fallen leader, on the woman who had interposed herself between them and the man with the revolver, at whom they had been about to fire, could well defend themselves, they had been seized, their muskets taken away from them, and any resistance rendered unavailing.

For a minute or two there was confusion. The men of Leslie's company made eager inquiry as to what all this meant. Nellie had sunk in her brother's arms, overcome by the reaction from the intense strain on her nerves. But for a brief moment only. She quickly rallied, and anxiously inquired what had become of her father. His report reassured her as to his safety. But Leslie's face sobered, as he looked upon the motionless form of Sergeant Obenaus. He exacted from his sister an account of all that had happened during his absence. Such members of Leslie's company as were not engaged in guarding the soldiers gathered around her, and listened eagerly to her recital of the conduct of Jeffreys and Obenaus. Her words produced profound sensation among the hotheaded rebels who had enrolled their names as defenders of the Southern cause. When she mentioned the attempt of Jeffreys to carry off the slave girl Cressie, their scowling faces and



And before the word "fire" was uttered she stood in front of the muskets leveled at her brother.

clenched fists gave token of the wrath that incensed them. Their blazing eyes were turned in the direction where the miserable wretch, recovering from the effects of the blow that had been dealt him by Leslie, was about to sneak off. It needed but a hint from the latter to start half a dozen men in pursuit. While he was secured and led back, Leslie bent over the fallen sergeant to search for his wound. A small red spot on his uniform marked the place where the bullet had entered his body; he tore away the clothing and discovered a small puncture in the skin, with hardly a drop or two of blood oozing therefrom. There was no respiration. The most eager search and delicate touch of Leslie's fingers failed to indicate the faintest trace of a pulse. The bullet had evidently penetrated to his heart; life was extinct.

Nellie had watched Leslie's features during the examination. Their expression alarmed her. "Is he dead?" she whispered.

"Quite dead!" said Leslie, soberly. "He will never again insult a woman."

"What could have been the meaning of his coming here with a lot of soldiers?" Nellie inquired.

"I am puzzled to guess," said Leslie. "That it was an unlawful purpose there can be no doubt. The attempted abduction of Cressie by that cowardly dog Jeffreys proves that. But then he must have had authority from his superior officers; for these men seem to be regular soldiers. There would be no such discipline among them, if they were marauders or common thieves."

"Yes," added Nellie, "and why should he exhibit such disgusting cringing toward me, asking me to introduce him to the master of the house?"

"I wonder if I could pump some information from Jeffreys," said Leslie. "I suspect that he does not feel in a communicative mood toward me. But I have, before now, made him talk against his will."

Contrary to his expectation, however, he found Jeffreys

nothing loth to talk. A sardonic smile of triumph accompanied his words as he replied to Leslie's questions. He volunteered the statement, that the dead officer was a "truly l'y'l" man, and stood high in the favor of his colonel. And that his murderer would surely be punished by the military authorities. Also, that he himself would be a witness against Leslie before the court-martial, where they would allow no hired lawyers to bother the witnesses and fool the jury. By dint of skillful questioning Leslie finally ascertained that Jeffreys did not belong to the same regiment with Obenaus, and that while the latter had come to forage for his company, he himself had no orders to accompany him.

Leslie also engaged some of the soldiers in conversation, with the view of eliciting from them further facts, or at least such scraps of information as might assist him in coming to a conclusion as to the course to be pursued in regard to them. He incidentally learned from them some additional news about the battle at Winslo's Run, from which he inferred, that there must have been some valiant fighting on the part of the Yankees; and that the victory of the Confederates, if victory they had gained, had cost them dearly. Leslie was far from easy in his mind; the presence of the six Federal soldiers, held as prisoners by the men of his company, raised an awkward dilemma. But in Nellie's presence he put on the appearance of cheerfulness and in response to her questioning look, said: "It is all right. But I don't intend to do anything until pa gets back. I must be careful not to implicate him in any collision with the authorities, civil or military. I wish he were here!"

When he came there was a surprise in store for him, equaling, at least, the one with which he had meant to astonish his family, — a surprise that greatly increased his thoughtfulness and anxiety. But he communicated the news he had brought with an air of quizzical humor. "Why, we are having a taste of war, sure enough," he said, as the events of the morning had been related to him. "Leslie and I have seen some stirring

evidences of it in town over there. And I am going to bring some of them here to complete the picture, adding romance to stern reality. What say you to a visit from our city friends, the Auf dem Busches, father and son, just at this interesting juncture?"

And he proceeded to astonish his wife and daughter with the announcement that he had not only invited, but actually made arrangements for, the conveyance of the severely wounded men to May Meadows.

"I could not permit myself," he said, by way of apologizing to the ladies, "to let the old gentleman lie there helpless and unattended but for the rough ministrations of some unsympathetic fellow detailed for sick service. You ought to have seen his face brighten up as I shook hands with him; one might think we had been life-long friends. I am afraid that he is badly hurt; but his first thought was for his son, as Wolde-mar's first thought had been for his father. I did not believe these blunt, brusque men capable of the tender solicitude which they unconsciously displayed before me. And so I told both of them that it would give us pleasure if they would allow me to have them brought to our house, and if they would consider it their home during convalescence."

Turning to his wife, he asked her: "What say you, Louise? Did I do right?"

Her assent was prompt, though not cordial. But Nellie spoke up unasked, and said warmly:

"Indeed, Papa, you could not do otherwise without abnegating your character for Southern hospitality. They are foes, but they have been punished by our gallant defenders; and we will only remember that they have been friends, and claim our hospitality."

"They may give us some information touching the sergeant and the soldiers," said Leslie.

"I trust you are not uneasy on that score, my son," said the father cheerfully and confidently. "If the military take cognizance of the affair at all, they are bound, in their own

interest, to vindicate your conduct. In this war, public opinion is a potent factor. They cannot afford to defy, or even to ignore it. And in a court of law, — well, you know better than I do, that no jury on earth would hesitate a single moment to acquit you.”

“ I am confident that there is no cause for fear, except that the facts may be perverted by a court-martial composed of comrades of the dead sergeant and of Jeffreys,” was Leslie’s answer.

“ Jeffreys?” exclaimed the senator, laughing. “ You don’t think that *he* has a comrade that would ever be called on to sit in a court-martial?”

“ I should hope not!” Nellie added. “ And as to his testimony, you have on two occasions shown what that is worth. Besides, there is the testimony of the soldiers. I believe them to be honest men, though they are Yankees. I could easily see that they were ashamed of their commander.”

“ As soon as our guests arrive, we will take these soldiers to the commanding general of the Federal army,” said the senator. “ I judge that it will be best for you, Leslie, to report the facts yourself, and make a clean breast of it.”

“ Of course I shall,” Leslie informed him.

“ Of course,” Nellie remarked, “ he will do that. But I have a notion that it will be best for pa to have a talk with the general first. Don’t you think so? If Leslie and his company escort these soldiers through the town, there will be a crowd of people following you, and it may arouse the prejudice of the Federal officers against him.”

“ I believe Nellie is right,” said her father. “ At any rate, it will not be amiss for me to chat with General Seele. And coming to think of it, it will not do at all to parade your men before the enemy or even to let them know that you are about to enter the Confederate army with them. I am glad, that Nellie called our attention to this.”

Before leaving, Senator May took his daughter aside and put the question whether she was aware of any difficulty or quarrel between Leslie and young Auf dem Busch. “ Because,”

he said, "when I remarked to him that both he and his father were to be brought to this place, a decided expression of pain, or at least of disappointment, clouded his face. His father, on the contrary, had shown in every way that he was grateful for the proffered hospitality, and Woldemar was evidently very glad to have his father here. It was only to his own removal to May Meadows that he seemed averse. Now, can you account for this?"

"I think I can," said Nellie smiling. "You need give yourself no uneasiness on that account. Young men are sometimes in each other's way, when they wish to be particularly polite to the same damsel. She is not here, so I think I can keep them on their good behavior."

"You don't mean to say, Nellie, that Leslie — is jealous?" said the astonished senator.

"No; not Leslie," Nellie assured him. "But I fear that young Auf dem Busch is."

"Of our Leslie? But how can that be?"

"Entirely without cause," said Nellie, with an arch look at her father that made him laugh.

"Well, well! This is news indeed. Under the circumstances, I think, that the young fellows should not meet, just yet. Young Auf dem Busch is very low, and any agitation might prove fatal to him. I leave it to your tact to keep them apart for a while."

"I will do my best. Mr. Auf dem Busch is our guest, you know, and we will make his stay as agreeable as possible."

"And don't neglect the old gentleman. He was much pleased, I think, with the prospect of coming here, and I don't wish him to be disappointed."

"Rest easy on that score, Papa. The old gentleman and I are on excellent terms with each other."

When Senator May reached Brookfield, for the second time that day he found the town in a lively stir. Numerous groups of soldiers were standing and walking to and fro about the

Square, beset by citizens, loyal and otherwise, eager to hear them talk. Busy officers crossed toward and from the headquarters and the courthouse, frequenting the stores to make purchases, dividing their patronage impartially between the Dutch Store and Mr. Barnes' establishment, or otherwise improving the time of the halt. The Square presented as lively a scene, and certainly a more picturesque one, as on court or election days.

The senator inquired for General Seele, and was shown to his room at the hotel. As he entered, the general was examining the card he had sent in, and met him with the question:

“ You are known as Colonel May? ”

“ Yes, General,” the senator answered with a smile. “ But I owe the title to the good will of my fellow-citizens. I have never been in military service.”

“ And you have been elected to the United States Senate from this State? ”

“ That position, also, I owe to the good will of my fellow-citizens.”

The general smiled and begged his visitor to be seated. Then he continued: “ I am pleased to make your acquaintance, Senator, not only because I deem it an honor to receive your visit, but also, because your name has been twice mentioned to me to-day, under circumstances engaging my attention. — Are you acquainted with a man by the name of Jeffreys? ”

“ I am, to my sorrow,” said the senator, somewhat disturbed by the general's question. “ If it is he who mentioned my name to you, I fear that I do not stand high in your estimation.”

“ If it is not unpleasant to you,” said the general with simple directness, “ I wish you would tell me in what way you have drawn upon yourself the enmity of that man. I make this request out of sheer curiosity. So if you feel the slightest repugnance to speak of him, consider my words unspoken.”

“ On the contrary, General, I am very glad that you have asked me to speak; for my visit to you concerns, in part, that

very man." The senator then proceeded to state the circumstances under which his former overseer had left him, and related, also, how, to revenge himself, he had tampered with the grand jury, and committed rank perjury in the trial of his young friend Victor Waldhorst.

"How?" the general asked, with obvious interest. "Victor Waldhorst? Was he a friend of yours? And he was under trial, here, in Brookfield, did you say?"

"Yes, sir," said the senator, noting with pleasure the evident interest the general took in his protégé of former days. "He was a mere lad, then, of whom, however, I thought a great deal; and he has since risen to some distinction."

"Yes, I have heard of him," said the general. "He was a member of our legislature; and is now doing valuable service as adjutant general to the military governor."

"I have reason to know that he was a very staunch and uncompromising Union man while in the legislature," the senator remarked with a significant smile.

The smile was reflected in the general's face; but he did not pursue the subject further than to say, "It must have been painful for him to vote against the friend of his youthful days."

Without awaiting an answer, the general then said: "Your name has also been mentioned by Doctor Behr, in connection with that of some of our wounded men. He asked me to consent to have them transferred to your residence, which, of course, I gladly did. The surgeon thought your offer a very generous one, and believes that it may save the life of one of them, who, he says, is in a very critical condition. You may rest assured, sir, that whatever may be the business that brought you here, you have a friendly 'cousin at court' as we say in Germany."

The senator then proceeded to state the occurrences as they had been related to him, at May Meadows, that morning. The general listened with very evident interest, and frequently interrupted the narration with questions, evincing a desire to possess the most accurate information.

Then, regarding Senator May with a deprecatory smile, he added: "You will understand, of course, that the matter must be looked into. It is important that discipline be observed. Nor can it be permitted that an officer should be shot down with impunity, while in the discharge of his duty. And therefore, if the sergeant had orders for what he did, there may be trouble for you, or at least for your son. Permit me to suggest, that he had better surrender himself to the military authorities at once, and voluntarily, so as to render unnecessary any compulsory proceeding for his arrest. I trust that in this way no harsh measures need be apprehended."

"But it will be such a shock to the ladies at home, to see him under arrest!"

"It need not be known to them at all, unless you wish it," said the general pleasantly. "I will send an officer with you to take command of the squad of soldiers, whom, I understand, you still hold in custody at your home. Mr. May can accompany them in the character of a witness against this man Jeffreys, whom we will arrest in good earnest, and the ladies need be none the wiser. If necessary, I will report the matter to the military governor, and request him to send his adjutant, or some other discreet officer, to act as judge advocate, if a court-martial should be decided on. You need give yourself no uneasiness at all, if Mr. May will act in accordance with my suggestions."

Senator May took leave of General Seele with a hearty handshake, and was accompanied home by an officer, who was to take charge of the prisoners and soldiers.



A STUDY IN BLACK AND WHITE.

THE Fourth of July had come and gone. Senator May had departed for Washington, leaving his family — for the first time since his election to Congress — at May Meadows. The Honorable Ralph Payton accompanied him. Both had left their respective homes reluctantly. Payton, though full of ambitious schemes, and inspired by a laudable resolution to distinguish himself as a political leader in the House of Representatives (now that his illustrious predecessor had cleared the way for him), felt some uneasiness in leaving behind him the brilliant young heiress; and that, too, while the wounded men from Busch Bluff were guests at the May mansion. The intimacy between the members of the May family and the Auf dem Busches had been exceedingly distasteful to him from the first, and, though he looked down on Victor Waldhorst as so greatly his inferior in social position, yet he resented the necessity which had compelled Miss May to correspond with Waldhorst's sister. For the condition of both the elder and younger Auf dem Busch had become so critical that it was deemed advisable to acquaint Mrs. Auf dem Busch and Miss Waldhorst with the situation. He did not for a moment doubt that one, or perhaps both, of these ladies, would gladly avail themselves of the cordial invitation to visit May Meadows which Nellie had sent them in the name of her mother, with a postscript in her own name to Pauline. To this rather fanciful grievance of the young congressman, Senator May unwittingly added a solid reason, justifying a flutter of apprehension, at least, if not downright anxiety, not to say jealousy, on the part of his young friend, by dropping a hint that Victor might be detailed to conduct the trial of Leslie

May, as judge advocate. The imagining of all sorts of possibilities growing out of a more or less intimate intercourse between young Waldhorst and Leslie May, and perhaps even with Nellie May (for she would necessarily be an important witness), thoroughly spoiled for the incipient statesman the enjoyment in anticipation of his triumphs in the arena of national politics on this, his first visit to Washington as a congressman.

Senator May's heart was even more heavy than that of his young traveling companion. There was a vague dread of impending harm to Leslie on his mind, which neither his own firm conviction of the perfect propriety of his son's conduct, nor the confident assurance of General Seele had been able to banish.

He did not quite comprehend the necessity of a court-martial, nor why his son could not be released on bail, or why, indeed, he should be held in custody at all. But he explained to himself, that this was probably one of the rules of military service: and with a melancholy smile he recalled how well he had succeeded in allaying the suspicions of his wife and daughter, putting aside their inquiries after Leslie by the plausible pretext suggested by General Seele, that he was held as a witness against Jeffreys, who was to be court-martialed for his marauding expedition. But all of these reflections failed to quiet his own misgivings, as to what might happen at a court-martial, composed of Federal officers, sitting in judgment upon a man of such decided Southern views.

Yet it was not apprehension for Leslie's fate that weighed most heavily on his mind. In his conversation with General Seele he had caught a glimpse of the spirit which animated the volunteer soldiers in the Union cause. There was, perhaps, less of exuberant enthusiasm observable on the surface than that which characterized the Southrons. Instead he marked a firm earnestness of purpose springing, evidently, from a profound conviction of the sacredness of their cause. These men, if General Seele was a fair specimen of them, had taken up arms

as though performing some sacred religious duty, and Senator May reflected that such an army, though it might give way before an impetuous onslaught, would in the end prove invincible. The war had begun, and the senator, having some notion of the enthusiasm with which the Southerners had gone into the fray, saw with a feeling of dismay almost, the calm determination of the enemy they would have to meet. His confidence in a peaceable adjustment of the differences between the two sections, by anything that Congress could do, was rudely shaken. For the first time he harbored a doubt as to the wisdom of further attempts at compromise.

What, then, had he to do in Washington? What, if Congress was powerless to help the country? If, after all, the sword, swayed by angry passion, was to be the final arbiter of the quarrel, ought he to go there at all? Was it not his duty rather, to take to the field, and throw the weight of his arm,—however feeble—into the scale for the cause of the South?

Then he would in truth have become an enemy to the government of the United States, as that strange man, Professor Raubenfels, had predicted as the consequence of his crossing the Rubicon. Ah! Had he, indeed, crossed the Rubicon? *Had he become a traitor?*

No! Not yet. How his daughter had winced, when Raubenfels first mentioned the word, in connection with his candidacy before the caucus! How her eyes had flashed when rebuking him for what she took to be a wanton insult to her father! No; he had not yet become a traitor. He was no traitor then; for he had honestly and to the best of his ability fought the passage of that fatal caucus resolution, and should not be held responsible for what was not within his power to prevent. Nor yet was he a traitor when he accepted the caucus nomination, although Professor Raubenfels had ruthlessly asserted that he would thereby give the lie to the whole of his past life. He could not justly be called a traitor for that, because he had done honestly and fearlessly what he believed to be for the best interests of his country.

But if he now took the field — ah, then he would be a traitor, a traitor in the legal constitutional sense — unless the South should win!

Such considerations as these pressed heavily on his mind as he left home, and made his journey to Washington anything but cheerful. The war had begun: the sanguinary battle at Winslo's Run had shown how terribly in earnest both sides were; the occurrence on the morning after the battle, at his own home, had given warning of the danger to which his wife and daughter would be exposed, and the necessity of leaving them unprotected filled him with deep anxiety. To this was added the apprehension of the consequences of the proclamation issued by the major-general at the head of the Department of the West, emancipating the slaves of all citizens bearing arms against the United States. This proclamation was promulgated on the Fourth of July, — the very day on which Congress convened for the extra session. Although it was subsequently disavowed by the President, yet while in force it created great consternation and wrath among the population of the rural districts, and added to the uncertainty of his son's fate in the hands of the court-martial.

Meanwhile the ladies at May Meadows remained in blissful ignorance of the troubles lying heavily at the senator's heart. Mrs. May was highly indignant that her son Leslie should be deprived of his liberty merely because his testimony was desired against a miscreant, who was to be punished for attempting to steal a slave. And she felt hurt that her husband had refused to take her to Washington. Now that she was a senator's wife, she longed to air her new dignity in Washington circles, and was slow to understand that the present was not a time to indulge in social merry-making, and that her place was at home rather than in that Maelstrom of political excitement and war fever that swallowed up all other interests at the capitol. But however distasteful her compulsory stay at home was to her, she endeavored to do her duty as an

obedient wife. Although she had no love for the guests brought into the house by her husband, she failed not in extending to them the proverbial hospitality of a Southern household.

Nellie had marked the change in her father, though he kept from her all knowledge of his troubles, so far as lay in his power. But in an unguarded moment, when he believed himself unobserved, she had caught a glimpse of his clouded brow and thoughtful mien betokening deep anxiety. The very fact that he was so carefully concealing from her every trace or indication of care rendered what she saw more significant; but she bravely kept her counsel, lest by betraying apprehension on her part she add to his trouble. Once only, just before his departure, she had betrayed by a slight tremor in her voice, when alone with him, and by a sympathetic tenderness in the eager look with which she regarded him, that she was not at perfect ease of mind. But the father had succeeded admirably, so he flattered himself, in reassuring his daughter. He had pointed out the brilliant prospects for a speedy settlement of the national troubles, on a basis both honorable and advantageous to the South.

“Our successes, both in the East and West, are marvelous,” he said. “Even the affair at Winslo’s Run has redounded to our glory. The Federal army occupying Brookfield just now, will soon be driven out by General Ciper, who is receiving reinforcements daily, and will soon march into the capital, to put an end to that military governorship. You have no cause to be downhearted, little girl; Payton and I will fix up matters in Congress, and Leslie will soon come home from the field of glory; and you are going to be very proud of us all. Think of it: Father, brother — and shall I add, lover? — all adding luster to our family name, and our cause!”

Her arm had been about his neck as she kissed him. But there had been no ring of exultation in her voice as she said: “I *am* proud of you, dear father, and oh, how I glory in brother Leslie’s bravery! For he is going to come home cov-

ered with glory. But don't mention lovers. This is not a time to think of love."

When he was gone, Nellie set about the discharge of her duties — consisting mainly, now, in assisting her mother in the entertainment of visitors, and looking to the comfort of the wounded men. Their presence at May Meadows drew many callers to the house, who came to satisfy their curiosity. For rumor had invested the strangers with the nimbus of mysterious interest, springing from the desire to pry into the relations between them and the May family. Speculations were freely indulged in, of course; fated, for the present, to remain unproved and uncontradicted; for the men were much too ill to see or be seen by any visitors. The military surgeon, under whose care they had been removed from the battlefield, had enjoined absolute quiet. He had requested that the family physician be called in to assume the treatment of the patients, since he himself might receive marching orders at any moment, but meanwhile continued his visits together with Doctor Purham with whom Nellie stood on excellent terms. The latter informed her, in answer to her questions on the subject, that while there was little of real danger from the wounds as such, the loss of blood, before they had received any attention, had been so great as to make the condition of both somewhat critical. The weakness of the old gentleman, in particular, gave him uneasiness; the younger man would, he thought, soon get well, although for the present he suffered more keenly from his injuries. He fully indorsed the orders of his colleague, Doctor Behr, dwelling upon the absolute necessity of perfect quiet for both the patients; and Nellie obeyed his instructions to the letter.

Cressie was installed as nurse in the sick room. Her ministrations were performed with a graceful ease and quiet self-possession, alike soothing to the sufferers and efficient in carrying out the course prescribed by the physicians. When Woldemar's fever had somewhat abated, he was enabled to notice the graceful movements of his young nurse, and followed

them with admiring eyes. He wondered who she could be. Not a daughter of the house, surely? For the features, though of a beauty even more striking than that of Miss May, were too utterly unlike those of either of the ladies whom he had seen to admit of such a thought. Not a hired servant? For she carried herself with a grace and dignity which Wolde-mar thought inconsistent with the character of a menial; and besides, he was well aware that in the interior of a slave State hired help was out of the question. It must be a guest — some relative, perhaps, on a visit to May Meadows, who had volunteered her assistance in waiting on the patients. Daughter, perhaps, of some wealthy Southern planter. For that soft, creamy complexion, brightened by a subdued glow on her round cheeks and the vermilion of the exquisitely shaped lips — the dreamy languor of her dark, lustrous eyes — the intense blackness of her glossy hair, coiled in great plaits about her shapely head, gave unmistakable token of Southern origin; while the easy grace of her carriage suggested familiarity with luxurious surroundings.

Having settled on this theory, he determined to inquire about her of his young hostess, for he felt a strong desire to become acquainted with the lovely girl; yet a shyness that would have astonished those who knew him well — himself most of all — if they had reflected on it, prevented him from speaking to her about herself. He was now rapidly improving, and the opportunity to converse with Miss May soon offered. She came into the room one day just after the military surgeon had quitted the house, bringing with her a bundle of stuffs and her work-box, evidently contemplating to do her sewing in the sick-room.

“The doctors have given us a very cheering account of their patients,” she said, while a reassuring smile brightened her face; “and if the gentlemen have no objection, I will change places with Cressie for an hour or two. And so I have brought my work with me.”

The face of Mr. Auf dem Busch Senior brightened percepti-

bly, as Miss May's pleasant voice fell on his ear. He, too, had thrown off the stupor that had held him unconscious; but he was still very weak. "You give us too high honor," he said with feeble voice, and a pathetic attempt to smile. "Your face is bright sunshine; and your voice like the lark-song. It is pleasure — to be sick — in your house."

"Why, Mr. Auf dem Busch," was Nellie's pleasant answer, "your politeness is overwhelming. Sir, I must positively forbid you such exertion. The doctors have strictly enjoined rest and quiet for you."

"It shall be rest for me," said the old gentleman, "if I look at you. And I will be quiet."

"Father is very proud of you," said Woldemar. "You took his heart by storm the first time he saw you. And I add my grateful thanks to his for the very great kindness that you and yours have conferred upon us. I am afraid, that I shall never be able to thank you sufficiently."

"Your best expression of thanks, and such as will be most highly appreciated by my parents and myself, will be to show us that you are perfectly at home with us, and say nothing about thanks. By the way, are you satisfied with Cressie's waiting on you? Does she attend to your wants as she should?"

"Cressie!" Woldemar repeated. "Is that the young lady's name? She has been untiring in her ministrations, and father and I are deeply indebted to her for her devoted care and kindness to us, although we are perfect strangers to her. But — pardon me: Cressie is not the family name of your young friend, is it? You have never introduced us, you know."

Nellie regarded the young man with a look of intense amusement. Her voice broke into a ripple of pleasant laughter, as she replied to Woldemar's question. "No," she said, "I have never introduced you. And Cressie is not her family name."

"Of course not," Woldemar rejoined.



“Cressie! Is that the young lady’s name?”

“Of course not,” Nellie repeated. “And would it surprise you very much, if I told you, that I do not know her family name?”

“But is she never called by another name besides that of Cressie?” asked Woldemar wonderingly.

“Oh, yes,” the young lady informed him, still beaming with hardly concealed merriment. “Some of the darkies call her ‘Creeshie,’ and if you wish to be very accurate in pronouncing her name, you may call her Lueretia.”

Woldemar looked puzzled indeed. “Is she not — your friend?” he asked.

“My friend?” Nellie repeated. “Why, no, Mr. Auf dem Busch; I am afraid I cannot call Cressie my friend, in the sense in which you evidently mean.”

“Not your friend?” with emphatic astonishment.

“At least Cressie does not stand on terms of social equality with me.”

A feeble chuckle was heard from old Auf dem Busch. “See you not,” he said, his features struggling with a faint smile of amusement, “how it is?”

“Ah, — but you do not tell me, that she is a — slave?” exclaimed Woldemar.

“I fear that I must shock your moral sensibility to the extent of admitting that Cressie is my bondmaid. But I, nevertheless, believe her to be my friend.”

“Your friend!” exclaimed young Auf dem Busch, showing that he was shocked indeed. “Friend — and slave! It is difficult to understand how that can be.”

Further conversation was interrupted by the entrance of Cressie herself, bearing a letter, which she informed her mistress had been brought from Brookfield by Xerxes. Begging permission from the gentlemen, Nellie opened the letter.

“Good news!” she exclaimed, as she raised her eyes from the page over which she had glanced. “Good news for you, gentlemen, as well as for myself. For however glad you will be to greet your friends from home, it is I who will be de-

lighted to welcome Pauline Waldhorst at May Meadows. We may expect them here in two or three days. And here is a message for you, Mr. Auf dem Busch: 'Tell Uncle,' she writes, 'that Aunt and I are coming just as soon as we can. I would have come on at once as soon as I received your kind invitation, but that I thought it wrong to let Aunt travel alone, and she cannot be ready for a day or two. So, knowing that you will kindly look to the comfort of dear Uncle and Cousin Woldemar, I thought it best to wait for her, so that we may travel together.' Now I think that this was very thoughtful of Pauline; don't you?"

Woldemar colored at mention of Pauline's name. But the news of her expected arrival affected him less than he would, a month or two before, have believed possible. He said nothing; but his father remarked, sententiously:

"Kindred souls find out themselves — on water and on land. Pauline's generous soul — and Miss May's generous soul — they know one another. And we know both." Then chuckling, "Not so, Woldemar?" he added.

"Pauline was right, of course, to wait for mother," said Woldemar. "I only wonder how she finds the courage at all, to travel all the way across the country, even if Pauline is with her."

"So I wonder," said his father. "I guess Pauline has the merit of it. But I find myself glad if the old lady comes. If it gives not — too much trouble to Miss May — and Mrs. May."

"Don't think of such nonsense," Nellie protested. "Trouble, indeed! Why, it will be the greatest pleasure to us. Oh, it will be just too lovely to have Pauline here."

Next day the old gentleman felt more poorly. But Woldemar was so much better, that the physicians permitted him to leave the room and to spend a part of the day on the porch, where Nellie presently joined him. His eyes were following the motions of Cressie, who busied herself with some domestic work a little distance from the house.

“ Still pondering over Cressie’s anonimity? ” the young lady inquired, smiling mischievously.

“ Rather over the anomalism of her relations to you, ” Woldemar made answer, slightly coloring under her glance.

“ And have you arrived at any conclusion? ”

Woldemar did not take his eyes off the slave-girl as he replied. He spoke in a dreamy sort of way, at first. “ I had begun to debate the question with myself, when I saw how much in earnest the rebels are, whether it would not be best, after all, to let the South go in peace, and regulate the slavery problem to suit themselves. But when you told me yesterday, that this young lady — pardon me, this girl, I mean, — was held in bondage for life, my eyes were opened to the enormity of the crime, that has hitherto found sanction in the Federal constitution. ” Then, turning his eyes on his young hostess, and speaking with positive though deliberate emphasis, he went on: “ Miss May, this war will never end until the country has purged itself of the foul stain on its bright escutcheon. I enlisted to vindicate, so far as my poor ability went, the integrity of the nation; I feel now, that the grander task before us is the restoration of its tarnished honor. ”

“ Ah, Mr. Auf dem Busch, ” said the hostess, “ you are at least honest enough to confess the true purpose of this wicked war, which your government is fighting under the false pretense of upholding the constitution. To do you justice, I believe that you follow your conviction. ”

Woldemar bowed. He was about to answer, when Miss May interrupted, saying:

“ It is a German trait, is it not, Mr. Auf dem Busch, to follow the dictates of conscience regardless of consequences? I half believe, ” she added, a far-off look in her eyes and a faint smile giving her face a thoughtful expression, “ that a genuine German would refuse St. Peter’s invitation to enter heaven, if he thought that duty called him to the other place, because the recording angel had made a mistake in casting up his account. ”

“You are severe on my countrymen, Miss May,” said Woldemar, “But I grant you that I abhor slavery, as all Germans, with rare exceptions, do; and I grant you, also, that its abolition, as one of the consequences of this war, is confidently hoped for by us.”

“Wherein, my hope is, that you may be disappointed,” said Nellie, a little positively. “Why do you wish to meddle with what concerns you so little?”

“I trust that this matter concerns me more than a little,” the young merchant replied, deferentially, yet soberly. “The honor and glory of my country are nor indifferent to me. Liberty is the proudest boast of American freemen. The negro is a human being. Then why is he not as free as the white man?”

“Because,” said Nellie, speaking in a tone of earnestness that impressed Woldemar, “there is a practical as well as a theoretical side to this question. Theorizing on this subject is, I suspect, another peculiarly German trait; is it not? And the negro in America constitutes an interesting problem, which the Germans solve in the abstract, according to the approved methods of speculative reasoning. Begging the premises, which you so dogmatically announce, that the negro is a human being, and that human beings are free, the conclusion is easily reached that the negro is, theoretically, free. But to the Southern people, who wear him,—if you will excuse the homely phrase—next to the skin, this problem is a most practical one. We assign to him the status, which in the monarchical countries is assigned to the people at large—obedience, or the lash!”

Woldemar listened in wonder to the remarks of the Southern belle, whom he had not credited with the general intelligence betrayed by her words. Her last remark about the lash in monarchical countries nettled him. With a touch of his old imperiousness, he replied with the question: “What enables you to speak in this fashion of monarchical governments? Is it, that you have heard, or read, of Russia, and the barbarous knout?”

“Chiefly that,” she admitted. “And what little I have seen with my own eyes.”

“Ah, yes! You have been to Europe,” he exclaimed. “I remember hearing your brother say so at one time.” And with increased interest, as if this fact had added value to her opinions, he asked her to state her views as to the relative merits of Europe and America.

“But, Mr. Auf dem Busch, we ‘did’ all Europe in scarcely more than a year,” she apologized. “And we were bent on having a good time, at that. Surely, my opinion cannot, under such circumstances, be worth listening to?”

“But still I am eager to hear it.”

“Then give me Europe for a year or two; America for a permanent home.”

“But Europe teems with culture, while America has hardly put forth a leaf.”

“I, for my part, prefer Spring to Summer.”

“But not rudeness to culture?”

“Manhood, then, to abject cringing. Mr. Auf dem Busch,” said the young lady, growing warm with the subject, “to me it was a humiliating spectacle to see the great mass of a nation crawling in the dust to the titled few. Counts, barons, dukes, lords — I have seen them all, bespangled like gypsy women, and about them the awed multitude gaping reverence.”

“And did it not occur to you that these titled few have acquired the skill to rule that multitude, and transmitted it from father to son through generations?”

“Sir,” said Nellie, with sparkling eyes and eager voice, “that touches the pith of the difference between us, and — I submit — between the old and the new world. Why should one man hold privilege over another by virtue of some ancestor’s deed? In America, thank God, the ruler is determined, not by the chance of birth, but by the will of the people.”

Woldemar, forgetting time and place, grew warmer. “Will of the people?” he exclaimed sneeringly. “Say rather, by the will of scheming tricksters, who barter office for cash or

pledges to the highest bidder. If eternal watchfulness be the only price, liberty is a costlier article than the average American cares to pay for. He contents himself with the counterfeit shadow of self rule, having long ago yielded up his birthright to self-appointed political hucksters, unprincipled demagogues and bosses, who harness the sovereign voters to the hack of partisanship and drive them with the lash of party discipline whither they will. No, Miss May, the will of the people is but a small factor in the machinery of determining our rulers in America. How far more rational is the rule of the monarch, whose sole care and purpose is the welfare of his subjects."

"Poor souls!" said Nellie, affecting mock sympathy. "These rulers by the chance of birth, or, as they themselves more euphoniously put it, by the grace of God, are fully as disinterested in governing their subjects as, I dare say, our slave-owners are in dealing with their slaves. And on your showing, Mr. Auf dem Busch, our slaves ought to be as grateful for being ruled by their owners as your subjects in monarchical States are to their hereditary masters. Then why would you deprive them of the protection they enjoy, any more than you would drive your countrymen, for instance, into revolt against their masters?"

"You are not just in comparing the German subject with the American slave. The former have not been robbed of their human rights, as your countrymen are robbing the negro. There, all men are under the equal protection of the law; here, you deny the servient race that equality given of God to all men."

"We are white; the negroes are black. Did we create this inequality? Is not inequality ordained of God, rather? Is not inequality an inevitable condition of our existence? Let not the seal-skinned Esquimo, then, compel the Hottentot to wear his furs."

Woldemar suppressed what answer he was about to make, when he saw Cressie approaching her mistress. But in a low voice he remarked;

“Cressie, at least, is not black.”

“No,” said the mistress. “But she has enough of African blood in her veins to make a most excellent servant, who, I firmly believe, would spurn freedom if offered to her.”

“It would prove black ingratitude, and the meanest treachery,” said Woldemar, “were I to put the correctness of your assertion to the test. Otherwise it might prove an interesting experiment.”

The young lady regarded her guest with the same mischievous smile that had somewhat disconcerted him when she surprised him gazing at Cressie.

“Try it, Mr. Auf dem Busch!” she exclaimed. “You may not succeed in giving me cause for complaint or vexation: but it is probable that you will be both humiliated and disappointed in the attempt. If there is any one, who can coax Cressie away from me, pardon me, Mr. Auf dem Busch, for asserting that you are not he.”

Woldemar did not answer; perhaps, because Cressie had approached and was conferring with her mistress touching some domestic duty. Or, perhaps, he was pondering Miss May’s words, and the meaning of the smile that had accompanied them. At any rate, he made no reply, even after Cressie had gone about her business; but he dropped his eyes before Nellie’s quizzical look, and suddenly colored without ostensible cause.



CONFESSIONS AND CONFIDINGS.

PAULINE WALDHORST, meanwhile, looked forward to her meeting with uncle and cousin in nervous excitement. She loved her uncle and benefactor with a fervency that made her anxiety for his safety as keen, perhaps, as Mrs. Auf dem Busch's apprehension for her husband's condition, while the dread of meeting her Cousin Woldemar added to her agitation. She was to meet him, too, in the midst of the May family; whom, she felt, he must cordially hate. Then there was the prospect of meeting Nellie, for whom she had conceived a fond affection, which excited her eager expectation; and the possibility — how her heart fluttered to think it! — of meeting Leslie May.

To these exciting topics the prospect of traveling through a comparatively wild tract of country, that might now be swarming with soldiers and marauders belonging to either of the belligerent armies, added another element of uneasiness. She had written to her brother in this respect, on receiving Nellie's letter, inquiring as to the feasibility of making the journey with Mrs. Auf dem Busch; and Victor, answering promptly, had informed her that the military governor, taking a warm interest in the members of the Auf dem Busch family, had so arranged as to send him with an important commission to Brookfield, directing him at the same time to take the ladies with him under military escort. This gave Pauline comforting assurance in one direction; but when Victor after his arrival in the city, indicated to her the nature of his commission at Brookfield, a new and more poignant anxiety racked her mind, overshadowing for the time every other emotion. The very

mention of the word "court-martial" in connection with Leslie May struck terror to her soul.

Under these circumstances the journey to Brookfield was not a cheerful one for Pauline; nor indeed, for Mrs. Auf dem Busch. The ill-humor of the latter sprang not alone from anxiety for her husband and son, though she fretted much about them, but lay in a different direction. She bemoaned the unpardonable weakness that had led her husband to acquiesce in Woldemar's enlistment, as well as the inconceivable folly of his enlisting himself, thus bringing all this trouble on his helpless wife. And she laid a heavy grievance at the door of Victor Waldhorst, holding him responsible, in some vague fashion, for this unholy war, with all its train of suffering and trouble.

But Victor, too, was glum and taciturn. He had seen neither Leslie nor his sister since the day he parted from them at the capitol, save as he had caught a glimpse of them on the next day, when the final vote was taken, by which Colonel May had been elected to the United States Senate. The stirring events that agitated the country, as well as the new sphere of action into which he had been removed by enlisting in the Union army had served to distract his thoughts from the disappointment that had burned into his heart. But now, when again approaching Brookfield on the road he had traveled in Yahkop's company, memories crowded upon him thick and fast. He showed his sister the steep declivity down which he had rushed with headlong impetuosity, eager to rescue the child that had charmed him with her silvery laughter; and the place, on the other side of the creek, where he had intercepted the runaway horses. A pensive smile flitted over his face, as he recounted the incidents following. A far-off look came into his eyes as he ceased speaking. His thoughts dwelt on the dreams of bygone days. Pauline had listened with rapt interest to his words, and would gladly have lured him into further confidences on this topic, but for Victor's obvious preoccupation. Only when they reached the ford where they

must cross the creek, swollen, just now, to unusual fullness by recent rains, she asked him whether the child had really been alone in the wagon, when the runaway horses dashed through the water.

Victor's eyes sparkled with enthusiasm, as he answered. "She had no equal as a child, even as she has no peer as a woman. You have seen her, Pauline. You have been attracted by the personal magnetism she exerts upon all who come within her influence. You have been charmed by her witching beauty, and won by her sweet loveableness. And you will see her again, Pauline; and I know her well enough to be sure that she will not let you feel the resentment that fills her heart against me —"

"Resentment?" Pauline exclaimed.

"For my base ingratitude, as she must judge it, to her father. Yes, Pauline; and she is right; from her standpoint. She had set her heart on her father's election to the Senate, and I promised him my vote and influence. She will never forgive me for opposing him, for she does not comprehend the cruel necessity that made it my duty to vote against him. To her, the cause of the South is a just and holy cause; and she is enthusiastic in her loyalty. She is a woman, and a woman's opinion is unreasoning and immovable. It will be better, believe me, that I should see as little of her as may be compatible with my duty in conducting the trial. When we have reached Brookfield I will remain at the hotel, while you proceed to May Meadows with aunt. You will explain matters to uncle. I would like to call on him; but I must not intrude my unwelcome presence on Miss May."

"You wrong Nellie!" Pauline asserted, with an assurance that Victor wished might rest on a more substantial foundation than her admiration of Leslie's sister. "I know her better than to believe her capable of harboring ill will against any one for simply doing his duty. Nellie is as proud as she is beautiful: but she possesses a bright intellect, and, above all, a warm, generous heart that would cause her to blush at the mere suspicion of a mean thought or impulse."

Victor looked at his sister with eager approval. "How wonderful is woman's intuition!" he exclaimed. "Your estimate of Miss May's character, based on an hour's conversation with her, is as unerring and accurate as my knowledge of her, based on an intercourse of years."

Pauline blushed as she smilingly replied: "But, remember, that you have told me all you know about her, and perhaps more. So that I have all your knowledge, besides my own, as well as my 'woman's intuition,' as you call it, to guide me. And believe me, this instinct is more reliable, sometimes, than the deliberate judgment of a man; at least so far as a woman is in question."

A faint reflection of Pauline's smile stole into Victor's face. But instead of brightening his features, it served rather to accentuate their somber earnestness.

"You are right," he said; "and just because you are right, Miss May must despise me. No one knows better than I her warm-hearted generosity. She has proved it to me in ways that I can never forget. It is this very enthusiasm of her nature that must condemn me in her eyes. Were she less womanly in her disposition, could she judge from the glacier realms of prosaic intellect, — could she look down on and reason upon the patriotism that makes her an enthusiastic — I may say a fanatic — rebel, and the bitter duty which cruelly demands of me to see in her and hers but traitors and enemies, she might forgive my course against her father, and respect me at least for doing my duty. As it is, I am to her a perjured, ungrateful wretch, who betrayed her father's interest and her own confiding trust in my promise. — No, Pauline; I will not annoy her by entering her house as a guest, and putting her to the necessity of refusing me that whole-souled hospitality, which it is her nature to extend to all whom she welcomes there."

Pauline shook her head doubtfully over Victor's self-disparaging words. She remembered Nellie's gracious smile, that evening among the philosophers, as she presented him with a

“posie for old acquaintance’ sake,” and Victor’s vivid blush on receiving it; and she was too thoroughly convinced of her brother’s sterling qualities to believe it possible that either Nellie or any other girl should look down upon him. But what Victor said about their being enemies, set her to thinking. If Nellie and Victor were enemies, then were not Leslie and she enemies too? And if she were to meet him now what would be his attitude toward her? And what is the attitude of Cousin Woldemar toward Leslie May?

Anxiously she pondered these questions, and soon became as silent as Victor. It was well for Mrs. Auf dem Busch that she made no demand on the conversational powers of her companions; for she would have been poorly entertained by them.

When the travelers arrived at Brookfield, Victor ordered the guard to proceed with the ladies to the May Mansion, notwithstanding the vehement protest of Mrs. Auf dem Busch, who insisted on Victor’s accompanying them to the end of their journey. But Victor quietly left them to pursue their way to May Meadows while he himself reported to General Seele at the hotel headquarters.

The guests were received by Mrs. and Miss May with the courtesy to be expected of them. Mrs. May was polite, though Pauline, if she had not been so preoccupied, might have fancied her to be a trifle condescending in her manner; but Nellie was very gracious to Mrs. Auf dem Busch, while she embraced and kissed Pauline with the warmth of sincere friendship. The two girls were at once on terms of perfect ease with each other, and exchanged their small confidences with great gusto.

Uncle Auf dem Busch received his wife in bantering mood, though as yet unable to leave his bed. “Come you all the way to Brookfield,” he inquired of her, “to curry my grey hairs, and tie my cravat, when I come on my legs once more?” And after a feeble chuckle, made pathetic by his weakness, he added: “Ah, these ladies shall know how proud I can be of my caresome wife; and how I shall be thankful to her, when

she shall make me to look well, before them. Or," with a comical grimace, "at least, so well as she can make me to look."

When Pauline bent over him to kiss him, he grasped her by both arms and holding her away from him, said: "Stop, little girl! I like your kiss better as sugar or honey. But if you got not more as one to spare, better you give it to that hungry boy there, looking at you like if he wants to eat you with his eyes."

"Oh, I am not stingy with kisses," said Pauline, blushing deeply, however, as she pressed her lips upon those of the old gentleman. "And I have one to spare for my cousin," she added, as she turned to embrace and kiss Woldemar, who had risen from the lounge on which he had been reclining. "I am so glad, Cousin Woldemar, to find you so much better than I feared, from the news we had of you. You will soon be well enough, will you not, to escort us home?"

Woldemar responded to the kiss and embrace with a coolness that surprised both his father and himself. The suffering from his wound must have drained his vitality very low, so his father feared, if Pauline's kiss failed to bring the slightest color to his cheeks. But Pauline felt grateful to her cousin for his admirable bearing under the circumstances, and Nellie, not appearing to notice at all, indulged in a furtive smile to herself.

"I would gladly escort mama and you," said Woldemar, in answer to Pauline's remark, "if they would let me. But when I get well, which I hope to be in a few days, I must rejoin my company. My term of enlistment will not expire for some weeks yet."

"We shall have a word to say about that, will we not, Pauline?" Nellie interposed. "For the present, you are a prisoner of war, Mr. Auf dem Busch; and I, under orders from my superior officer, am your inexorable jailer. Do not flatter yourself, sir, that I am so tame a rebel, or so recreant to my trust, as to send a redoubtable warrior back to swell the

ranks of the enemy, before he is exchanged, or at least paroled."

"Old lady," said Auf dem Busch, Sr., with a sly wink at his wife, "it has the seeming that you go home with uneffected purpose. Because, see you not, if Miss May be jailer, then I am a prisoner in her hands, too?"

"Of course you are," said Nellie, with smiling emphasis. "And I shall put you under strict surveillance, as well as my other prisoner. Mrs. Auf dem Busch, I appoint you my deputy and give it you strictly in charge to keep a watchful eye over the safety and comfort of your husband. And you, Pauline, shall bear the responsibility for the younger prisoner."

"Ah, what strategy in a petticoat!" mused the old gentleman, regarding his young hostess with admiring eyes. "It is great luck for our side that Miss May wears not gray trousers and some stars on her shoulders. She would be irresistible as an enemy. What brave boys in blue would stand before the artillery of her eyes, they would be overcome with her strokes of genius."

"Look to your prisoner, Mrs. Auf dem Busch!" the young lady commanded. "He is evidently delirious, and needs an application of cold water." Turning to Pauline, she continued, with mock severity: "Miss Waldhorst, I warn you to keep strict watch on your prisoner also. I suspect him of entertaining treasonable designs on one of our 'contrabands,' as the Yankees now call our 'peculiar institution.' Mind, I shall hold you responsible for the safety of our domestics. There is one," she went on, nodding slightly in the direction of Cressie, and smiling mischievously, "upon whose rescue the Yankee warriors, including your gallant cousin Auf dem Busch, seem intent. Your task in guarding her will not be a very arduous one, however. For I suspect that she will not willingly be carried off by any of them, save by one, who has not shown up, so far."

Pauline looked at Nellie as if she did not understand. She

looked at her cousin, and the distinct blush of embarrassment on his face puzzled her. It was so unusual a thing in Cousin Woldemar to blush, on any occasion. From Woldemar she turned her eyes on the octoroon maiden, and was struck by her marvelous beauty. As Victor had asked on first seeing her, Can she be a slave? So now Pauline, shocked by what to her appeared a monstrous incongruity, whispered in her friend's ear "Is she —?"

"Yes," Nellie answered, loud enough to be heard by all, not excepting Cressie, "she is a bounden slave; my own special property. Shocking, is it not?"

"It is!" Pauline exclaimed, still gazing in wonderment at the slave girl, who was performing some menial office with the unconscious grace of a well-bred lady.

"*It is!*" Nellie echoed with mock solemnity, enjoying for a second Pauline's eloquent, though silent protest. Then she broke into a ripple of musical laughter, and continued: "I think it is your brother's voice I hear saying these words, and your brother's face, on which I see the horror that seizes you on this discovery. Oh," she went on, more soberly, as if indulging in reminiscence, "it was a sight, when he bravely defended Cressie from the lash of the brutal overseer! His blazing cheeks and flashing eyes made him look really handsome, when he told father that he ought not to permit Cressie to be flogged."

A swift glance at Victor's sister from Cressie's eyes, and a tell-tale blush coloring her cheeks with crimson glow, betrayed that she had not forgotten the episode in her lowly life, that had thrown her into contact with her master's guest.

But Nellie continued: "By the by, that brutal overseer is now one of the loyal patriots defending your government, and therefore Victor's comrade in arms. What a curious pair of patriots! Jeffreys, whom Victor has made an enemy for life, and who hates him worse than he can hate any rebel — unless it be brother Leslie — fighting alongside of Cressie's brave champion, in Lincoln's army, which is fighting, as

Mr. Auf dem Busch here admits, for the liberation of the slaves! ”

“ Only because the rebels compel us,” said Woldemar. “ If they laid down their arms to-day I fear that our government would not only forgive them, but secure them more firmly in the possession of their slaves.”

“ You *fear* so,” Nellie repeated. “ Yes; you are a German, and would prefer, I suppose, to *be* a slave — to your gracious master by the grace of God — than to see one in a free country. Well, you are at least a little better than the Yankees in this respect: You Germans fight slavery on instinct, as Don Quixote fought the wind-mill, while the Yankees grudge us our slaves on the principle of the dog in the manger.”

“ I guess Miss May has right with the Yankees,” Mr. Auf dem Busch Senior remarked. “ The Yankees make blue laws for Sunday, because they feel blue on Sunday, and it makes them mad when some folks be jolly on Sunday, and they make laws to make everybody feel blue on Sunday.”

“ Come Pauline,” said Nellie, taking her guest by the hand, “ I see that mama is ready to show Mrs. Auf dem Busch to her room, and I must take you to yours. Which is also mine,” she added, as the two girls were leaving the room. “ You do not object to me as a room-mate, do you? ”

“ Oh, how kind of you! ” Pauline exclaimed, regarding her friend with a radiant face. “ You don’t know how glad you make me to take me to your own room.”

“ My kindness in this respect as in most others has a selfish basis,” Nellie confessed, in a confiding way. “ I want you to myself as much as I can get you: and I give you fair warning, that I shall monopolize as much of your time as you will let me.”

“ Command me! ” Pauline replied, as the girls reached the privacy of their chamber. “ I only fear that you will soon get tired of me. My conversational talent is poorly developed, and when my small stock of gossiping news is exhausted, the

burden of colloquial entertainment between us will rest chiefly on you."

"Have no fear," said Nellie, "but that we will fully develop your dormant talent in that direction. You shall learn, before you leave May Meadows, not only how to chat, but to chatter like a magpie. Meanwhile, let us draw on what you call your small stock of gossiping news. Tell me, for instance, where is your brother, Mr. Waldhorst, and what is he doing?"

"Why, don't you know?" Pauline asked in surprise. "He is here, — I mean in Brookfield, — to act as judge advocate in the trials before the court-martial."

"Judge advocate?" counter-queried Nellie, in equal surprise. "I did not know that he was a commissioned officer. I heard of him last as the military governor's private secretary."

"I don't know about his being a commissioned officer," Pauline informed her. "They call him Captain, I believe; and he was the governor's adjutant until he was sent here to conduct the trial of your brother."

"Trial of my brother?" exclaimed Nellie, turning pale. "You mean the trial of Jeffreys, — that miscreant who came here to carry off Cressie, and against whom Leslie is detained as a witness, — do you not?"

Pauline was startled by Nellie's vehemence. It was a genuine surprise to her to learn that Leslie's sister had been left in ignorance of the charge against him.

"Have you not been informed?" she inquired, in a voice tender with genuine sympathy. "Where, then, is your brother?"

"Ha!" exclaimed Nellie, aghast, and white as a sheet, "that is the miserable secret of Leslie's protracted absence, — ever since the horrible day when he marched off with the guards that arrested Jeffreys! And I — simpleton that I was! — thought he was detained as a witness when he was himself a prisoner! He has been in vile durance all this time,

and neither his mother nor his sister as much as dreamed of visiting him! Oh, this was a cruel kindness, father, to keep us uninformed as to my brother's fate!"

"How careless I have been!" Pauline lamented. "I am so sorry, — your father must have had good reason to conceal the truth from you; and by my awkwardness I have thwarted his intention."

"Hush!" said Nellie waving her hand in a peremptory gesture. "Don't be silly. As if you could have suspected! And besides, I must have heard all about it in a day or two, at all events." Then, as if wishing to put her visitor at ease, she added: "So your brother is in Brookfield, and I have heard nothing of it!"

"Why, yes. He came with us. It was he that escorted us to this place."

"And why have I not seen him?"

"Aunt and I both endeavored to persuade him; but —"

Pauline had it on her tongue's end to repeat to Nellie the reason Victor had given her for refusing to visit May Meadows; but she thought better of it. She finished the sentence by adding: "But his business with the commanding general was too pressing to allow him time to accompany us here."

"No; of course," her friend remarked. "Victor, you say, is judge advocate. Then it will be his office to prosecute Leslie, — to urge the court to convict him. Convict him of what, Pauline?" And in her sisterly anxiety she addressed herself to her visitor in the eager hope of learning from her brother's opinion of the case. "He has done nothing, has he? Nothing that is wrong, that a court-martial can punish? To be sure, he has tried to raise a company for the war. But they cannot punish him for that?"

"No, of course not," said Pauline, timidly. For while her interest in the fate of Leslie May was fully as deep as that of his sister, she had gathered from some of her brother's remarks, that the charge on which Leslie May would be tried was a serious one, involving danger to his liberty, if not his life.

And she naturally shrank from imparting her own apprehensions to the anxious sister.

But Nellie, in the instinctive hope of being contradicted by Pauline, went on: "Surely they cannot call him to account for shooting that odious beast that came here to rob us, and insult me? Tell me, Pauline, they cannot, surely, hurt him for that?"

"You forget, dear Nellie, that I know nothing at all about what happened here. But this I know, that Victor will never permit injustice to your brother —"

"Why yes;" she interrupted. "Victor is to be his prosecutor. And think, Pauline, Leslie has mortally offended him — has offended him beyond forgiveness —"

"Don't you believe it, Nellie!" Pauline broke in. "Leslie could not offend my brother so deeply, but that he would readily forgive. Oh, you do not know how he idolizes every member of your family!"

"But Victor is the soul of honor — Oh, don't I know it? — And Leslie and I too, have reviled him as base, and ungrateful, and treacherous!"

Pauline drew herself up to her full height. Her cheeks reddened; her eyes flashed. "Treacherous?" she repeated with the emphasis of indignant surprise and amazement. "My brother Victor, treacherous? And you, Miss May, you, — and your brother, — you, *both of you*, — of all the people in the world, you had the heart to tell him that?"

As Pauline stood there, the very embodiment of indignant protest against the cruel wrong to her brother's character, Nellie regarded her with undisguised admiration. "How like your brother you are!" she said. "And yet how unlike! If he had your spirit, what a man he would be!"

"You will find that he has plenty of spirit on occasion," Pauline retaliated. "But you need fear no return of evil for evil from him," she added, regarding Miss May with lofty pride. "He will be all the more scrupulous in shielding your brother against injustice and wrong for the cruelty he has

suffered at your hands. You have said it, Miss May, and you spoke truly when you said it, — my brother is the soul of honor.”

“Can any one in the wide world know it better than I?” the young lady emphasized. There was exultation in her voice and bearing, as she said it, yet a tone of resignation withal, which caused Pauline to wonder. “But there is little comfort in that,” she continued, “either for me or for Leslie. He is loyal to his government. In his eyes Leslie is a traitor; we are enemies. His nice sense of duty in conducting the trial will take alarm at every memory or sentiment of tender regard or affection into which his warm and generous heart may betray him. He will do his duty all the more sternly and inexorably — he will prosecute Leslie as rigorously as if — he had never known us.”

There was a tone of anguish in Pauline’s voice, as she answered, “I dare say he will, Nellie!” For she, too, trembled for the fate of Leslie May.

“He will! — He loves you, Pauline, — I know how tenderly! But he would sacrifice you as surely as he would Leslie or me, if he thought the interest of his cause demanded it.”

“Oh, no, Nellie! Only if *justice* demanded it. Be of good cheer, dear; for I am as certain as I am of my own life, that your brother has done nothing that is not high-minded, and honorable and right. So if Victor be his judge, you ought not to fear for him.”

“You are right, my dear!” said Nellie, impulsively embracing and kissing her friend.

Yet neither of the girls felt assured. The issue of a trial before a court composed of enemies of the accused was looked forward to by both of them with awe and trepidation.



XXXVIII.

JUDGE AND ADVOCATE.

WHEN Captain Waldhorst — that being now Victor's military title — delivered the dispatches of which he was the bearer from Governor Rauhenfels, General Seele detained him for a lengthened interview in which the contents of the dispatches were under discussion. They contained the order directing the general in command of the Federal forces of the Department of the Southwest to convene a general court-martial for the speedy trial of the prisoners in custody. Sergeant Jeffreys was charged with attempted kidnapping and provoking an aggravated breach of the peace, and conduct unbecoming a soldier. The civilian Leslie May was arraigned for the murder of Sergeant Obenaus, an officer of the United States army in the lawful discharge of his duty as such. There was a further order detailing Captain Waldhorst of the governor's staff, to be attached to said court, when convened, as judge advocate.

Victor was agreeably surprised to find how much interest the general evinced in the case of the prisoners. The questions put by him elicited from the young captain a rather full account of all that Victor knew about the matter. His every word became a glowing tribute to the sterling character of father and son; and though he never mentioned the name of Miss May further than was necessary to explain her attitude toward Jeffreys in regard to the threatened flogging of Cressie, yet it was not difficult for the general to guess the secret that Victor thought he was safely hiding.

“I learn from our surgeon, Doctor Behr, who attends the patients at the house of Senator May, that his daughter is a most estimable lady, whose cheerful devotion to the comfort of

the sufferers goes far in aiding their recovery. I also learn from the doctor, that she is ignorant of the real charge against her brother, believing him to be detained merely as a witness."

"What a fearful shock it will be to her, to learn of the peril of her idolized brother!" Victor exclaimed.

"It will be your task to help her to bear it," said General Seele, a scarcely perceptible humorous smile lighting up his countenance. "The governor's action in selecting you as judge advocate in these trials seems to be a most fortunate thing for the May family. Do you happen to know whether he is acquainted with them?"

"He is."

"Ah, that explains it. I am very glad; for I feel that with you to conduct the proceedings, no injustice will be done."

"I shall certainly do my duty, General."

"I know you will. Since you have made me aware of the high esteem in which you hold your friend May, your conduct in the senatorial election challenges my unqualified admiration. In voting against your old benefactor, you must have felt something of the anguish of Junius Brutus when he signed the death warrants of his sons for treason to the State."

"I might have truly said, in the words of that other Brutus, Caesar's friend and assassin, 'Not that I loved my benefactor less, but my country more.'"

"Go now," urged the general, "and confer with the prisoners, so as to be ready to go on with the trial at the earliest possible moment. You are aware, I suppose, that we may receive marching orders at any time, and it would be awkward if the trials were begun and not concluded before we leave here. The enemy is concentrating an overwhelming force, and if he should think of attacking us, nothing but a speedy retreat would save our forces from annihilation. Besides, it would be a cruel thing to the prisoners to be dragged hence under guard, and remain in custody for an indefinite time."

"Not to speak of the anxiety of his mother and sister,"

Victor added, thinking of but one of the prisoners. "I will enter on my duty at once, if your Excellency will grant me access to the prisoners."

"Self-evidently," said the general. "You have unlimited authority to visit or cause to be brought before you not only the prisoners, but any witness or other person from whom you may wish to obtain any information. I have one request to make of you, however. One of the witnesses, is, I infer, the young lady, his sister, and I would not like to have her frightened by being dragged here under military escort. Could you," he added, a humorous twinkle again appearing in his eye, "manage, perhaps, to pay your visit to her without taking a squad of soldiers with you?"

"I may as well admit to you, General, that the fear I have of meeting with Miss May would not be relieved if not only a squad, but a whole regiment of soldiers were to accompany me."

"Fear?" the general repeated in surprise. "Why, what a strange man you are for a soldier! I learn that she is a most charming young lady, and must be a friend of yours. And your uncle and cousin are in the house, too. I must say, that these May people, although they *are* rebels, have acted most handsomely in taking to their home two wounded Federal soldiers, and caring for them as if they were dear friends instead of enemies."

"But I am not a wounded soldier," the young man replied, with a sad smile of resignation. "I will be to her only the enemy in the hated uniform, and the prosecutor of her idolized brother. It will not be a pleasant task, General, to bring to her the tidings of the grave accusation against him."

"Still, it will give her comfort that it is you and not some hated Yankee that is to be the judge advocate at her brother's trial."

Victor made no answer, but, on being dismissed, hurried to the room in which Leslie May was kept under guard.

The meeting between the young men was characteristic. Leslie, having already been informed of the nature of Victor's

errand, cordially shook hands with him, and said, with that winsome smile which had always won Victor's heart, more touching now for an eager, expectant look that accompanied it: "I may truly say, Victor, that I am glad to see you! Very glad, indeed, in view of the errand that brought you here. You came to prosecute me, did you not?"

"To try you, Mr. May," said Victor. "I assure you that I deeply feel the painful necessity of this visit."

A dark look, as of keen disappointment, crossed Leslie's face. Dropping the hand he had held in his own while speaking, he said: "*Mr. May*, is it?" And with icy politeness he added: "Then pardon me, Captain Waldhorst — that, I take it, is your military rank? — for my seeming disrespect in addressing you by a name that was once familiar to me."

"Do not misjudge me, Mr. May," was Victor's quiet answer. "It is not your friend or comrade that stands before you —"

"No, I should say not," Leslie interrupted, a touch of sneering sarcasm in his voice. "I suppose that I dismissed that friend and comrade some time ago. But we are liable to make fools of ourselves sometimes, Captain Waldhorst; and so I forgot for a moment that a newer influence has come between us. It is not your fault: your stubborn persistence in tantalizing us — my sister and me, I mean, and I have no doubt yourself, also, — ought to make it plain enough, that you wished no further friendship with us."

"You wrong me, Mr. May, as you did on that awful occasion you speak of. Your father, at least, understood that I could not act otherwise than I did. If you had not been passionately absorbed in your ambitious purpose, you might have known what it cost me to vindicate my honor and self-respect, — what anguish it gave me to lose your and Miss May's friendship, to be looked upon by both of you as perfidious and basely ungrateful. But I may say, without humiliating myself, that your cruelty on that occasion abated not one jot of my regard and admiration — I may add, of my affection — for you —"

‘Then why address me as ‘Mr. May’?’

‘Because, as I was about to say when you interrupted me, I stand before you as an officer with the duty of prosecuting you on a serious indictment. I come to request of you an accurate statement of the circumstances attending the death of the Federal officer, so that I may know how best to conduct the examination of the witnesses.’

Leslie smiled and looked at Victor with a puzzled mien. ‘Cool, that, is it not?’ he said. ‘You soberly tell me, that you come not as a friend, but as an officer charged with the duty of prosecuting me—possibly on an indictment for a felony, for there is no telling to what extent the facts may have been exaggerated and distorted—and you ask of me to help you convict me? Does it not strike you that you are trenching on the sacred privilege, guaranteed by *magna charta* and the constitution, according to which no man shall be compelled to testify against himself?’

Victor cast a reproachful glance at the prisoner. He was about to answer, when Leslie hastily added:

‘There—don’t think that I believe you capable of any intention of taking advantage of me. I know you so well, that I am perfectly sure you would not have called on me with any sinister motive; for you would ten times rather suffer than do wrong. Only it appears so outlandishly absurd to me that the prosecuting officer should consult with the prisoner. It looks—would look in any one else but you, I mean—so much like a cowardly attempt to trick him into an unguarded statement, to be used against him on the trial.’

‘You seem to forget, Mr. May, that courts-martial do not proceed according to the course of the common law. In all but English-speaking communities, the examination of the prisoner himself is a most important factor in ascertaining guilt or innocence. Under rare circumstances, only, could his statement militate against him, if he were really innocent, as, permit me to say, I believe you to be—’

Leslie’s hand sought Victor’s and pressed it.

“ Nevertheless I must do my duty. And you will pardon me, will you not? for the suggestion, that your situation is not entirely free from an element of danger. Men are liable to err. The officers that are to compose the court to try you, are men, of whom it would be expecting too much to imagine them exempt from bias, prejudice, or even passion. You see, then, that it is not enough for safety to know yourself to be innocent of the charge laid against you, nor that I, the judge advocate, am convinced of the justice of your cause. It behooves us to disarm suspicion, remove prejudice, and cancel unfavorable bias. Remember that your judges will be men who took up arms from a sense of duty, to crush out a rebellion which they deem unholy and wicked, and to which you and yours are lending powerful aid. Do you see how a mistaken sense of duty may turn their very patriotism into injustice against you? ”

The prisoner's eyes flashed. “ Victor! ” he exclaimed, “ do you mean to tell me, that men who wear a soldier's uniform, who hold commissions from your government, who profess to be fighting for a righteous cause, can be guilty of the pusillanimous tyranny you suggest? Do you want me to believe that *you* would associate with men, who would trample right and justice under foot, and call it patriotism — ”

“ Calm yourself, Mr. May,” said Victor, laying his hand gently on Leslie's arm. “ I but caution you against overweening confidence; and I again remind you that a court-martial is a different thing from a *visi prius* court at common law. What I have suggested is a remote possibility; but a possibility that should be taken into account.”

“ More the shame for a cause that is supported by men whom you deem capable of such things! ” exclaimed the prisoner indignantly. “ Why, you might scour the South from end to end in vain for a man so low as not to spit at a tribunal suspected of the possibility you suggest.”

“ And yet,” said Victor with a sad smile, “ I mistrust that under similar circumstances a tribunal in your Secession might incur similar suspicion. Human nature, I suspect, is much

the same whether it manifests itself under a blue, or under a gray, uniform."

Leslie was about to answer, but closed his lips firmly without uttering what may have been in his mind.

"You demand justice," Victor added. "Then try to be just. Remember that these men are nursing a wrath against you,—as one of the originators of this wanton and reckless assault on our common country,—that appears to them as just and as patriotic, as does the fierce indignation to you, which increases you against the government, to destroy which you are honestly doing your best. Passion, though in the garb of patriotic indignation, clouds the judgment: What they might excuse as justifiable homicide in a non-combatant, may seem to them a heinous murder when committed by one engaged in recruiting for the enemy in this unholy war."

Leslie seemed illy pleased with Victor's homily. But with something of an effort he forced a smile, and said: "It is of less importance to me, just now, which side is right or wrong; or even whether the judges that are to pass on my case are patriots or bigots. The one thing needful is to show them, that justice requires my acquittal. What am I to do?"

"For the present," said Victor, soberly, "you are to tell me all you know about the facts."

* * *

When Victor was announced at May Meadows, it was late in the afternoon. The convalescents,—for the old gentleman had also recovered sufficiently to be able to leave his bed at times—had been enjoying the open air on the porch, for an hour or two, in the company of the ladies, but had retired just before Victor's arrival, to their room, followed by Mrs. May and Mrs. Auf dem Busch; while Nellie and Pauline had gone to their own room. Cressie handed Victor's card to her mistress, her face flushed, her voice in a tremor of excitement, as she told her that Captain Waldhorst desired a few moments of conversation with Miss May.

"*Captain Waldhorst!*" Mrs. May read from the card,

with an emphasis on the title as if it was an offense that must be resented. "Well, show him into the drawing-room, and tell your mistress to join him there." When Cressie had left the room, taking the card with her, Mrs. May added, conciliatingly: "I must say for the young man, that it is quite considerate in him to send in his card, considering that he used to be perfectly at home here, and that his whole family is at home here now. What business can he have with my daughter, I wonder?"

Nellie held Victor's card in her hand when she entered the drawing-room. He had for days been schooling himself for this meeting; and now, as she approached him with extended hand, her eyes seeking his, that exquisite smile wreathing the lips that bid him a hearty welcome, once more, to May Meadows,—now he could not control the vivid flush that mounted to his very forehead, leaving his face, as it receded—as white as marble. But with a herculean effort he steadied his voice, as he replied to her greeting, bowing very low,—so low that it might seem as if he had not seen the hand so gracefully proffered. "I thank you, Miss May, for your kindness in replying so readily with my request for an interview. I shall trouble you no longer than will be absolutely necessary for a proper discharge of my duty."

Nellie noted the vivid flush, and a faint reflex of it shone on her cheeks; for it enabled her to see that she had not become indifferent to him. She noted, too, the ignoring of her extended hand, and the color deepened; for this seeming act of impoliteness assured her that he had been schooling himself to self-control and self-reliance. The discovery, however, did not diminish whatever regard she might have entertained for the young soldier, nor increase her anxiety for the fate of her brother. But she answered promptly: "We highly appreciate the honor you are conferring upon us by this call," as she placed a chair for him. "Your sister has already informed us of the nature of your duties here. I am so glad, Captain, that it is you into whose hands the conduct of the trial against

brother Leslie has been intrusted. For I know that, come what will, you will not let him suffer unjustly."

"If Pauline has told you the nature of the charge against your brother, I am spared the painful task of doing so," said Victor, with a look of relief at his hostess. "It remains, then, only for you to tell me the circumstances preceding the arrest. May I beg of you to do so as fully and as accurately as possible, distinguishing between what you saw and heard yourself, and what you may infer, or have learned from others?"

The account which Nellie gave was clear, succinct and graphic, commencing with the intense excitement produced among the inhabitants of Brookfield by news of the battle going on at Winslo's Run, and her own nervousness in the morning, when her father and brother had gone to Brookfield. She related even her conversation with Cressie, dwelling smilingly on the octoroon's pensive renunciation of a possible lover. Of course, she grew indignant over the memory of the insults that had been heaped upon her by Sergeant Obenaus; her feelings carried her away to such extent, that she did not hesitate to repeat the strong language she had used, until she suddenly checked herself, remembering that she was addressing a Union soldier. "Pardon me," she said then, "I ought to bear in mind that I am speaking to a fellow-officer of the miscreant, — to a representative of the same government which he professed to serve."

Victor had listened with rapt attention to the fiery flow of her words. So fully did he share the speaker's indignation, that he jumped up as she ceased, exclaiming: "You are right, Miss May! Such a scoundrel disgraces the army and the government. A bullet in his heart from an honest man's weapon is too much honor for the coward."

Nellie had also risen. She regarded him with a triumphant sparkle of her eyes. "Could my brother do otherwise than shoot him?" she exclaimed, fixing an eager, questioning look upon the young officer.

Victor gazed at her admiringly, but made no answer.

“Not that he would have found me an unresisting victim,” she continued, speaking proudly, her lips curled with ineffable disdain, while drawing from her pocket and displaying before her visitor a revolver of proportions rather formidable for a lady’s toy. “This faithful friend would have laid him low, if need had been; or, failing in that, — though I am no poor shot — it would have held in reserve one friendly bullet to place me beyond his power.”

“Ah, you were armed!” exclaimed Victor.

“Yes. My father and brother both insisted on my carrying this reliable protector, and themselves instructed me how to use it. The cowardly villain was in greater danger than he knew, even before brother Leslie appeared. But it was Leslie that fired, with probably surer aim than mine would have been the next moment.”

From this point on, the account given by Nellie was but in corroboration of what he had already learned from Leslie. But Victor questioned her closely as to the minutest details, so as to be sure of what the prisoner’s sister would testify to at the trial.

He had not yet ceased questioning when Cressie appeared, announcing that supper had been served, and that the company were waiting in the dining-room for the honor of being joined by Captain Waldhorst and Miss Nellie. This was a move in the game on which Victor had not counted. He had resolved to confine his intercourse with the members of the May family to the merest formalities dictated by the rules of common politeness. To sit down at table with them was far from his purpose. His absorption in the gathering of the facts for the trial had prevented him from noting the approach of meal-time. Greatly annoyed as he was at his inadvertence in this respect, he saw at once that to decline participation in the meal would not only be in shockingly bad taste, but would amount to a confession of weakness which would humble him before the woman, to whom of all others he did not wish to appear weak. Steeling his nerves for the trying ordeal await-

ing him, he bowed to the young lady and offered his arm to escort her to the supper table.

Nellie acknowledged the courtesy with a graceful smile; but Victor remained stolidly indifferent. Her graphic account of the occurrences in which she had played so conspicuous a part, had stirred up his very soul, so that it had required all his mental resources to steer clear of an open betrayal of his deep feeling. Now, when her soft hand rested daintily on his arm, her bright face upturned trustingly to his, as they walked toward the supper room, he felt more than ever the dire need of fortitude to maintain the barrier of reserve behind which he proposed to intrench himself against the dangerous fascination. He would rather incur the imputation of churlishness, than hazard the succumbing, once more, to the witching charms that had so often enthralled his whole being. So her sprightliest sallies elicited but monosyllabic answers, and her sweetest smiles met seeming indifference. But it was a seeming that cost him heavily.

They found the company already assembled, Mrs. May having, in honor of their military guest, persuaded the convalescents to join the family at the general table, at which Mr. Auf dem Busch Senior appeared for the first time. Mrs. Auf dem Busch and Pauline were, of course, present also; and so it was quite a little party that Nellie and Victor sat down to.

The conditions for a free flow of conversation were not the most favorable. Mrs. Auf dem Busch felt constrained by the recognition of the obligation both she and her husband, as well as her son, were under for the generous hospitality and unremitting kindness that had been extended to them, yet lacked the grace to show her gratitude in any acceptable manner. Mrs. May, on her part, in no wise came to her aid; on the contrary, she added to her chagrin and annoyance by the cool display of her superior elegance and polish, doing the honors at table with the air of a princess, until Nellie, in very pity, by a well-directed question or two, put her at comparative ease.

The relations between Woldemar and Pauline had under-

gone no perceptible change since the day on which Woldemar had been rejected as a lover; at least on the part of Pauline. The cool, dignified demeanor on his part, studiously calculated to impress her with his profound misery and heroic attempt not to hold her responsible for his suffering, was met on her side by unvarying friendliness, such as might be expected from a loving sister. Some hope he had entertained that Pauline would relent on learning of his resolution to enlist in the service of the country; some hope, too, — when he had learned of the invitation to his mother and Pauline, — that the wound he had received on the field of honor would enlist Pauline's sympathy, and with it, perhaps, a warmer feeling in his favor. Such hope he now no longer entertained. And though it surprised him that he felt no keener pang of disappointment on settling down to the conviction that Pauline was irretrievably lost to him, yet he felt sufficient resentment to make pleasant conversation between him and her, for the present, at least, extremely difficult.

The only person at the table that was on entirely pleasant terms with every other, was the old gentleman Auf dem Busch. He rallied Victor on having monopolized Miss May to an unchristian extent. "Just like he was master here, or generalissimo," he suggested. "You will clip him the wings, Mrs. May, if he takes too soaring a flight. What say you to it, Miss May?"

"I don't think Mr. Waldhorst is in a soaring mood this evening," the latter replied, with a sidelong glance at Victor before she looked at the old gentleman. "He seems to be carrying a burden that might crush a weaker man. But being an ardent rebel, I am glad that he is not generalissimo of the Union army, although, as Leslie's sister, I might wish him to be."

The others looked at Nellie as if they did not understand. But Mr. Auf dem Busch remarked with a chuckle, "I guess our Victor has been in Leslie May's sister's company and has not talked with a rebel at all, this afternoon. I guess the

sister's wish for him to be generalissimo is the burden what he carries. What, Victor?"

"Nay," said Victor, with a weak attempt to smile it off as a joke, "I fear that Miss May's honesty as a rebel has been getting the better of Leslie May's sister in that wish of hers. Her wish to see the rebel forces victorious is perfectly natural; and she is, of course, right in supposing such an event probable, if I were generalissimo of the Union forces. And she is right, too, in supposing that such an apprehension on my part would be a heavy burden to carry."

For a wonder, Nellie seemed annoyed at Victor's sally. "Sir," she retaliated, rather more warmly than was her wont in conversation, "I protest that you are most unjust to yourself, and ungenerous and unfair to me, in the construction you put upon my words. We are enemies, it is true; but neither of us can help that. But you will not persuade me, Mr. Waldhorst, that even as an enemy, one may not be generous and just. Then why should I not rejoice to find my enemy a man of probity and sterling worth, though it pain me that he is an enemy?"

"Miss May has surely right!" exclaimed the elder Auf dem Busch enthusiastically. "She has hammered that nail square on the head. It is a miserable shame, that we shall be enemies of Colo-nell May, and of his excellent lady, and of his charming daughter. But must I be blind to Miss May's beauty, and a blockhead to her wisdom, and a fool to her wit, only because her father is on the other side of our fence in this war, or because her brother would like to shoot Yankee hypocrites?"

Just then the slave Xerxes entered, bringing the mail for which he had been sent to town. There was one letter each for Mrs. and for Miss May.

"My letter is from Washington," said Mrs. May; and then added with an apologetic bow to the company, "You will please excuse me for a few moments, until I see what the senator has to say to me."

While Mrs. May left the room, Nellie opened her letter,

saying, "You will pardon me, gentlemen, and you, Pauline, for opening my letter in your presence."

Victor thought that he recognized the handwriting of Ralph Payton on the back of the letter, and closely watched her face as she perused its contents. She turned pale, and a frown settled on her features.

"I have unpleasant news," she said presently, without taking her eyes off the paper. "Mr. Payton informs me that the Senate is about to expel a number of the Southern senators, and that although father is not yet named among them, still it is probable that he will share the fate of all of those who will not bow before the tyrannical majority. The same treatment is in store for Mr. Payton, and both he and father are debating the propriety of resigning before either the Senate or House has acted on their cases."

"I wonder me," said the elder Auf dem Busch, "that Mr. Payton has not long ago resigned. If I understood him not false, he is not honest to sit in a Congress that he is willing to conquer."

"I have no doubt but that he will enter the army as soon as he leaves Washington," said Nellie, dropping the hand with the letter into her lap, and looking at Mr. Auf dem Busch in a pensive mood. "Is it not strange, that government should wantonly drive its best friends into the ranks of its enemies? For I know father well enough to be certain that he, too, will offer his sword to the Confederacy, if he can no longer serve the country in Congress."

"Congress has right when it throws out Mr. Payton," Mr. Auf dem Busch asserted. "He can do more harm with his vote, as he can do with his sword. But Senator May — ah, it is a great sadness that his wise counsel shall be lost for the nation. The country needs much the counsel of good and wise men in these times."

Nellie was touched by Auf dem Busch's tribute to the character of her father, even though she may have resented the reflection on Payton's integrity.

Victor cast a grateful look at his uncle for the opinion expressed by him, which so completely agreed with his own; but he contented himself by saying that it was sad to know that such men as Senator May and his son Leslie must be found in the ranks of the enemy.

“And yet I could wish that he were there now,” said Nellie. “My brother Leslie, I mean.”

“And Mr. Payton?” suggested Woldemar.

“I was not thinking of him,” the girl replied. “He will take care of himself.”

“Yes,” chuckled the old gentleman, “better as Mr. Leslie. Mr. Payton knows the German saying, that ‘Far away is wise in danger.’”

Nellie made no answering remark, and it was impossible for Victor to tell, — though he watched her features ever so sharply — whether she was offended by his uncle’s remark.



JUSTICE AT THE DRUM-HEAD.

THE trial of the two prisoners at Brookfield, before a veritable court-martial, had for some days been the talk of the town and the country around, among civilians as well as in the tents of the Federal army. The town was rife, of course, with wild speculations and rumors. It had become known that the former overseer of Senator May was to be tried for the attempted kidnaping of one of his slaves; and was vaguely connected, with the emancipation proclamation by the major-general commanding the Department of the West, which had just been promulgated; and that Leslie May was under charges for shooting a Federal officer implicated in the kidnaping. Busy was Bob Rountree in explaining the condition of affairs to the numerous customers, in those days, at Burden's bar-room; for Leslie May was very popular, and the recruits he had enlisted were impatient to take part in the fighting, under his leadership. But, though so pronounced a secessionist, he was hardly less popular in the Dutch Store, where Van Braaken still presided, — neutral, he, in the quarrel between the belligerent sections, remembering that he still owed allegiance to the King of Holland, but proud of his young apprentice, that had now arisen to the dignity of a judge advocate. Popular, too, was Leslie May, even at the Yankee store, whose proprietor was one of the staunchest adherents to the Union cause; not to mention his popularity at the establishment of the old pioneer, Mr. Barnes. In all these places the expected trial was talked over, and if the voice of the people could foreshadow the judgment of the court, there was no doubt as to the fate of either of the prisoners: for the indignation

against Jeffreys was at least equal to the favor in which Leslie was held.

Thus, expectation stood on tip-toe; and when at last the court assembled, a crowd of eager people filled the Square around the courthouse. The gathering would undoubtedly have been far more numerous and turbulent but for the proximity of the Union army, and for the imposing array of military guards stationed about the Square.

The court, presided over by the commanding general by virtue of his rank and by the terms of the commission from the governor, was composed of officers chosen by lot. One of them was Colonel Scheffel, commanding the Second Regiment of the Metropolitan Volunteers, whose acting adjutant had been Sergeant Obenaus.

The trial of Jeffreys was taken up first. The facts in this case were simple. The testimony of Miss May, given in dignified, straightforward, candid answers to the questions propounded to her, seemed to impress the court favorably, and left no doubt on the minds of all unbiased hearers that there had been a conspiracy between the two sergeants to carry off the octoroon girl and rob the house of its valuables. Victor debated with himself whether to rest the case on Nellie's testimony alone, or to corroborate her statement by the evidence to be given by the soldiers whom Obenaus had taken with him. But he soon found that he was not to be alone in the management of the case.

Colonel Scheffel had noted with displeasure the evidently favorable disposition of his brother officers toward the witness, and determined to break the force of her testimony. So, when Victor signified that he had no further questions to ask of her, the colonel took her cross-examination into his own hands.

"You know we got war, ain't it?" he asked the witness, with a severity of tone that effectually dispelled any notion that he was, possibly, joking.

"I have reason to be aware of that fact, sir," Nellie answered.

“Und you know, oss selehfs be conterband?”

“I do not know that slaves are contraband,” she answered, her clear, sweet voice contrasting strongly with the harsh, almost angry tone of the colonel. “The girl is my property; and I have not made war on the United States.”

“You be a repbe’ll, ain’t it?”

Nellie’s eyes sparkled, as she replied; but her voice did not lose its musical accent, and her serene dignity did not forsake her. “If I were a man,” she said, “I think you would be right in calling me a rebel; for I would try to prevent the wrong that is being inflicted on the South by the Federal government. Being a woman, I can do nothing for the South, but give it my sympathy.”

The frown on the colonel’s face grew darker. “A repbell’ in a petticoat do worser mischief oss a he-repbell!” he exclaimed. “Und your brodder ish a repbell? Und your fahder ish a repbell, ain’t it?”

“But, sir, I am not my brother; and my father is a United States senator.”

“Und a high traitor!” added the colonel, flinging the words at the witness with triumphant defiance, as if with this accusation he had canceled the whole of her testimony, and thrown upon her the crime with which the prisoner stood charged.

But the judge advocate interfered with his triumph. He suggested that Miss May was not on trial, nor was Senator May.

“Und it ish right oss his selehfs be confiskehted!” added the colonel, not heeding Victor’s words.

Victor arose and addressed himself to the presiding officer.

“I feel bound to interpose my objection, please your Honors,” he said, “to the course pursued by his Honor, Colonel Scheffel, and wish this objection to be noted on the record. I need not explain to your Honors the impropriety of the court’s bandying arguments with a witness; not to mention the display of bias in favor of the accused.”

The general presiding promptly sustained the objection, and ruled Colonel Scheffel's questions to be out of order.

The decision had been rendered so promptly, as to cut off any debate on the objection. This aroused the fierce wrath of the colonel; but the energetic use of the president's gavel effectually prevented him from giving expression to his opinion on the subject. So he had to content himself with the eloquent protest that lay in the black scowl with which he regarded the insolent young judge advocate.

The latter cast a swift glance in the direction of Miss May, to note the effect upon her of the ruling of the court. It nettled him, somewhat, to see upon her face the expression of vexation, rather than of relief. Perhaps she deemed herself fully able to cope with her unfriendly interrogator, and resented Victor's interference in her behalf. But Leslie, who had watched the proceedings with breathless interest, was fully in accord with the course pursued. He felt greatly relieved, therefore, by the prompt ruling of General Seele; but he also knew, as well as Victor, that the real danger was still to be met.

Jeffreys had listened with unbounded satisfaction to the questioning of Colonel Scheffel. A grin of malicious triumph had settled on his face, and he feasted his eyes in turn on the anxiety depicted in the features of Leslie and Victor. But the grin changed to a scowl of hatred as the president of the court ruled on Victor's objection. When asked whether he had any witnesses that he wished to have examined, he asserted, with an insolent swagger, that he was a "truly I'y'll" man; that Colonel May was well known to be a rebel and a traitor; and — taking his cue from the remarks that he had heard Colonel Scheffel make — he was about to justify the "confiscation" of Colonel May's slaves, when he was interrupted by Colonel Scheffel, who called for the reading of the proclamation of the major-general in command of the Federal forces of the Department of the West emancipating the slaves of such rebels as had taken up arms against the Union.

This was what Victor feared as the most dangerous element in the case against Leslie. He determined to meet the question in the outset and rose to object. He put forward every argument he could think of to induce the court to rule out all evidence touching the proclamation, suggesting that the President had promptly disavowed and retracted the proclamation the moment it had come to his knowledge. To which the zealous colonel replied vehemently, that the President's foolish retraction of his general's wise order could not affect the validity of an act done before such retraction.

Colonel Scheffel was deaf to all considerations militating against the prisoner's innocence and insisted vehemently on the reading of the proclamation, while Victor, in his anxiety for the life of Leslie May, cared little for the outcome of the trial of Jeffreys, save as it might affect the case of the other prisoner. He therefore purposely abstained from emphasizing any of his arguments, contenting himself with the dry statement of the point which it might seem his duty as judge advocate to urge, and offered no further resistance to the reading of the proclamation.

After it had been read, Colonel Scheffel could not forbear the remark, uttered triumphantly, that a soldier, who obeyed the orders of a superior officer, ought to be commended, and not punished.

The acquittal of Jeffreys surprised neither Victor nor Leslie; but it did surprise both that the court had spent nearly an hour in deliberating, with closed doors, over their judgment.

“So ish it right!” said Colonel Scheffel, when the judgment had been announced. “Und now will we see, w’y de young reppell’ shot mine adshutant.” He was eager to proceed on the spot; but the court voted an adjournment until after the dinner hour.

To Nellie May and her mother the impunity of the criminal Jeffreys appeared, more impressively, perhaps, than to the inhabitants generally, in the light of an unparalleled outrage.

It was inconceivable to Miss May, how the blackest crime known to a Southern consciousness, — a crime for the commission of which the legislature had enacted the death penalty — should be condoned by a tribunal calling itself a court. For the first time she saw herself confronted with the terrible reality of civil war. She had not reckoned, hitherto, with the dark side of the dreams of glory which her enthusiasm indulged in, as involving the peril of life and limb to the gallant defenders of the South, as well as woe and tears of anguish to their mothers and sisters. Deep down in her heart a glimpse of the possibility that she might be called on to yield up, on the altar of her country, her idolized brother, or even her adored father, would sometimes insist on being recognized, to be bravely fought off by resolute cheer. But this thing shook her very faith in human nature. That a court, armed with the power over life and death of fellow-men, — organized to administer justice! — should prostitute itself and its high trust by making common cause with evil-doers, rewarding hypocritical protestations of loyalty with immunity from punishment for cowardly crime! This, — so it seemed to her — was putting a premium upon hypocrisy, and inviting atrocious crime to hold high revel in the land. The depth of iniquity thus revealed staggered and dumfounded her.

But the shock to her moral instincts soon gave way to fierce indignation. Her wrath still grew with the contemplation of her utter helplessness against the brutal power of the soldiery, and the wish burned into her heart, that the Southern army might appear and avenge this outrage, crush the tyrannical court into nothingness. The barbarous brogue in which Colonel Scheffel had hurled at her his offensive epithets, intensified her vindictive resentment, so that, for once, she gave way to the popular prejudice of Southerners against Germans, on account of their almost universal loyalty to the Union cause, hating Colonel Scheffel for a “cowardly Dutch infidel” even more cordially than she hated the cold-blooded Yankee abolitionists.

The young judge advocate was no less deeply excited. His

anxiety was for Leslie. He knew — none better than he, save Leslie himself — that the young man's life hung trembling in the balance, and that a hair's weight might incline the scales for life or death. He felt deeply the responsibility resting upon him as the advisor of the court — a responsibility all the heavier because he was conscious of his bias in favor of the prisoner, as well as of that of the majority of the court against him. To stand between Leslie May and an unjust sentence, — to shield the family of his early benefactor from sorrow and deep humiliation, — to place Nellie May under obligations of gratitude for the life of her idolized brother, — these were motives powerful, irresistible. But while not ashamed of them, he felt them to be personal and selfish. A higher, more exalted consideration was superadded: He must prove loyal to his country's cause. So unjust an act as the punishment of Leslie May would be looked on by fair-minded men of all parties, would prove a heavier blow to the Union cause, than the loss of a great battle. The army that was battling for the rights of humanity must be protected against the obloquy and shame of so odious an act. And so Victor was nerving himself for the encounter with Colonel Scheffel; for he felt that nothing could save Leslie May from conviction and death sentence by that court-martial, unless Colonel Scheffel's influence over it could be broken.

It was in this frame of mind that Victor, after the adjournment, approached Miss May and her mother, having promised to procure for them permission for an interview with the prisoner. The ladies received him in sullen silence, — Mrs. May with icy politeness, her daughter with eyes flashing angrily. Victor, whose heart was heavy with his own trouble, failed to take warning by their hostile demonstration, addressing them with his usual deference. But Nellie, smarting under the sense of wrong and personal insult at the hands of that tyrannical Dutch court, identified Victor with his brother officers, and he was the only one upon whom she could vent her wrath. She accosted him with a look of superb scorn.

“Sir,” said she, “I suppose you expect to be congratulated on the victory you have gained.”

“I fail to understand,” he answered, regarding her with questioning eyes. “Victory? Congratulated?”

“Are you not proud of what you have done?” she continued, sneeringly. “You and the rest of your outlandish court of Dutch ruffians? Oh, it was so brave in you all to insult women, who have no one to defend them!”

“Brave? Proud?” Victor asked, his astonishment increasing. “What do you mean?”

“Pardon me. Bravery is an American, — at least a Southern quality. Perhaps you do not understand.”

Victor colored violently.

“Let me, then, congratulate you on your success in vindicating negro-thieves. Do you understand that?”

“Madam,” said Victor, drawing himself up to his full height, regarding her with a look of commanding superiority, and addressing her in a stern voice, such as she had never heard from him before, “I understand nothing, except that you wish to wound and insult me. But I am not in the mood to pose as your toy, nor to submit to your splenetic abuse, or to humor you in this silly outburst of a childish fit of passion.”

“Sir!” exclaimed Nellie, amazed at Victor’s earnestness.

“To hold me responsible for the act of the court is not only cruelly unjust, but ridiculously silly.”

“Mr. Waldhorst, I — ”

But Victor paid no heed to her. “I will not forget that you have been wronged,” he continued more gently, but with unabated firmness and dignity. “In the intensity of your anger you have permitted yourself to be carried beyond the control of your judgment. You may, when your mad passion has cooled, be thankful to remember what I now say to you — that your unjust words have not so deeply wounded me, but that I can distinguish between them and your usual high-minded, lady-like self. I shall not hold you responsible for them, further than to suggest that if you really believed me the

oward you represent me, you might feel that your taunts would but poorly serve the cause of your brother, who is now to be tried for his life."

Nellie's anger had rapidly abated on hearing Victor's indignant reproof. Once more, this man had shown her, that his will was stronger than his passion. No man had ever dared to openly rebuke and humiliate her before; this man had chided her like a naughty child, yet her feeling was rather one of wonder and awe, than resentment. But when Victor had reminded her of the peril of her brother, the words smote heavily on her ear. As she realized their awful significance, the revulsion of her emotion was terrible. She knew as well as did Victor, that Leslie's trial before that court meant conviction and — death! Death — to her brother Leslie. Not the glorious death he had reckoned with, on the field of glory, battling for his country's right, but the death of a convicted felon!

"I have promised to conduct you and your mother to his room," Victor continued, not noticing her agitation; "there is no time to spare. He doubtlessly expects your coming. The sympathy of a mother and loving sister will not fail to cheer him and add to the fortitude with which he is facing his fate."

Her brother was waiting for her — waiting for the cheering words of a loving sister! And he had reminded her of a sister's duty, — he whom she had studiously reviled and wounded to the quick! The contrition under which she writhed, and that had so suddenly followed on her towering passion, produced a shock that tried her nerves. It required all her energy for the effort to keep her feet; for a second or two the power of speech forsook her. But by exerting all her strength, she recovered herself sufficiently to say to Victor, though with trembling lips:

"You will despise me, Mr. Waldhorst, as I deserve that you should. But you will not forsake my brother whom you love?"

“Madam,” he answered, “you know well, that I shall do my duty, to your brother, — and to my country.”

“You are right!” she mused. “Yes, I know that you will do your duty. But oh, God, is it your duty to condemn my brother?”

“It is not I that will condemn or acquit,” said Victor. “And I have already informed you, that I do not believe your brother guilty of any wrong.”

A look of gratitude, of bright hope, withal, and of trusting confidence, suddenly transfigured Nellie’s face, as she begged Victor in a voice so gentle and humble that he mistrusted his senses, to bring them to him.

Victor silently complied. Though his heart beat tumultuously, he hushed its jubilant promptings with unrelenting sternness. “How dearly she loves her brother!” he mused; and he remembered that he had no place in the heart of the haughty woman, who now walked so meekly by his side. Nothing more was said between them until he brought the ladies into the presence of Leslie.

But he never forgot the glorious beauty of her face, when she had electrified him with a look of radiant hope, and thankfulness, and trusting faith, on repeating to her his belief in her brother’s innocence.

There was some delay in the reassembling of the court after the dinner hour. Victor was engaged in an earnest conversation with the prisoner, which Colonel Scheffel, who was promptly in his seat at the hour to which the court had adjourned, noted with undisguised displeasure. The opening remarks of the judge advocate, when the case against Leslie May had been called, did not serve to sweeten the colonel’s ruffled temper. He informed the astonished officers, that the prisoner demurred to the jurisdiction of the court, as a court-martial, observing that he, the judge advocate, concurred in the defendant’s view that it was at least doubtful whether a military court had power to try a civilian, or non-combatant, on a charge of felony, while access was open to civil courts, to whom the ju-

risdiction clearly belonged. After a brief discussion carried on mainly by Colonel Scheffel, and in which Victor participated no further than to quietly state his points and answer such questions as he was asked by different members of the court, the demurrer was overruled.

Colonel Scheffel, after the announcement of the ruling, called for the reading of the charges and specifications with evident impatience, concluding his remarks with the expression of his hope, that "we don't will haf no more foolishness."

But if objection to the power of the court over the prisoner was the foolishness of which Colonel Scheffel wanted no more, he was disappointed; for the judge advocate next read the prisoner's plea to the jurisdiction of this particular court, alleging that by the trial of Jeffreys, involving many facts bearing on the case of Leslie May, they had disqualified themselves from granting the prisoner that fair and impartial trial to which he was entitled under the constitution, and according to fundamental principles of justice. Victor volunteered no opinion himself; and on being questioned directly, stated that he believed the plea, in the shape in which the prisoner had presented it, to be groundless. Whereupon the court made short work of overruling the plea, to the obvious gratification of Colonel Scheffel, who now again demanded the reading of the charges.

But the colonel's patience was put to the strain once more. The judge advocate was not through with the presentation of the prisoner's objections to the competency of the court. He now announced his intention to challenge one of its individual members.

This was too much for the colonel. "Mishter Bresident!" he shouted in great wrath, "der shutsh adfocaht shall be put in arresht fur foolen' mit der kohrt. Der kohrt be here fur bissness, und der shutsh adfocaht be here fur foolen'. Shet him up in arresht, odder he pull der kohrt on der nose."

"Colonel Scheffel will come to order!" the president proclaimed. "Captain Waldhorst is an officer of the court, and

must be respected as such." He gave emphasis to his ruling with a vigorous rap of his gavel.

But the colonel was too angry to heed the president's call to order. "Who ish dis Capt'n Milkbeardt," he thundered forth, "Wot got no hair on his teefs, und comes here, in ke-hoot mit a rebell' murdtrer fur foolen' mit l'y'l shutshes —"

"Colonel Scheffel will take his seat!" the president again shouted, using his gavel vigorously.

The colonel, though with ill grace, obeyed; and Victor proceeded to state the grounds upon which the prisoner denied the competency of Colonel Scheffel as one of the judges. "Besides," he concluded his statement, "the prisoner informs me that Colonel Scheffel will be needed as one of the witnesses."

Whether the grounds for the challenge mentioned by Victor had staggered, or the prisoner's unheard-of audacity in questioning his, Scheffel's, fitness as a judge, had dumfounded him so that he forgot to answer, the colonel himself was not perhaps quite sure. For it is proper to say, that although his hatred of rebels was as deep as his contempt for lawyers, yet he was not impervious to considerations of justice presenting themselves in the garb of common sense. At any rate he said nothing in refutation of the challenge, but contented himself by calling "fur a wote, Mishter Bresident!" in which he had the grace not to participate.

It was an unfortunate circumstance for the success of the challenge that the rule demanded the vote to be taken *viva voce*, and according to the seniority of the officers, the youngest voting first. For these, — whether moved by their *esprit de corps*, or in deference to their senior in command — voted in favor of the prominent military magnate, until a majority had been recorded against his disqualification — the votes of the older generals, including General Seele, whose name was called last, coming too late to change the result. General Seele announced with evident reluctance, that the challenge was overruled.

Victor had counted on this result. But although he was profoundly impressed with the peril menacing Leslie May he did not fully share the generally expressed opinion, produced by the hostile attitude assumed by the court toward the prisoner, that his conviction was a foregone conclusion. Even Mrs. May, whose proud consciousness of superiority, as a descendant of one of the first families of Virginia, as well as the wife of a United States senator, had hitherto befogged her judgment, so as to hide from her vision her son's danger, began to realize that he was in a critical position. The tenacity with which she clung to a fond mother's hope was giving way to the agony of fear.

Nellie's distress, though borne with brave firmness, was none the less poignant. She had hitherto placed unreasoning confidence in Victor's ability to save her brother. Even while flinging at him those stinging taunts, she had not for a moment doubted his unwavering loyalty to the May family. But now it occurred to her that his efforts to rescue Leslie from the grip of that ruthless court-martial had been lukewarm and perfunctory, and a sickening dread crept into her heart that Victor, too, might believe her brother guilty, in spite of his assurance to the contrary. Then she realized, more fully than ever, to what extent her confidence in Leslie's acquittal had rested on her faith in Victor's friendship; and with heart-crushing weight the thought came to her of that day at the capitol, when, the perspiration of agony pearly on his forehead, he yet with unbending firmness sacrificed to duty his hope of earthly bliss. She felt now, with contrition and shame, how superficial and unthinking had been her remark to Pauline, that she knew well that he would do his duty!

She looked at Leslie. He bore up bravely, and she could not repress, even in her agony of suspense, a thrill of sisterly pride on beholding his undaunted courage.

Unconsciously, almost, her eyes turned again to Victor. He, too, looked brave, as he confronted the frowning officers of the court. How proud he stood there, his mouth com-

pressed with stern determination, his eyes ablaze, his very stature, towering, as if upborne by the strength of indomitable purpose! Nellie wondered. Never had she seen him so moved, save that once, when he afforded her a glimpse of the intensity of his passion, and had compelled her admiration of the might by which he mastered it at the call of honor. And her wonder changed to horror at the thought, that Victor was nerving himself for the performance of a duty even more awful to him than that of voting against her father had been, — the duty, if so he deemed it, of prosecuting her brother to the death! For she knew that he would do it; do it with anguished heart, indeed, suffering in the doing more keenly than the prisoner himself, but do it — if he deemed it his duty, — if he thought Leslie guilty.

Oh, how could he!

The young judge advocate was indeed deeply stirred. He *was* nerving himself for the discharge of a solemn duty. A duty imposed by his sense of gratitude and of obligation to the friends of his youthful days, — by his strong sense of justice, — and above all, by his patriotic love for the cause of his country. To shield the Federal army from the disgrace and odium that would surely follow the sacrifice of Leslie May to the vindictive animosity of this court-martial he had determined, if need be, to sacrifice himself. For he was well aware that by the course he had resolved on he would incur the hatred of a number of the officers of the court, and the deadly enmity of Colonel Scheffel.

The trial began. After the reading of the charges and specifications, for which Colonel Scheffel had so long clamored, the witnesses were examined; first of all Jeffreys. Neither Leslie nor Victor were surprised by the perverted account he gave of the affair in which Sergeant Obenaus had found his death. Of the actual facts he stated just enough to serve as a framework on which to hang the web of malicious falsehoods he wove for the gratification of his spite. Aided by the suggestions conveyed through the leading questions put to him by the

colonel here and there, he made out a strong case of willful murder against the prisoner. His mother and sister stood appalled. Though Nellie, for her part, was not surprised by the outrageous lies of Jeffreys, — for she had never looked upon him in any other light than that of a brutal slave-driver devoid of principle or honor. But that the witness should be permitted to pursue other members of the May family with his scurrilous aspersions, — that he should be encouraged to traduce her absent father, and to bespatter with the venom of his ribald tongue the prisoner's mother and sister, against whom no charges had been preferred — this was an outrage on common decency for which not even the experiences of the morning had prepared her. And so, when in answer to one of the colonel's suggestive questions, he repeated a foul defamation against her mother and herself, it exasperated her beyond quiet endurance. She rose from her seat with glowing cheek and blazing eyes.

“Gentlemen —” she said, and paused for a second, as if in doubt. “You will pardon me if I use a wrong term in addressing you. But you seem to forget, that you have placed neither my mother nor myself under charges.”

Leslie was startled by his sister's unexpected outburst. As to Victor, though her honest indignation exactly suited the plan he had outlined to himself in conducting the trial, yet he saw in her flashing eyes the same reckless spirit she had displayed toward him an hour or two before, and feared lest she might destroy the sympathy in the breast of some of the officers upon which he so largely counted to attain his end.

He turned sharply upon her. “Madam,” he whispered into her ear, in stern rebuke, “please remember we are not posing in your drawing-room. Those men are to cast the lot of your brother for life or death. Do you mean to destroy his one chance for liberty, by giving way to a babyish fit of temper?”

Once more Victor's allusion to her brother blenched the cheeks that had burned with fierce indignation. Nellie sat down leaving unsaid what she had commenced to say.

But Colonel Scheffel, scenting some new indignity to the majesty of the court, inquired gruffly: "W'at means de she-repbell?"

Victor, turning toward the speaker, encountered the eyes of several of the officers of the court, and noted in them an expression of disapproval. He lost no time in utilizing what he deemed a favorable mood for his purpose. "She means," he said, speaking slowly and with emphasis, and fixing his eyes on Colonel Scheffel, "that it is an outrage on justice and decency for a court not only to permit, but to invite a scurrilous scoundrel to revile defenseless women, because they are of kin to the accused."

"You mean," retorted the colonel sharply, and with a black frown, "*you* mean so yourself?"

"Your honor is right," Victor answered deliberately; "that is most certainly my meaning. But I only answered your honor's question as to the young lady's meaning. It excited her wonder — she herself may mistake the feeling for righteous indignation — that a court should delight in listening to the venomous gossip of a malicious slanderer, even if they did not know, or find sufficient proof in the eager pruriency with which he details his foul-tongued calumnies, that he lied out of whole cloth."

Victor anxiously scrutinized the faces of the judges, to note what effect this thrust at the colonel produced. He thought that he detected signs of acquiescence on the faces of some of the younger members, and the rage depicted in the colonel's face taught him, that he had fully accomplished his purpose in that direction.

The cross-examination of Jeffreys was conducted by Leslie in person. The situation which Jeffreys had boasted of, had come about: Leslie May stood arraigned before a court-martial of "loyal" officers, charged with the murder of a "loyal" soldier, and he, Jeffreys, was a witness against him, and there was no hired lawyer to bother the witnesses and fool the jury. But he soon found, that Leslie May was not more

easily dealt with in his character as a defendant, than he had found him when he had acted in the defense of another. Under his shrewd questioning the contradictions in his testimony were made conspicuous. His deep-seated hatred of all the May family appeared in a strong light. He was driven to narrate his former experiences, his threats of revenge against Colonel May, his daughter, and even against the slave girl herself. To the infinite chagrin of Colonel Scheffel, the malignant witness was trapped, cajoled, and frightened into so many significant, though involuntary statements concerning the presence of the two sergeants at May Meadows, that no one could for a moment doubt the nefarious scheme they had concocted for the robbery of Senator May's house.

The testimony of Miss May and that of two or three of the soldiers that had accompanied Sergeant Obenaus concluded the trial, so far as the taking of evidence was concerned.

Victor now arose, pale with the responsibility resting upon him, and addressed the court.

“ May it please your Honors,” he said, “ I beg of you to pardon the presumption which impels me to a step that may appear to you as a breach of official etiquette and decorum. The rules of the service require, that any argument as to the guilt or the innocence of the accused must be made in writing. The prisoner, I have no doubt, will do so on his part, and I shall give you my views, why the prisoner ought to be acquitted, in writing also. But preliminary thereto I wish to explain to you my views of the duties incumbent upon me as the law officer of this tribunal. And I crave your patient hearing for what I may say to you, as an officer of this court, — as a soldier, loyal to the flag and to the sacred cause to which you have all sworn allegiance, — but above all, as a man, demanding justice for a fellow man. I do so in the sincere hope that I may thereby assist you in deliberating on the judgment which you are so soon to render.

“ My position imposes upon me a twofold duty. Mark the title — *Judge* — *Advocate*. As judge, which term implies

merely, that I am the legal advisers of your Honors, it behoves me to declare the law applicable to the case before you. I conceive it to be my solemn duty, in this capacity, to act with the most scrupulous impartiality, with an eye single to the accomplishment of justice as embodied in the law, advising you without fear, favor or affection. I trust, that to the extent of my poor ability, I have done so, and shall continue to do so in discharging the duties yet remaining to be performed.

“ But as the advocate I am to represent the interests of the prisoner, — always under the law, keeping in view the paramount duty to accomplish justice, as defined by the law. It is not my duty, as I understand it, to press the prisoner’s guilt upon your minds, unless I believe him to be guilty. My office is not to demand conviction, but to see that justice be done. I am not the prisoner’s advocate *against* the court, nor yet the advocate of the court *against* the prisoner; but emphatically the representative of the State *between* them both.”

Victor was deeply in earnest. His purpose was not so much to persuade the judges, as to convince himself, that his championship of Leslie May had a legal, as he knew it to have a moral, sanction. For he was perfectly sure of this one thing, — that in securing the acquittal of the prisoner, he would serve his country’s cause, even while serving his friend.

“ And now let me remind you of the high and sacred character of the function you are called on to perform. Do you assist me — I implore you! — in the discharging of my duty, by dismissing from your minds all side-considerations, all passion, all prejudice. Concentrate your energies to rightly answer this one question: What does justice demand of you? Remember, that the wish to redress a fancied wrong may itself become a grievous wrong, if indulged at the cost of impartiality. Remember, that even patriotism affords no excuse for injustice; that it is not the function of the court to avenge, but to judge. Remember, that in illegally convicting

the prisoner you would none the less perjure yourselves, degrade yourselves as soldiers and gentlemen, and prostitute your sacred office as judges, though your motive were to vanquish an enemy, or to punish a rebel."

Victor had addressed the last few remarks singly to Colonel Scheffel. So pointed was his manner in doing so, that a number of his fellow-officers turned their eyes in his direction. Perceiving this, the colonel colored violently.

"Mean you me?" he inquired, wrathfully. "W'y mean you me?"

"Because," said Victor, deliberately, "I believe you to be the only officer on that bench who needed to be told."

"W'at? You young puppy! W'en der kohrt ish out, den I shpank you mit mine flat sahbel!"

The colonel's face was blue with rage when he roared out his threat. If it had been Victor's purpose to rouse him into fiercest anger, he had fully accomplished it. But he himself turned as white as his wristband, as he retorted:

"If you mean fight, Colonel, I shall not accommodate you. For if your arm be no truer than your judgment, it would be murder in me to accept your challenge."

The president rapped vigorously for order. "Gentlemen," he said, "I regret that justice to the prisoner demands that this trial shall be brought to a close before you can be dealt with as your highly indecorous conduct deserves. I now adjourn court until—shall it be to-morrow morning? Mr. May, and Mr. Waldhorst, will you have sufficient time to prepare your written arguments by to-morrow?"

And it was so determined.





Victor had addressed the last few remarks singly at Colonel Schettel.

A WOOER'S WILE.

THERE was rejoicing at May Meadows. Colonel May, having resigned his seat in the United States Senate, had returned home in time to participate in the jubilation over the acquittal of his son Leslie. Great was Nellie's joy in welcoming home her father. Never had his daughter's greeting been so tender, — never her smile so radiant, as when he pressed her to his heart on his return from Washington.

Mrs. May, too, was abundantly happy. Not only because she had her husband home once more, nor because her son had, so to speak, been snatched from the jaws of death; there was other cause for exultation in the glorious news her husband brought from Richmond: he had been offered a seat in the cabinet of President Davis. *This* was cause for rejoicing indeed! She had found it hard to forgive him for refusing to take her with him to Washington, as a senator's wife. Now she would be compensated. To shine a star of the first magnitude in that glorious galaxy of Southern women that would be assembled at Richmond almost filled the measure of her ambition. To be looked up to as the leader of the most select circles of society in her native State, at the capitol of the new republic, whose splendor would eclipse the waning light of sleepy old Washington, was a dazzling prospect to contemplate.

Leslie May's spirits, rebounding from the depression of the last few days, had risen high. He too, like his mother, felt elated by the prospect of seeing his father a cabinet minister of the new government. But the exuberance of his joy was less demonstrative than it would have been before his late experiences. Neither he, nor his sister Nellie, were so enthusi-

astic over the distinction as Mrs. May. There was a tinge of sober thoughtfulness in both of the children which, though unusual in them, accorded too nearly with his own mood to challenge their father's notice.

The liberation of Leslie May gave, self-evidently, great satisfaction to all the Auf dem Busches, — not excepting Wolde-mar, who had come to look upon the persecution of his enemy as unwarrantable tyranny, unworthy of the cause for which he had joined the army. To the old gentleman it gave great pleasure, too, to shake hands with Colonel May, express to him his heartfelt thanks for his generous hospitality, and congratulate him on the vindication of his son.

But what of Pauline? Though not so demonstrative, her joy shone brightly forth from every lineament of her radiant face. She had impulsively hugged Nellie to her heart and kissed her fervently when news of Leslie's acquittal came to them. "Oh, Nellie!" she had exclaimed, "I am so happy! Because," she quickly added, with a scarlet face, "I am sure, that Victor did his best to help him!"

Nellie responded to the kiss and embrace with warmth; but even in the exuberance of her joy Pauline noticed that at the mention of Victor's name her friend's face sobered. A shadow passed over it, as of a summer cloud mellowing the brightness of a sunny landscape. "Yes," she said, "he did." And as she spoke, she took her eyes off Pauline's face, gazing beyond her into vacuity. "No one but he could have saved my brother from ignominious death."

"How happy it will make him to think, that he has been able to repay, to some slight extent, the great debt of gratitude he owes you all!"

"Only the debt happens to be the other way, if your brother but knew it," said Nellie, still with the absent look in her eyes. "But he is not one to keep tally of generous deeds, if they swell the credit side of his account."

Pauline's heart beat tumultuously, just then, for Leslie May entered the room. Though she had looked forward to this

meeting in feverish expectation, now that they had met, her maidenly instincts put her on her guard, and she seemed the more self-possessed of the two.

Leslie May, of course, was profuse in his protestations of delight to see Miss Waldhorst in his home. But Pauline missed the spontaneous expression of his pleasure, — the involuntary kindling of his eye which, on former occasions, had spoken more eloquently to her heart than his choicest compliments, or his most delicately flattering speeches. He pressed her hand, but withdrew his own more readily — at least less reluctantly — than had been his wont when accosting her. Pauline yearned to congratulate him on his honorable discharge; but his manner, — decidedly more deferential and respectful toward her than she had ever known him — chilled her enthusiasm, and her words came with a hesitancy that deprived them of the candor and spontaneity otherwise natural to her.

Nellie was quick to note that something was amiss, and meant to come to Pauline's aid by taking part in the conversation.

“I have just been telling Miss Waldhorst, Leslie, how deeply we are indebted to her brother for the favorable issue of this terrible trial. Never shall I forget the fearful suspense we were under during the last hours of the examination, nor the reassuring confidence inspired in our hearts by Mr. Waldhorst's powerful support of Leslie's cause.”

“You are right, Nellie,” said Leslie, speaking with unusual warmth. “If any other Federal officer had conducted the trial as judge advocate, or if Mr. Waldhorst had not, at his own personal peril, dared to show up the iniquity and despotic tyranny of this Colonel Scheffel, the court would have made short work of ordering me to be shot. I fear that he has incurred the deadly enmity of that officer.”

“I am glad,” said Pauline, “that his duties will demand his presence at the capital, so that he will not, probably, meet with Colonel Scheffel very soon.”

“ Ah? ” queried Nellie, her swift look into Pauline's face betraying an eagerness not indicated by the tone of her voice. “ Is he called away from here? ”

“ I do not know whether he has received any special order,” Pauline answered. “ But Governor Rauhenfels commissioned him, so he informed me, to attend the trials here as judge advocate; and of course, now that the trials are over, there is nothing to detain him longer. Unless,” she added, “ he will wait to escort us back home. For it was also part of his duty to protect Aunt Auf dem Busch and myself on our way here from the city.”

“ I am glad to know that your brother will not have Colonel Scheffel as an immediate superior officer,” said Leslie. “ He might make the service a burden to Victor, even if he did not jeopard his life. I am glad, too, to know that you will be under your brother's protection on your way to the city. And so you intend to leave us so soon? ”

“ It will depend on brother Victor,” Pauline answered. “ Since our patients are now strong enough, in the opinion of the doctors, to travel, there can be no reason to further tax your generous hospitality. I expect notice from Victor, now at any moment, to get ready for the homeward journey.”

Ralph Payton had likewise returned from Washington. He had made of necessity a virtue, and resigned his seat in Lincoln's Congress to avoid expulsion. Before paying his respects at May Meadows he called on his friend Bob Rountree, at the groggery on the Boonville Road. The garrulous barkeeper professed to be overjoyed to see the ex-congressman, whom he hailed as a persecuted victim of Lincoln's tyrannical government. He was, of course, full of important news to communicate. The court-martial and the trials of Jeffreys and of Leslie May, were graphically depicted. Payton listened eagerly.

“ And so Jeffreys got off scot-free? ” he asked, when Rountree had related, not without liberal embellishments, the

incidents of his trial. "He's a lucky dog to escape in this way."

"Lucky?" Bob repeated. "He's a dirty scalawag! That's what he is. He joined the abolition army just to get even with Colonel May, and to get that smart wench Cressie into his clutches. The judges that tried him were d—d abolitionists themselves, and so they thought it no harm to steal a nigger."

"How did May's women-folks behave when they acquitted Jeffreys?" Payton inquired. "Didn't it rouse their anger?"

"Anger? Why anger's no name for it. It was a treat to see Miss May. I thought her blazing eyes would burn a hole in the face of that Dutch colonel that quizzed her while she gave her testimony. But that was nothing to what happened at the trial of her brother. Why, she absolutely insulted the court, telling them they were no gentlemen."

"Miss May, do you mean? She is a trump!"

"You bet she is!" the barkeeper assented. "But that Dutch storekeeper of old Van Braaken's spoiled it all. I guess it made him mad to hear his Dutch colleagues talked to in that way; he turned on Miss May with a black frown, and frightened her into silence. You know, he was what they call the judge advocate, and had a good deal to say."

"The insolent boor!" scolded Payton. "To forget his manners in the presence of Miss May!"

"He is an insufferable upstart!" was the judgment of Bob Rountree. "But I guess that Colonel Scheffel will take him down a peg or two."

"What do you mean by that?"

"Why the conceited puppy undertook to lecture the judges, and told Colonel Scheffel about as much as that he was a prejudiced tyrant. That riled the colonel, and I guess he will make sparks fly from the young Dutchman yet."

"Are they going to fight, do you think?"

"Well, there's no telling. The old fellow is full of madness, and threatened to spank Victor with the flat of his sword;

but Victor told him that he could not accommodate him by fighting a duel. What a little coward he is!"

"But Leslie May was acquitted!" said Payton. "How far has he got with his company? Have they been sworn in yet?"

"How could they?" Bob asked back, "when the town has been in possession of the Federal army all the time? But the boys are boiling over with impatience to join General Ciper's army; and now that their captain is at liberty, I guess they will find some way of getting out of town."

"If they do, they can easily reach General Ciper's men," say Payton. "The general himself was at Richmond when we were there —"

"Were you at Richmond?" asked Bob Rountree, interrupting the congressman. "How in the world did you get there?"

"Well, you see, Colonel May, as soon as he had determined to resign from the Senate, wrote a letter to Jeff Davis, who is an old friend of his, and the President invited him to Richmond. So I resigned my seat too, and accompanied the colonel, thinking that there might be a chance for some place for me, or at least for a commission to command some regiment in the army, to be had from the government of the Confederacy."

"I see!" said Bob with a smile of intelligence.

"But they are as stingy with their favors at Richmond as they are at Washington," the ex-congressman continued, frowning at the obtuseness of the new President in failing to divine his merits. "Don't you think, old Jeff had the munificence to offer me a — lieutenantcy! 'Yes,' says he, 'I think there will be no trouble in giving you a second, perhaps even a first lieutenantcy in one of the new regiments forming beyond the Mississippi.' And that, too, when Colonel May had himself introduced me, and when there was talk of appointing him Postmaster General, in the place of that Texas man of whom Jeff Davis would like to get rid."

Mr. Rountree was about to offer a severe criticism on the

inefficiency of the Confederate government, but was prevented by the entrance of no less a personage than Orlando Jones, who burst into the barroom with the triumphant announcement:

“They are moving! The d—d Dutch invaders are leaving! I guess old Ciper’s boys are after them. Hurrah for Jeff Davis!”

As if in corroboration of the news brought by Orlando Jones, drums were heard to beat the long roll, and bugle signals resounded near and far. Rountree and Payton rushed to the door. There was lively commotion of the Federal army; officers were seen to repair to their tents and orderlies and adjutants hurried to and from the headquarters. It was evident that some important and sudden movement was going on.

“They are running away, sure enough!” cried Payton, in high glee. “The pitiful cowards!”

“Oh, if we had our arms now!” exclaimed Orlando Jones. “What a glorious chance for our boys it would be!”

“What a glorious chance it is, you mean,” suggested Payton. “Leslie May, if he is the man I take him for, will lose no time to march at the head of his company and take revenge for the wrong they have done him and his folks.”

“By George, that is so!” exclaimed the barkeeper. “Now, I wish I could join Leslie’s company. Wouldn’t it be fun to run after the Dutch cowards!”

“Why don’t you?” said Orlando Jones. “There’s room yet in our company; and if General Ciper comes along with his quartermasters, we will soon be uniformed and sworn in.”

“Can’t leave the old man,” Mr. Rountree replied, with a sly wink. “Besides we want some folks to tend to matters at home. There are some things that can be done without wearing a uniform.”

“Yes.” Orlando Jones admitted, his brows contracting into a frown of discontent, “we might, as Leslie May once said, be appointed to guard the henroosts and oversee the niggers,—if any of them are left when the abolition army gets away from here. That’s not my style of service.”

“ Talking about niggers,” said Payton, “ I wonder whether Jeffreys is going to leave here without making another grab for that yellow wench — ”

“ Yellow ! ” exclaimed Orlando Jones. “ She’s a heap whiter than he is, any day.”

“ Well, white or yellow,” continued Payton, “ she’s a nigger ; and he is making himself a crazy fool about her. I would not be at all surprised if he repeated the maneuver for which he was court-martialed. He might have better success this time.”

“ If so he’d better be about it ! ” remarked Bob Rountree. “ He will stand a mighty poor show in this neighborhood, once the Lincoln army has left.”

“ I hope it will be our turn soon,” Orlando remarked. “ I am fairly burning to do something against this d—d Dutch Dictator that is lording it over free-born Americans at the State capital. It makes me mad to see that pet of his strutting about in his captain’s uniform insulting his superiors and putting on airs, as if he owned the universe.”

“ I wouldn’t mind taking down his pride any time,” said Rountree. “ And who knows,” he added, winking knowingly at Payton, “ but that our chance is coming ? Waldhorst does not belong to the army of General Seele, but came here long afterward to prosecute Leslie May. He may not leave with them. If we could catch him napping — ! ”

“ But you won’t ! ” said Orlando Jones, sullenly. “ We tried that once before. I should think you would remember that for the balance of your days.”

“ It was not he that beat us that time,” Rountree replied. “ It was Leslie May ; and Leslie is with *us* now.”

“ Not against Victor Waldhorst,” said Payton. “ As I understand you, Captain Waldhorst insulted the officers of the court-martial, in the defense of the prisoner. Leslie May will not forget that soon.”

“ Nor will he forget that Waldhorst is an enemy, and a sneaking abolitionist,” Rountree continued doggedly.

“Somebody might make a good haul by bagging the whole family, with that outlandish name, that has been quartering at May Meadows for a month or more. Victor Waldhorst’s uncle and cousin, and his aunt and sister.”

Payton looked at Rountree as if struck with the suggestion. “What do you mean?” he asked.

“Oh, nothing in particular,” said Rountree. “Except that if Leslie is not a sentimental fool, he might initiate his company into the Confederate service by a coup that would put the Confederate authorities under great obligations to him.”

“Yes,” mused Payton. “The *Auf dem Busches* are among the richest merchants of the metropolis. They would be exceedingly valuable to hold as hostages, and to exchange for prisoners taken from our side. But Leslie won’t do anything of the kind. He is entirely too high-toned to lend his aid to what might be looked on as a breach of hospitality; for these people are guests at his father’s house.”

“And don’t you forget that Victor Waldhorst is on hand,” Mr. Jones put in. “If he goes with General Seele’s army corps, you may bet high that he is going to take his folks along with him; and if he stays behind, he will have a detachment of soldiers to guard them.”

“I wish he would just stay behind until General Ciper arrives,” said Bob Rountree, maliciously. “Our friend Payton might lay a trap for him, even if Leslie May should be mean enough to betray his cause and his country for the favors of a Dutch sweetheart, that he is fooling with just to make her Dutch lover jealous.”

“How did you learn this?” demanded Payton.

“Learn what?”

“That Leslie May is sweet on that Dutch girl?”

“Oh, well, don’t let on, now,” said Rountree. “I guess you knew it before I did. Leastwise it was you that told me.”

“Yes; I certainly thought so when I saw them down at the city,” Payton said. “But now, you say, Victor’s sister is still at May Meadows?”

“A nice cosy arrangement, now, isn't it?” Orlando Jones broke in. “The sister, as Miss May's guest, ogling with the new-fledged captain, while pretending to wait on her uncle and cousin; and her brother, prosecuting Leslie May before a Dutch court-martial, all the while casting sheep's eyes at Leslie's sister. If I were you, Ralph Payton, I would stir my stumps in laying siege to the beautiful heiress. There is no telling what may happen, if you *are* an Honorable M. C.”

“Pshaw!” exclaimed Payton, making a show of confidence he was far from feeling. “The idea of Miss May throwing herself away on a Dutch simpleton! And he one of Lincoln's hirelings, wearing the hated Yankee uniform!”

“I guess she is playing with the silly cub, as Leslie is playing with Waldhorst's sister,” Rountree remarked consolingly.

But Ralph Payton, whether sure of his game or not, thought it not amiss to put in an appearance at the house of his lady-love. So he excused himself to his friends, and started out into the Square on his way to May Meadows.

Rountree's suggestion of a *coup* to be executed by making prisoners of war of the guests at Senator May's mansion, kept haunting him as he walked on. And what was still more exciting in the prospect, a trap to be laid for Victor Waldhorst. To be sure, it might be of great advantage to Leslie May's company of volunteers, if they began their military career by so signal a service as would be the capture of such prominent personages as prisoners of war, as the two Auf dem Busches, — men of heavy weight on 'change at the metropolis. And the ladies — Payton wondered if the usages of war permitted the capture of women. But it occurred to him, that whether this were so or otherwise, Leslie would never sanction it. He doubted, whether Leslie, indeed, would have anything to do with the taking of his father's guests as prisoners of war —

Then Leslie need not know anything about it.

Indeed, it would be of much more value to him, by way of ingratiating himself with the Confederate general, than it

could possibly be to Leslie May or his company. If he succeeded, perhaps the general would not refuse him the commission to a coloneley which he had in vain expected of President Davis, through the influence of ex-Senator May.

And the trap to catch Victor Waldhorst!

“ I suppose Bob Rountree meant that I should bag him along with the balance of that Dutch crowd. That would indeed be a feather in my cap! But how set the trap? I must consult with Bob about it.”

“ Meanwhile I will keep my eyes open to see how the land lies.”

Ruminating thus, he was suddenly accosted by a horseman, who overtook him on the way to May Meadows.

“ Hello! Back home again? ” he addressed the pedestrian.

“ Hello! What are you doing in town? ” was the reply.

“ I have a message for Senator May,” said the horseman, “ and meanwhile I want to find out what the Feds are doing here.”

A conversation ensued between the two, which lasted until they came within a short distance of the house, and they separated, each continuing his way alone. When Payton reached May Meadows, he found things rather lively. There was stir and preparation. News had been received that the Federal army had been ordered to evacuate the town and fall back on Division-General Freeberg's corps, and that General Ciper's army was approaching with the evident purpose of engaging the Federals. Victor Waldhorst had sent a note to his uncle, informing him that he himself had been ordered to report to Governor Rauhenfels, to escort the ladies back to the city, and to take along the wounded men, if able to travel. He had inclosed a few lines to his sister, requesting her to express to Mr. and Mrs. May his high appreciation of their generous kindness to his relatives; and to say to them, how sorry he felt that official duties made it impossible for him to make his adieux to them in person. In a postscript he informed her, that she must hold herself and the others in readiness to

accompany an officer that would be detailed to escort them to headquarters as soon as the body of the army had passed from the town.

Nellie May coaxed the letter away from Pauline, who, for a reason not quite clear to herself, felt a reluctance to let Nellie see her brother's note; but, as usual, she found herself unable to resist her friend's playful cajolery.

Nellie read and reread the few lines. Pauline noted a slight increase of color in her cheeks. It might have meant vexation at being so closely watched by Pauline; or it might have meant something else. She laughed as she handed the paper back. A rather loud, merry laugh; but it sounded unsympathetic in Pauline's ears.

"So the young captain is too busily engaged to find time for a farewell visit to May Meadows!" she presently said. "What, think you, can it be that keeps him away, now that the mission which brought him here has been accomplished?"

"Why, he is a soldier, Nellie," said the sister, wondering why her friend had laughed, and why she put the idle question. "He must obey orders. Now that the army is on the move, there must be much to do; and with him, you know, duty is always first."

"Yes; I suspect that he is deeply wrapped up in solving the problem as to what officer he is going to send to take you away from here." There was a faint smile on her lips, and just a touch of resentment, as Pauline thought, in her voice, as she spoke these words. "Do you imagine that it will be a subaltern? Or will he honor us, by sending some one of rank superior to his own? Your brother Victor is so deferential, you know. It would not surprise me, if he sent the commanding general of the Union army to hand you to your carriage in person."

Pauline felt hurt. "I do not think this levity becomes you," she said, looking reproachfully into Nellie's eyes. "However excessive my brother's deference may seem to you, it is not a thing to be laughed at, least of all by you. If

General Seele *should* pay a visit to this house — which, by the by, would not be so wonderful as you seem to think it — he would come to thank you all for your generous kindness to his wounded soldiers. For Victor has not been niggardly in his laudation, you may rest assured.”

“I dare say,” said Nellie, with a provoking smile of patronizing assent. “Your brother has a trick of looking at what he deems meritorious in others through a magnifying glass of marvelous power, and to invert the telescope when looking at his own merit. Well, perhaps he has lent his spectacles to General Seele; and if this august magnate *does* come here,” — a melodious little ripple of laughter interrupted her words — “why, who knows but that he may learn to consider us dyed-in-the-wool rebels almost as good as other people.”

Another reproachful look from Pauline was all the answer she got from this young lady.

While yet the two maidens were conversing, Cressie appeared in her master's room and announced that a dust-covered horseman had alighted in the rear of the house, demanding to speak to him.

“Show him up here,” Colonel May said.

The visitor proved to be a farmer living in the neighborhood of the battlefield of Winslo's Run, whom the colonel addressed with cheerful voice as Mr. Boyd. Although there was no other occupant of the room, and Cressie had closed the door after her, yet Mr. Boyd spoke in whispers.

“I have a letter for you from General Ciper,” he said.

“From General Ciper?” the colonel asked in some surprise. “Why, I left him a week ago in Richmond.”

“He is to take command of the corps now in charge of General McCullom,” Mr. Boyd explained. “And he is anxious to catch up with the Yankees here, to finish the work begun at Winslo's Run.”

“He is too late,” said the colonel thoughtfully, “if he means to fight before General Seele effects a junction with

General Sturdy. I have information that General Seele has orders to fall back, and to avoid an engagement with the Confederates until the two generals can co-operate. The Federal troops at this place are moving now, and in an hour there will not be a man left here."

"That is just what I came here to find out," said Mr. Boyd. "For the general intends coming here to await the arrival of his army, which follows in the rear."

"You may assure him that it will be a great honor to me to offer him and any attendants he may have with him, such poor accommodations as May Meadows affords. But where have you the letter you spoke of?"

"You must excuse me, Colonel," said the messenger, "for seeming disrespect. But one cannot be too careful in war times." He took off his coat and vest, and proceeded to rip open a part of the lining near the top seam, from which he produced a very greasy piece of paper. "I begged the general for permission to oil this letter," he explained, "so that its rattling might not create suspicion in case anything happened to me."

"Why," said the colonel, smiling, "is it a treasonable correspondence you are inveigling me into?"

"I don't know what is in the letter," replied Mr. Boyd. "But I suspect that the most important information he is after is not written in that letter. I guess he wants to know whether he is safe in coming here in advance of his army."

"Perfectly!" said the colonel, opening the well-oiled letter. It proved to be a brief note intended, probably, as a mere indorsement of the trustworthiness of the messenger, and informing him that it was the desire of President Davis that Colonel May should repair to Richmond as speedily as possible, to assume the duties of his office and "put some life into the postal service of the Confederacy."

The allusion to the duties awaiting him as a member of President Davis' cabinet did not tend to exhilarate the colonel. But true to his hospitable instincts, his first care was to urge

upon the messenger some refreshments before returning, and to order his horse to be rubbed down and fed. But as soon as opportunity offered he sent for Nellie, to impart to her the news of the expected arrival. She was delighted.

“How glad Leslie will be!” she exclaimed. “He is wild to be at the head of his company and to take part in the liberation of our country. General Ciper, I know, will be very glad of the accession of such a gallant company to his forces.”

“And you, my daughter, are you glad too?” asked the fond father, grasping Nellie’s hands, and looking wistfully into her eyes.

“What, — glad that General Ciper is coming?”

“That Leslie is going away to the war — and that I am to go to Richmond.”

Nellie’s arms were quickly about her father’s neck.

“How can I be otherwise than proud — exultantly proud, dear father — over the distinction you have achieved!” she said; but her voice had not the ring of joy that her words implied.

“But you would like to have me stay at home with you, would you not? Yes, I can understand that. But I must not be a drone in the hive, you know. You would despise me if I did not willingly add my little mite to the success of our cause. And so I must go, and leave you in charge of the plantation. For I believe it to be best to take mama with me. She has set her heart on accompanying me to Richmond; and when Leslie has gone, you will be here all alone.”

“I am not afraid, dear father!” said Nellie, resolutely.

“For I fear,” he continued, “that if I left the place in charge of the overseer alone, it might go to ruin before we got back.”

“Yes — six years is a long time!” his daughter agreed. “They elected their President for six years, did they not?”

“Not yet, my daughter,” the colonel said, smiling sadly.

“As yet the Southern Confederacy is but a provisional affair,

and its government has but the tacit, — not the expressed — sanction of the people. I sometimes think that — but never mind. I am getting old, Nellie; and most naturally take a more sober view of things than you and Leslie, in the bright enthusiasm of youth, can bring yourselves to see. And I would like to know you safe, before I leave you. I could think of you with better assurance, if I knew you to be a happy wife."

"Do you not trust me?" the girl asked anxiously. "Am I not amply able to take care of myself even when you and Leslie are gone, that you should think of marrying me off?"

"Is the idea distasteful to you?" asked the father, evincing some surprise.

"It is preposterous!" exclaimed the girl. "Why, did you not just now mention how necessary it will be for me to remain here in charge of our place?"

"But it would be most natural, that your husband would live here with you," said the colonel. "I thought that you and Payton had been engaged now long enough —"

"Engaged?" asked Nellie, surprised, almost frightened by the suggestion.

"Am I mistaken?"

"I should think so!" said the girl, proudly. "I have never been engaged to any man in my life."

"Then Payton is mistaken also. I understood from him that there was nothing in the way of your marrying him. I have befriended him, helped him into position, and received him in our home believing him to be your choice for a husband."

"Payton permitted you to believe so?"

"He certainly did; nor did your conduct militate against such a supposition."

"Oh, Papa! You humiliate me. How flippant must you believe me, to suppose that I would promise to marry a man without your counsel and consent!"

"You might have taken my consent for granted, from the manner in which we all have treated Mr. Payton."

“Tell me honestly, dear father, would my marriage with Mr. Payton please you very much? Have you set your heart on him as your son?”

“In-law, you mean. I have certainly accustomed myself to look on him in that character. It would not be the worst thing you could do in that direction.”

“And did Mr. Payton permit you to believe that he would, after marrying me, settle down and stay at home — manage your plantation, and — take care of me?”

“That is what I hoped, and inferred from his conversation with me. I looked on the arrangement as being so desirable for you, and as such a simple solution of the complication arising out of my unlooked-for call to Richmond, that I may have taken more for granted, perhaps, than your conduct, or his words, really warranted. But that is certainly the impression I was under.”

“How could you wrong Mr. Payton so!” exclaimed Nellie. “Does it seem possible to you that he would consent to stay idly at home while the tocsin of war is sounding through the land?”

“He would be excusable in doing so,” said the colonel, smilingly soberly. “You know, even Moses exempted newly married men from military duty.”

“But he would forfeit honor, manhood and every claim to respect, were he to turn a deaf ear to his country’s call to stand by her in her struggle for liberty and independence!”

The young girl spoke earnestly, almost indignantly, as if she were defending her own honor against unjust aspersion. The colonel looked at her, evidently disappointed, yet unable to repress his admiration.

“You take a heroic view of the matter,” he said, “and I ought to feel proud of the patriotic ardor of my children. I wish I could share your enthusiasm.”

The tone of resignation in which he uttered these words struck Nellie as more despondent than she had ever heard from her father. She turned to him with tender solicitude.

“Do not feel disheartened on my account,” she said, speaking with cheerful assurance. “You know me well enough to trust me, do you not? Although you cannot leave me here as Mr. Payton’s wife, — for if I marry him he will certainly not be the man to take his ease and comfort at home before the independence of our beloved South has been achieved — you need not worry on my account. When you and Leslie and all our guests are gone, the Union forces will also be gone from this part of the State. We have nothing to fear from our own people. You may take mama to Richmond with perfect assurance that I will take care of our plantation as effectually as — Mr. Payton could.”

Cressie now appeared, and announced that Mr. Payton wished to pay his respects to Miss May.

“I expected him before this,” said the colonel. “What will you say to him?”

“That will depend upon Mr. Payton, Papa,” she answered, resolutely. “I still believe that you have wronged him in supposing that he contemplates the role of a craven recreant. I shall put him to the test.”



THE TESTER TESTED.

THE Honorable Ralph Payton might have chosen an hour more propitious to his wooing, than the one following on the interview between Nellie May and her father. He rose to meet her, as she entered the drawing-room, with his usual self-possession.

Miss May had nerved herself to appear before her visitor in her usual sprightly humor, for the purpose of testing, as she had intimated to her father, her lover's character. Humiliating task, to a spirited woman. If she had ever indulged in the fond fancy that she loved this man, the very consciousness of her purpose to *test* him must have opened her eyes to the dispiriting truth, that her affection for him had never been more than a fancy. She was wholly heart-free. There was a feeling of relief in the reflection, that if she should find him wanting in the trial to which she would subject him, it would not break her heart. But she was fully determined to act fairly and honorably by him. Let him prove to her the sincerity of his love and his integrity as a man, and she would not say him nay. But he must be ready to fly to the rescue of her beloved South, he must prove his loyalty to her by unswerving loyalty to his country, he must be able to sink the lover in the patriot. This was the test that she had resolved to try him by.

"Welcome back home, Mr. Payton!" was her greeting, as they shook hands. "I heard from papa that you had returned with him, by way of Richmond. You were somewhat slow in making your appearance at our house?"

"Truly, I snatched at the first opportunity to come and see you," he protested eagerly, "and if you will pardon me for saying so, I did not feel really at home until now."

“I am glad to hear you say so,” she replied, smiling sweetly. “Then make yourself at home, and be seated. So, you accompanied papa to Richmond? The place must have looked small to you after leaving Washington. But I suppose you were filled with admiration of President Davis, and the new cabinet, and the first Congress of the Confederacy — of the government, in a word, of a young nation just launched on the billows of history?”

“Why, yes — of course,” he answered, dropping his eyes from Nellie’s face. “There is considerable stir there, just now —”

“Especially in the War Department, I suppose,” said Nellie, interrupting him. “They are making war plans there, and organizing armies, are they not?”

“Naturally. That is the matter of uppermost importance in Richmond. The people are very enthusiastic, and wonder, why our State still holds out against the Confederacy.”

“So do I wonder,” said Nellie, with some animation. “I hope, however, that the combined forces of Generals Ciper and McCullom, who are now co-operating, will deliver our people from the yoke of the oppressor, drive the usurping dictator and the whole of the Federal army out of the State, and allow it to take its natural place in the New Republic.”

“I hope so with all my heart,” Payton responded. “The Federal forces that have occupied Brookfield are already retreating from the neighborhood,” Nellie continued, “and Leslie is fretting and fuming to take part in the fray. He hopes to be among the pursuers with his company, when our gallant boys overtake and whip the Federals. By the way,” she added with a searching look into Payton’s face, “do you propose to join the company?”

“Leslie has the war fever bad, I can imagine,” said Payton, without heeding Nellie’s question. “He has a heavy score to settle with the Yankee minions. First, his imprisonment at Camp Jefferson —”

“You kept him company there, did you not?”

“ Indeed I did! And I shall not forget it, either. Then the cowardly conduct of that beast whom he shot down, and the still more brutal outrage of arresting him and trying him for it by a court-martial of Dutch blockheads — ”

“ Don’t be unjust, Mr. Payton. That court-martial acquitted Leslie.”

“ How could they help it? ” Payton exclaimed, taken aback by Nellie’s remark. “ They would have liked well enough to sentence him to be shot, so as to get rid of one dangerous enemy, anyhow. But they did not dare! ”

“ No! ” Nellie repeated, with a far-away look. “ They did not dare! ”

“ They were swift enough to excuse Jeffreys for his dirty hand in that outrage,” Payton continued, a little puzzled by the young lady’s absent look. “ I don’t wonder at it, either; for they are all birds of the same feather, — chicken-hearted abolitionists, every one of them.”

“ I would not say, every one of them,” Nellie observed quietly, yet in a tone of conviction. “ There are those among them who, for courageous devotion to duty, might shame some of our stay-at-home Southern patriots.” She looked at him, as she said this, with a demure face, and then added coaxingly: “ But you have not answered my question, whether you mean to join Leslie’s company? ”

The pointed allusion to Southern stay-at-homes warned the eager wooer to be on his guard. He knew that lukewarmness in the Southern cause would sink him in the estimation of this enthusiastic young woman; yet he shrank from the prospect of entering the service under the very eyes of bold and daring Leslie May. It was a time for the development of that keen diplomaey upon which he prided himself. He must not only convince the fair patriot before him of his unbounded zeal in the cause of the Confederacy, but also impress upon her his own importance and the brilliant part he was called on to perform in the war for the liberation of the South.

“ Nothing would give me greater pleasure and more genuine

satisfaction," he answered, in a tone of heartfelt regret, "than to be permitted to fight under the leadership of your brother. But I stand committed, substantially, to accept a commission at the hands of his Excellency, President Davis."

"Ah!" exclaimed Nellie, her increased respect for a prospective colonel, or general, showing itself, involuntarily. "So President Davis has made a military magnate of you? Papa has never told me of this."

"He could not have told you, because it is not a fact," Mr. Payton hastened to explain. "I did not say that I had received a commission; only, that I had, in a manner, committed myself to accept one."

"I understand, Mr. Payton," said Nellie, her face beaming upon him with radiant glow that he had rarely seen there. "But surely the President will be as good as his word, and we may look on the thing as accomplished."

"And you also understand," Mr. Payton urged with some earnestness, "that under the circumstances it would be an affront to his Excellency, were I to enlist in your brother's company."

"No, I do not understand that," said Nellie. "But I suppose it is against some military rule of etiquette. I do, however, understand that you are going to devote yourself to your country's cause, and it gives me great satisfaction."

"I am proud and happy to hear you say so," said he, with a polite bow.

"Because it quite vexed me, when I understood from papa, that he had recommended you to President Davis for some civil office, though unsuccessfully. Oh, I am so delighted, Mr. Payton, to imagine you leading your gallant columns to the onslaught, — Brother Leslie, it may be, following you at the head of his company, both of you pointing the way to the enemy with your swords, shouting: 'Follow me, brave comrades, to Victory, or Death!' And Victory will perch upon your banners, and glory forever crown my heroes!"

Nellie, though more than half in earnest, spoke the latter

words in a playful banter, smiling piquantly. Payton believed that the propitious moment had come for him to press his suit.

“Ah!” he exclaimed, in a voice of tender supplication; “would that you smiled upon me ever thus! Let me beg of you to be my inspiration, as you are my ambition, my heavenly queen! A word of encouragement from you would carry me to the pinnacle of bliss! Speak the word, adored one, — be mine!”

The moment was not badly chosen. His skillful insinuations had aroused the patriotic enthusiasm of the excitable maiden. Her imagination was fired by the gallantry and heroism with which it invested the man now pleading before her, — qualities, though existing nowhere else, that were for the moment a reality to her. But when, to emphasize his ardent supplication, he bent his knee before her, she was rudely disenchanted. A cloud passed over her countenance on remembering that it was her purpose to test his character. He must give her better proof of his manhood than the half-extorted admission that he might allow himself to be placed at the head of a regiment, or of a brigade. So she summoned to her aid whatever skill she had acquired by her experience as a reigning society belle in dealing with importunate beaux, and pursued her object under cover of coquettish badinage. The cloud passed as swiftly from her face as it had appeared, leaving in its stead a sportive smile.

“Get up, you ridiculous man!” she said, playfully extending the tips of her fingers to assist him to his feet. “How could you be so cruelly awkward as to dispel the brilliant halo my fancy wove around you! Think of the leap from the sublime to the comical, when you showed me the conquering hero of my dreams dropping from the clouds to grovel at my feet!”

“Cruel, cruel woman!” he exclaimed, regarding her with rueful face.

“Why cruel, Mr. Payton?”

“ You laugh at and mock me, when I am pleading for my life's most sacred boon.”

“ But even Solomon says, there is a time for all things,” she suggested. “ Surely this is not time for love and dalliance. When the sea runs high, the crew and the captain of the vessel laboring in the stress of the tempest, dream not of roses and forget-me-nots.”

“ You will break my heart, Nellie! ”

“ Never fear,” the lady replied, smiling archly. “ Hearts are not so fragile. I warrant you, that neither yours nor mine will break. We are both too — wise for that. Like the fibre of the slow growing oak hearts grow tough with time. Come, rouse yourself! Show me the man that you are. Listen to the call of your country! ”

“ Incurrable! ”

“ Why, I am your best friend.”

“ You are inexorable.”

“ I am mindful of my country's glory, and of what should be your own! ” Then, as if in relenting mood, she added coaxingly, “ Come; the war cannot last forever! But while it lasts, you must not think of shirking your part in it.”

“ But then — then may I hope? ”

“ Hope? Why not? ‘ Hope springs eternal in the human breast,’ you know; and though the cruel poet adds ‘ Man never is, but always to be, blessed,’ why, you are blessed in that you hope. And that makes hope a blessing canceled by fruition, does it not? Then make the best of this blessing, nor let fruition end it all too soon.”

The baffled suitor's view of this aspect of things was not divulged. Before he found time to answer, his eye fell on two horsemen approaching the house on the road from Brookfield, whom he pointed out to his companion.

“ Why, that is General Seele! ” Nellie exclaimed, unable to quite conceal her astonishment at the fulfillment of the bantering remark she had made to Pauline. “ And there is Captain Waldhorst! They are coming here, sure enough.”

‘What on earth can bring these blue-coats to your house, Miss May?’ asked Payton, showing his displeasure in unmistakable fashion.

‘Captain Waldhorst’s people are here, you know,’ said Nellie, and added, with a tinge of sarcasm in her voice, ‘and I suppose the general of the Union army is escorting him on his farewell visit. Or, maybe,’ she continued, her sarcasm emphasized by a sneering smile, ‘he has come to apologize for the rude handling some of us received at the hands of his court-martial.’

Payton saw with undisguised satisfaction how unwelcome the visitors seemed to the young lady. He felt reassured as to the influence that Victor Waldhorst might have obtained over the sister of the prisoner, whose fate he had, to some extent, controlled as judge advocate. Nevertheless he awaited the entrance of the Union officers with some degree of uneasiness. He did not like the obvious distinction enjoyed by Victor though he endeavored to console himself by the reflection, that he might be accompanying the general in the capacity of an official subordinate; but even then the familiarity between the two was remarkable, and to Payton, alarming.

It was a minute or two, during which the military guests were being received at the front door by Senator May in person, before Cressie entered the parlor announcing them. They were ushered in by the senator, who was, in his turn, followed by the messenger from Winslo’s Run.

‘Permit me, General,’ said the host, as he led the latter up to Nellie, ‘to present to you my daughter Eleonora. This, my child, is General Seele, the commander of the army that is about to evacuate the town of Brookfield. And this,’ he added after an interchange of bows between Nellie and the General, ‘is my friend, Mr. Payton, late a member of the Federal Congress.’

The recognition between the two gentlemen was a formal affair, Payton contenting himself with a sullen bow, the general taking no further notice of him.

“ My friend, Mr. Boyd,” said the senator, as he introduced the messenger from Winslo’s Run. The latter eyed the military visitor with keenest interest; but the general had nothing to say to him. He turned to the young lady, who anticipated his words by a remark upon the distinguished and truly unlooked for honor conferred upon the house by the visit of military gentlemen of such high rank.

“ As for Captain Waldhorst,” she continued, turning abruptly to Victor, “ we had given up the hope of *his* coming to see us at all.”

“ And yet there was a time, when he was quite at home in our house,” Senator May added.

“ That was before he sided with our enemies,” Payton remarked, to the visible chagrin of the senator and his daughter.

“ Whatever this young gentleman may think,” said the general, casting a contemptuous glance at the ex-congressman, and then resting his eyes with evident admiration on Nellie, “ You, at least, Miss May, have no cause to look upon him in the light of an enemy. Nor you, Senator May. And I happen to know, that there is not a heart in all your ardent South more genuinely loyal to those high and chivalrous Southern virtues, of which the ladies and gentlemen of this household are shining examples, and which he knows so well how to appreciate.”

“ Give me your hand, young man,” said the senator, advancing toward Victor. “ You have evidently greatly exaggerated to the general what little we have been able to do for your uncle and cousin; but I am proud to think that you bear us no malice, and that you have not ceased to be a friend, though we think differently on the unfortunate quarrel that divides the nation.”

“ Believe me, Senator,” the general addressed him, “ I, too, appreciate the sterling qualities which have compelled the admiration of my young friend, the captain here. I am greatly indebted to him for the privilege of having been permitted to

shake hands with you, without the humiliation I must have experienced, had the trial of your son taken a different turn. Thanks to the fearless integrity of Captain Waldhorst, our side has been spared the stigma, which so great a wrong as the sacrificing of justice to fancied interest, or mistaken patriotism, must have fastened on us. For however grateful you may feel toward the young man — and not even you can know at what peril to himself, at what risk to his standing in the army and reputation among his comrades he snatched young May from a tragic fate — his country is indebted to him for a service of infinitely greater importance to its cause — ”

“ Spare me, General! ” exclaimed Victor impatiently. “ You are ungenerously abusing your authority as my superior — ”

“ Silence, sir! ” the general interrupted him, gruffly. “ I cannot permit my subordinates to criticise my words, or impugn my conduct. ” Then, addressing himself to the senator, he continued: “ I was about to say, sir, that my acquaintance with you and your family has been productive of sincere regret, but also of hopeful assurance of a bright future for our country: Regret, that men having a common aim — I may add without boasting — the most exalted motives, should stand arrayed against each other in deadly combat. But an abiding faith, withal, in the final triumph of Right and Truth. For however at fault our judgment may be, — clouded, for the time, by passion and prejudice — where the purpose and aim of both sides is the vindication of Right and the accomplishment of Justice, Right and Justice will surely prevail, whichever side may win. ”

Nellie was deeply impressed, though she looked puzzled at what to her seemed a paradoxical inconsistency. But Senator May, who had listened attentively, smiled drearily as he answered.

“ Yes, General, ” he said; “ but it will be the Right as established by our conquerors’ Might; and to the vanquished it will ever remain Wrong. ”

“No, Senator,” rejoined the general, in earnest though gentle voice. “If the vanquished took up arms to vindicate a cause in which they have faith, — such as you have in yours, and I have in mine — then they were firmly convinced that Right was Might, for they appealed to Might to establish the Right; and they must see, in the end, that what Might establishes, *is* Right.”

“Grant God, that this may be so,” said the senator. “But I am afraid that ‘Convince a man against his will, He’s of the same opinion still.’”

“Never fear,” said the general smiling. “There is wonderful power of persuasion in the Logic of Events.” Then he turned to the young lady and continued: “But this is indifferent comfort to the eager, impassioned young enthusiasts, such as you and your brother have shown yourselves to be. To you the world is still divided into two classes: On the one hand the Good, to which I am glad to know that you and all of yours belong; and on the other, the Wicked, among whom, I am afraid, you must class me and my young friend, the captain, here, on account of our skepsis touching the Gospel of Secession. To you, it will and ought to be a day of jubilant rejoicing when, if such shall be our fate, you see us humiliated and crushed. But the world will seem dark and cold to you, if the God of Battles should smile on our side. May the losers, whosoever they be, learn to confide in the magnanimity of the conquerors, and accept the decree of the Arbitrer of War as the vindication of Justice!”

“Let us shake hands on that,” said the senator, “and hope, that when we meet after this war is over, it will be in a Union strengthened and purified, and guarantecing Justice to all its parts!”

Victor had meanwhile remained a silent listener. But for the protest uttered against the general’s laudatory speech, he had uttered not a word. He regarded the gentlemen that were speaking, mostly, save that now and then, when he thought himself unobserved, he turned his eyes furtively on the form

of Nellie, standing there by Payton's side. Once, when the general mentioned her classing the good and wicked, he noticed that she was about to speak; but she must have thought better, for she closed her lips again, without saying a word. But turning her eyes toward Victor, she intercepted the stolen glance, looking him full in the face. He flushed deeply, as he looked away from her, and noted the sullen frown on Payton's face.

"Now, Senator," said the general, "I must beg of you to kindly conduct me to your guests, our wounded soldiers, and the ladies, whom Victor is to escort home. It is time that he should be on his way, if he means to reach his first stopping place before dark."

"Why," asked Senator May, "do they not accompany the main army on the march?"

Both Mr. Boyd, the messenger from Winslo's Run, and Ralph Payton listened eagerly for the answer.

"No; his course is in quite a different direction," the general mentioned. "He is to escort your guests as far as Rollaville, where they take the train for the city, while he, with his military escort, will proceed to the capitol, where he is to report to the governor."

"Military escort?" the senator asked. "So you are going to divide your forces?"

"To the extent of detailing a body guard of three men to accompany the captain," said the general, smiling. "We anticipate no trouble, of course; the escort is more a matter of etiquette, than a military precaution."

Whether by concert, or purely by accident, Ralph Payton and the messenger from Winslo's Run exchanged rapid glances, and then both turned their eyes toward Victor.

"Shall I have the pleasure of seeing you again, Miss May," said the general, addressing the young lady. "Or am I to say good-bye here, and now?"

Nellie, too, seemed surprised on learning that Victor was not to accompany the troops. As the general addressed her, she

advanced toward him, offering her hand with a frank smile. "We have met under exciting circumstances, General," she said, "and I need not assure you that I will not soon forget them. But I do wish to tell you, that you will be associated in my memory with some of the most stirring experiences of my life; and I shall ever think of you as — an enemy, whom I would like to number among my friends."

"You make me, indeed, proud," said the general, with a profound bow.

"And I cherish the hope, that we may meet again under more favorable auspices," she added.

"Such, indeed, is my fervent wish," the general replied, reluctantly quitting the hand he had been holding; "and so I make bold to say 'An revoir!'"

General Seele left the room with Senator May, and Victor was in the act of following, when Nellie, in a reproachful tone, exclaimed: "Captain Waldhorst!"

Victor paused.

"Have you no valediction for me?"

He looked about the room, his eyes sweeping the forms of Mr. Boyd and Ralph Payton. As they rested upon her face a cold, haughty expression darkened his own.

"I have the honor, Miss May," he said, bowing ceremoniously, "to say to you that I wish you may ever fare well."

"Victor!" she exclaimed, in a voice blending earnest remonstrance with such tender entreaty as to thrill him to the very soul. "After what you have done for us, — for us all, but most of all for me — must you leave without listening to a word of thanks?"

Victor was in torture. To clasp that outstretched hand, — to press it to his burning lips, — were bliss supreme. But she had too often toyed with his most sacred feeling, and his manhood rebelled.

Before he could respond, Payton stepped forward and seized the hand which Victor had ignored.

"You lower yourself," he said, endeavoring to lead her

away, "before this — boor, whose very presence in your parlor, in the garb of the enemies of our country, is an affront to you."

Nellie flung off his hand with an angry gesture, but kept her eye on Victor, to note the effect on him of Payton's audacious assertion of authority over her.

Whatever may have been Victor's thoughts, he did not utter them. One contemptuous glance of defiance he shot at Payton; then bowing with icy politeness to Nellie, he left the room.

For a moment she gazed at the door through which he had disappeared. The pallor of her cheeks gave way to a flood of brilliant color as she turned her flashing eyes on Payton, only to be again succeeded by the paleness of Parian marble. The scathing rebuke that had seethed for utterance remained unspoken. For with the conviction, — that Payton's presence had closed Victor's lips, and his presumptuous conduct, consistent only with an accepted lover's privilege, driven him from the room — had come the revelation of a secret that had long lain dormant deep down in her heart. Now that it had leaped into vivid consciousness, it kindled a passion before which all previous experience paled into insignificance.

Nellie knew that she loved. It had come late to her, this master passion; but now that she was under its spell, it threatened to rule with sovereign might, engrossing all other interests. How lukewarm had been her most exalted enthusiasm, how tame the most thrilling excitement she had experienced, compared with the new power that in her bosom held sway supreme!

What boots it now to put Payton to further test? Were he as brave as Achilles, or as gallant as Tancred, he must be found wanting, if tried by the measure which Nellie would apply. Nor he, nor any man would henceforth approximate to the standard of excellence to which Nellie had elevated her ideal.

But with the recognition of her love had come the humili-

ating consciousness, that it was an enemy to her country to whom she had surrendered her heart. How could she face her friends with this fateful secret burning in her bosom? What would her father, what her brother say, when they learned of her shameful weakness!

Swiftly these thoughts passed through her mind.

She had not yet answered Payton. He stood there, regarding her with a puzzled air, trying to account for her sudden change of color, and the strange expression of her countenance. One thing she was perfectly clear about: that she must, above all things, guard her secret from this man. And she felt that it might require all her tact to allay any suspicion his jealous mind might entertain. With an effort she recovered her self-possession to a sufficient degree to answer him calmly.

"You will pardon my petulance, Mr. Payton," she said. "Your language to Captain Waldhorst was rude; and it annoyed me that a guest at our house should be treated rudely. But you may have been right. The visit of the commander of the Federal troops may have been, under the circumstances, in bad taste, even though he came accompanied by Captain Waldhorst; for he put a restraint on our conversation —"

"I am so proud to hear you say this," Payton interrupted. "You may be sure, that it was only for your sake that I ventured to remind that — Dutchman of his manners."

Nellie *did* have need of her power of self-control to choke down the resentment of her wooer's bungling speech. Her social accomplishments again stood her in stead; she had a conciliating smile ready to sugar the rebuke which her reply conveyed. "Yes," she said, "and I thank you for also reminding me of my manners to you. But you know he was a guest under father's roof, and father, somehow, thinks so much of him. And I must really go to say good-bye to the Auf dem Busches, and to Captain Waldhorst's sister, though the captain would have nothing to say to me."

She left the room, Payton looking after her in doubting mood. Mr. Boyd, who had remained, looked at Payton. He

had been highly interested to see the Federal commander at the house of so prominent a Southerner as Senator May, and the tone of cordial amity between them was a surprise with which to embellish his report to General Ciper.

“This young woman — she’s your intended, ain’t she? — seems to have high notions of hospitality to Union soldiers,” was Boyd’s remark when he was alone with Payton. “She kind of resented the interference between her and the Federal captain. I thought once, that she had a sharp tongue-lashing ready for you. What changed her mind, do you think?”

“I hate the d—d upstart!” Payton exclaimed, with an angry scowl. “He’s always hanging round the family. And Miss May and her brother amuse themselves by a sort of patronizing toleration of him; and the old man — well, he lets them.”

“Don’t you think,” said the messenger, insinuatingly, “that the young rascal has an eye toward Miss May hisself?”

“The d—d, puppy is just fool enough to imagine such a thing!”

“If I were in your place,” Mr. Boyd suggested, “I’d try to get rid of him. I half believe that she don’t hate him a bit.”

“By God, I mean to!” Payton exclaimed, stung by the insinuation of Mr. Boyd.

“Who are the people he is going to escort?”

“Oh, an old uncle of his, and a cousin, who were wounded at the battle of Winslo’s Run, and who have been nursed and fed here like a couple of pets.”

“But I heard some ladies mentioned,” said Boyd.

“Yes, two of them. His aunt and his sister.”

“What a pity, that there are ladies in the crowd,” suggested Boyd. “Otherwise you might make a stunning haul—”

“What do you mean?”

“I mean,” said Mr. Boyd, “that two Federal soldiers and a captain are worth bagging, and that as a prisoner of war, the captain would not be so much in your way.”

Payton evinced less surprise over this suggestion than Boyd seemed to have expected. The two men looked at each other for a moment, when the door opened, interrupting any reply that might have been intended. It was Cressie, the slave-girl, that entered.

“What do you want here?” Payton addressed her brusquely.

“Misses May sent me to look for her thimble,” she replied, without looking at either of the men. “She suspects that she lost it here this morning.”

She busied herself with the search, and was taken no further notice of by the men, except that they carried on their further conversation in whispers.

While looking sharply about for the lost article, she had her ears open also; because the secrecy with which the two men carried on their conversation had challenged her curiosity. Of the conversation she caught here and there a disconnected word, of which she could make nothing. But as she left the room, followed by the two men, who seemed to have come to some understanding, and while concealed by the shadow of the staircase in the hall, as they passed her, she heard Boyd say distinctly: “If they show fight, make sure of the young captain first.”

These words startled her. They smote upon her ears like a danger-signal ominating peril to the young officer. What could these men want of Captain Waldhorst?

“If they show fight!” she ruminated. “If who showed fight?”

“Make sure of the young captain first.” That must mean danger to the young soldier’s life!

Then the word “Shackleford’s” occurred to her, which she had heard one of the men pronounce. And she remembered the further word “morning.”

“Shackleford’s!” Was not that the name of a roadside inn, out on the Rollaville Road? Then it flashed into her mind, that she had heard Miss Pauline tell her mistress, that

they expected to reach Shackelford's about dark, on their way to Rollaville, where they would take the cars. That made it certain to Cressie, that danger menaced the travelers, at that inn, if they reached it by dark, and remained there that night.

Now Miss Waldhorst, as well as her uncle and cousin, had treated the young slave-girl with a kindness and respectful consideration, that was to her a pleasant experience, eliciting on her part a feeling of profound gratitude.

But it was not any of the guests at May Meadows, that engrossed her thoughts just now. She trembled for one whom she had enshrined in her innermost heart, who had, however unconsciously, commanded her loyal homage, almost from the first moment she had seen him, above even her beloved mistress;—for one whom she worshiped and adored with an unhoping devotion, which nevertheless possessed the intensity and ardor of passion.

Her first impulse on conceiving the danger that menaced Victor, was to warn him of his peril. But it occurred to her, that a simple statement of her suspicion, without more tangible proof than her own surmises from the fragments of a conversation overheard, would only result in one of his indulgent smiles, and that he would thank her, without paying further heed to her caution. And when she entered the room where she supposed him to be, she learned, to her great disappointment and trouble, that he had already left, as well as the general.

What do now?

The guests were in the act of leaving. Senator May was gallantly escorting Mrs. Auf dem Busch to the stage-coach waiting for them in front of the house, on which three Federal soldiers had already taken outside seats. Her husband followed, accompanied by Mrs. May and leaning on the arm of Wolde-mar, who, however, was not yet firm on his legs himself. Pauline and Nellie walked arm in arm, both pensive to a degree unusual in them.

At any other time, the deep thoughtfulness of the young

ladies, so entirely unlike either of them, would have given Cressie cause for wonder. But her own mind was oppressed with her weighty secret. In her eager solicitude to convey warning to the absent captain she overlooked the circumstance that Miss Pauline was a fellow traveler with her brother, and would probably share any danger to which he was exposed. But as the two girls kissed each other good-bye, it did occur to her, that her mistress might put the sister on her guard, and that she would probably inform her brother of any danger apprehended. She had just determined to speak to her mistress, when Woldemar Auf dem Busch, having helped his father to enter the coach, stepped back toward her and said :

“ I ought not to leave you, Miss Lucretia, without thanking you for the kind attentions and the untiring devotion which you have displayed toward my father and myself. Will you shake hands with me? ”

With a vivid blush. — less of pleasure, however, or even of embarrassment than of pain — she submitted her hand to the strong grasp, saying : “ I only did what I was bid to do. ”

“ If others did their duty as well, as cheerfully and as efficiently as you did yours, then the world would be a brighter place. Good-bye! ”

Woldemar was followed by Pauline. She turned her eyes wistfully up and down the road ; but Leslie was nowhere to be seen, and a look of keen disappointment made way for the sadness of resignation that settled on her face. She had hardly taken her seat, when Nellie rushed to the door, and tearing it open, said :

“ Oh, Pauline ! I almost forgot to tell you, that Leslie asked me to say good-bye to you in his name. He is so sorry that he could not be here to see you off ; but the organization of his company for active service fills his whole soul now. He thinks of nothing else. ”

“ I thank you, ” was Pauline's faint answer. The message seemed to crush her utterly.

Cressie stood on needles. The stage was starting, and her mistress stood gazing intently on the departing guests, waving her handkerchief slowly.

“Don’t make a spectacle of yourself!” said Nellie’s mother. “Everybody is looking at you.”

Nellie made no reply. “What is it, Cressie?” she said to the octoroon girl, noticing her eager anxiety.

As Mrs. May followed her husband back to the house, the girl approached her mistress and whispered: “Please m’m, I fear Mahster Victor is in danger.”

“Victor?” Nellie repeated, forgetting to chide the slave for the freedom of using Victor’s given name. And there followed a long and anxious interlœution between maid and mistress.



CUPID'S COUNTER COUP.

THE capture of Victor Waldhorst and the party with him, to be delivered as prisoners of war to the Confederate authorities, suggested originally by crafty Bob Rountree, had busily engaged the thoughts of the Honorable Ralph Payton. The project itself met his hearty approval, promising, among other substantial advantages, riddance of what he deemed an inconvenient obstacle to his designs upon Miss May. But guerrilla warfare, which later on in the war became the terror of the border States, had not yet been recognized as a feature of the war; those engaged in it were looked upon as outlaws and criminals, pursuing their marauding enterprises for the gratification of personal malice and rapacity.

He therefore hailed with satisfaction the suggestion of Mr. Boyd, in that conversation which Cressie had partly overheard, to give the affair a military coloring by obtaining from the general of the Confederate forces an order for the capture of the bearer of important dispatches from General Seele to the military governor. A detail of two or three private soldiers to cover the transport of the prisoners to the Confederate headquarters, would certainly make the project, or at least give it the appearance of, a military enterprise.

While Boyd, then, hurried off to make his report to General Ciper and obtain the necessary order, Ralph Payton, after concerting with him the place of meeting on the Rollaville Road, rushed off to talk the matter over with Bob Rountree. He hoped to secure the co-operation of the crafty young man in whose fertile brain the plan had originally germinated. His confidence of success rested largely more on stealthy approach and sudden surprise, than on the issue of an open combat.

But the very quality which Payton admired so highly, induced the young fox to keep aloof. He was profuse in regrets and plausible in excuses for denying himself the rare fun of participation in bagging the Dutch gang, including Leslie May's sweetheart, who alone, Bob put it, was a prize for which Captain May might be grateful.

While they were talking the matter over, Orlando Jones burst into the room with news that the last of the Federal troops had left Brookfield.

"Are you sure?" asked Payton.

"No mistake," Orlando asserted. "The last man to leave, as, I believe, he was the first to enter the town, was General Seele himself."

"Why, he was out at May Meadows not more than an hour ago," said Payton.

"I know," was Jones' answer. "I saw him come out. And he wasn't alone, either. That little Dutchman that wears a captain's uniform was with him; and the two hobnobbed with one another as if they were cronies. Oh, how I would enjoy it to smash his nose for him!"

"But I thought you told me, Payton," said Bob Rountree, "that he was escorting his kinfolks as far as Rollaville, where they are to take the cars for the city?"

"Of course he is," Payton asserted. "I heard the general himself say so."

"I guess that's so," said Jones. "Leastwise he was galloping across fields when I last saw him, over toward the Rollaville Road; and for all I know he is following the stage coach this very minute."

"Then he accompanies them on horseback," mused the congressman. "I wonder whether the military escort is mounted also?"

"A part of them are on top of the stage-coach," Orlando informed him. "I was watching when they put in the whole Dutch cargo. Three blue-coats climbed on top. And who, do you think, was one of them? You'll never guess in a life-time."

“ Well? ” urged both Payton and Rountree.

“ Jeffreys! ”

“ What — Jeffreys? ” exclaimed the others, simultaneously.

“ Do you mean it? ”

“ Jeffreys! ” Orlando reiterated. “ The scamp, that got us into the scrape with the d—d Dutchman, that time. A queer watch-dog *he'll* be to guard his particular pet! ”

“ Yes, ” said Payton with a triumphant smile. “ It is just like committing the lamb to the protection of the wolf. ”

“ You are in luck, as usual, Payton, ” Bob Rountree observed. “ I shouldn't wonder, if it turned out that this is a trick played by that Dutch colonel on the judge advocate that bearded him on that court-martial. ”

“ But are you sure, Orlando, that it was really Jeffreys you saw? ” Payton insisted.

“ Sure as rolling off a log; ” Mr. Jones asserted. “ I couldn't be mistaken in that hang-dog look of his phiz, for all that he's shaved off his whiskers and wears a mustache, and transmogrified himself with his soldier-trappings into a sort of military cut-throat. ”

“ Now, then, Orlando, ” said Payton insinuatingly, “ how would you like to take a hand in the fun? ”

“ Yes, Jones, ” Bob Rountree seconded his friend, “ this comes just in your line in the soldiering business. And maybe your first practice will be the smashing of your Dutch friend's nose, for which your fists are itching. ”

Orlando shook his head. “ I don't much like the job, ” he said, “ if there's a hitch anywhere, some other noses might be smashed. ”

“ But, ” Payton added eagerly, “ there will be you, and I, and Boyd. Don't you think we will be an overmatch for the little Dutchman, and his invalid relatives, even if they should wake up before we have secured them, which I don't propose they shall do? ”

“ But how about the guards? ” suggested Jones.

“Why, Boyd is going to bring three picked Confederate soldiers,” Payton informed him.

“And of the blue-coats, one is Jeffreys!” Rountree exclaimed. “And that is as good as if he counted three on your own side.”

Orlando Jones finally allowed himself to be persuaded to be of the raiding party, and promised to accompany Payton to the place of meeting on the Rollaville Road, to join Boyd and his military escort, on their way to Shackelford's inn.

Meanwhile the slave-girl Cressie proceeded on the way from May Meadows to the Dutch Store in Brookfield. A swiftly moving mass of murky clouds eclipsed the reclining October sun, and a brisk breeze sougled through the waving tree-tops as she passed through the grove of stately forest trees on the way to town. Her errand in the Dutch Store was an insignificant purchase, hardly justifying the trip from May Meadows; but she was waited on by Mynheer Van Braaken himself, who was eager to retain the custom of the May family. As she was about to pay for the article she had purchased, she saw Yahkop, the teamster, enter the store; whereupon she be-thought herself, that a churn was wanting in the dairy, and expressed a regret that she could not carry one home with her. Of course, Mynheer Van Braaken offered to send it, and commissioned Yahkop to carry it for her. So it happened, that Yahkop accompanied the girl on her way home.

Cressie, though a slave, and as such far below the social scale of even Yahkop, was too well bred to speak to a white man unless first spoken to; and as Yahkop, shy and awkward as he felt in the presence of ladies, drew no distinction between the lady-like slave girl and a real lady, conversation between the two was not lively.

The wind increased as the evening wore on. When they entered the grove, it shrieked and whistled through the branches, stripping them of the seer and yellow autumn leaves, shaking them down in rustling showers, spinning them about in whirling eddies, and when reaching the ground, still

chasing them onward, in a rolling, bounding, leaping race, as if eager to reach May Meadows before the silent pedestrians. Yahkop seemed to enjoy the sport of the merrily dancing leaves; but Cressie looked anxiously upward, at the swaying, storm-tossed treetops and at the threatening clouds visible in the sky beyond.

“Do you think it will rain?” asked the girl, finally; not, evidently, by way of making conversation, but in such anxious tone as to rouse the attention of even Yahkop.

He looked at her with a kind of commiserating contempt. “Yahs,” he replied, after a close scrutiny of the clouds, “I guess it vill rehn. Mahbe to-night it vill rehn. Und der sun vill shine in der morning.”

“Will it shine on him?” Cressie involuntarily asked herself, but did not put the thought in words. She said, instead, with a wan little smile, “Do you think so?” For she wronged the teamster with the suspicion that he had attempted to perpetuate a joke, which politeness required her to appreciate.

“Shoor!” he comforted her. And this was the extent of their conversation until reaching May Meadows.

When he was about to leave, after depositing his burden in the kitchen, Cressie invited him to Miss May's room to receive payment for the churn.

Miss May received him with a smile of captivating friendliness, thanking him as if he had performed the errand at her own request. As she counted out the money she put several questions to him about his affairs, which made the honest teamster think her exceedingly inquisitive.

“Did you see much of your old comrade Victor when he was here?” was one of the questions she asked.

“Fictohr?” he repeated, his face brightening with an interest she hardly deemed him capable of entertaining. “Fictohr be an cap'n now und he come, und he shehk hands mit me und mit der boss. Und if he got an cumpanee, I fight mit he.”

“Ah, you would like to be a soldier,” said Nellie insinuatingly. “Wouldn't you like to join my brother's company?”

“Capt’n Meh, he belongs mit der Sout; und I fights der Sout,” he explained.

“I see. And I suppose you like Mr. Waldhorst very much?”

“I likes Capt’n Meh; und I likes Fictohr more better.”

“And would you be willing, Mr. Yahkop — pardon me for not knowing your other name — to put yourself to some trouble to save your friend from great danger?”

“What you mean?” asked Yahkop, in astonishment.

“I am afraid Victor has some enemies,” Nellie said, speaking very earnestly. “You know, do you not, that Mr. Roundtree, for instance, is not friendly to him?”

“Bop?” inquired Yahkop. “Der shneak vhat runned off from der Dutch shtohr?”

“And Mr. Jones —”

“Der old man Tshones? I ken lick him!”

“Orlando Jones, I mean —”

“Vhat Fictohr ken liek alretty once befohr?” the teamster interrupted eagerly. “Fictohr don’t be afraid from him.”

“But there is one who is more formidable than these, and who has never gotten over a boyish quarrel, in which Mr. Waldhorst worsted him. I mean Mr. Payton.”

Nellie had involuntarily betrayed deep apprehension, and Yahkop listened with some alarm to her latter words. But when she mentioned Payton’s name his face brightened for a moment in evident relief, and instantly assumed an expression of profound contempt.

“Pehton?” he repeated scornfully. “Vhat goes to der Cohn-gre’ss! Bah! He be one awful bully mit his mout, und one shneak und eowert mit his heart.”

Yahkop’s blunt characterization of the man who aspired to her hand, stung Nellie to the quick. “Bully!” he had called him. “Coward!” Her first impulse was to resent the affront on the part of this boorish elown, so far beneath her and beneath this man in social standing. But it occurred to her, that Yahkop stood before her on her own invitation, and for a purpose

of pressing importance. And it came to her with a pang that blanched her cheeks, that he had but used plain and unpolished language to express what the high-spirited young belle had begun to suspect herself.

When she resumed the conversation, her color returned in a vivid blush, unnoticed, probably, by her downright auditor, as she tried to conceal her own feeling, and yet impress upon Yahkop the peril of his friend, if not warned in time. "If we can give him, or those with him, notice," she concluded, "the danger may be easily averted; for I do not believe Mr. Payton contemplates an open attack. His plan is, probably, to surprise them unawares."

"Like an sneak, und an cowert!" Yahkop muttered; but he eagerly volunteered to place himself under Miss May's directions for any service to which she might put him. It was finally arranged, that Cressie should proceed to Shaekleford's and there seek admission to the house through some of the colored servants, and thus communicate with Victor's sister.

"Cressie is anxious to serve these people, who have been very kind to her," Nellie explained, "and would willingly undertake the message alone. But there is the greatest danger, that a slave away from home in the night time would surely be held up and taken into custody, and that would frustrate the whole plan. It is therefore that I am so anxious to have some one accompany Cressie on this ride. With a white man accompanying, she will not be molested."

Yahkop's ready acquiescence took a load off Nellie's mind. She requested him to hold himself in readiness to meet Cressie in the grove on the way to Brookfield, so that no one might see them start together. "For you will understand," she explained to him, "that neither my brother, nor any of his friends, must ever find out that either Cressie or I have helped a Union soldier to escape. Cressie would be cruelly punished, I fear, if it were discovered that she had a hand in the rescue. And I don't know what would happen to me; for my brother

and his company of recruits are very zealous partisans of the South."

Yahkop took his departure with the promise of prompt appearance at the tryst with the girl.

At the gate he was met by Leslie May, who was returning from a drill of his company in the town, and greeted the well-known teamster in his usual pleasant manner; wondering, however, what could have brought him to May Meadows.

In the house he accosted his sister with the laconic question: "Have they gone?" Whereat she blushed, and answered with equal brevity "Yes."

"What had Van Braaken's teamster to do here?" he asked her.

Her answer was cut off by the entrance of Senator May, who seemed glad to meet his son, and somewhat eagerly asked him, whether he knew of the expected arrival of General Ciper and his staff.

"They will be here within an hour," Leslie answered.

"I am very glad," the old gentleman remarked, "that our guests are safely out of the house. It would have been awkward all around, if the Confederate officers had found Federal soldiers quartered with us."

"What would they have done in such case?" Nellie asked.

"Made prisoners of them, I suppose," Leslie answered, with ostentatious indifference, which Nellie easily perceived was assumed.

"Shocking!" Nellie exclaimed. "Surely they would not have violated the obligations of hospitality to such an extent? Think of it—to lay violent hands on our guests, on Victor's friends, after what he has done for us!"

"I do not think I should have suffered it," said the old gentleman, with proud dignity.

"It is indeed well, that the occasion for you to test your authority as master of the house has passed away," Leslie observed. "For I fear that your opposition to Victor's arrest

if he had been here, or that of any of his friends, would not have availed them. A soldier's duty is paramount, even to the claims of hospitality."

"Mr. Auf dem Busch and his son are wounded soldiers," said Senator May, "and they ought to have been as safe under our roof, as under the yellow flag of a hospital, which all civilized nations respect. As to Victor, that is a different matter. He is an officer on active duty. And from what I know of him, he would be the last man to complain, if the fortune of war should cast him into a Confederate prison."

"A fate," said Leslie, "that may very likely overtake him as it is. I understand that he has an escort with him of only three men, in passing through a district that is thoroughly Southern in sentiment, and bitterly incensed against the military governor. Under these circumstances, the uniform he wears will rouse their anger, and the escort prove an element of danger rather than a protection; for what can three or four men avail against an infuriated mob?"

"Your fears are unfounded, I take it," said his father, "Victor is well known to most of the people in this region, and generally liked. He will not be molested. Unless, indeed," he added, a little more seriously, "he should fall a victim to the treachery of some personal enemy."

"He *has* personal enemies," Leslie rejoined, also in more serious tone than was habitual to him. "And it might not be held treachery to waylay and surprise an enemy bearing dispatches to the hostile commander. Nor am I quite easy as to what may befall his uncle and cousin, or even the ladies with him."

"For shame, Leslie!" his sister hotly protested. "How can you so cruelly wrong our brave defenders, as to deem them capable of making war on women?"

"I have no fear that our *soldiers*, will do so," Leslie replied. "But Victor's enemies are not soldiers, though, perhaps, they may wear a uniform. There are miscreants who disgrace their uniform; whose valor takes the shape of cunning

and intrigue, — who do their fighting by stealth, and upon those least able to strike back. To such, neither age nor sex is sacred.”

Nellie's cheeks turned paler. Leslie's words greatly intensified her alarm for Victor's safety. Never had anxiety so harrowing oppressed her heart before; not even when her brother's life had hung trembling in the balance. Oh, that Cressie may reach there in time! Oh, that Yakhop be punctual to meet her!

Should she take Leslie into her confidence? For a moment she harbored the thought. He could, with half a dozen of his men, shield from threatening danger the man, who had stood between him and a felon's doom.

But then she remembered that she must not betray her secret. The very thought of it sent the blood in a mighty rush to her face and forehead. Not a living soul, — least of all, just now, her brother — must suspect that a foreigner, a Northerner, a Federal officer, commanded the homage of her heart. And she knew that she could not ask her brother to interfere without betraying herself.

But it was torture to rest idly, with that terrible uncertainty as to Victor's fate oppressing her. Her fertile imagination conjured up a thousand possible contingencies each one of which might prevent the message from reaching him in time, or render it unavailing if it should reach him. Those portentous words, “Make sure of the young captain first,” continued to haunt her, until anxiety and excitement goaded her into the resolution to join in the midnight ride herself.

It surprised her to find what relief there was in having formed that resolution. She set about the task at once to make such arrangements as would conceal her absence from home. Nellie was not an adept at lying; but her simulation of being troubled by a violent headache — a malady so unusual to her, that it was difficult to summon the requisite patience to stifle her vexation and annoyance — was a piece of superb acting that would have been creditable in a professional. To

deceive her father and brother was easy enough ; but even her mother was vexed by the impatience and petulance displayed by her wayward daughter, and advised her, before the evening meal had been concluded, to carry her violent headache and savage temper to bed.

“ You are right, Mama,” she answered, rising from the table. “ To bed I shall go ; and I give fair warning that nothing short of an earthquake will induce me to open the door of my bed-room before to-morrow morning.”

Meanwhile Boyd had met the Confederate general, who was on his way to Brookfield with his staff and a small detachment of troops, and brought him the tidings — no longer a matter of news to General Ciper, however, of the evacuation of the town by the Federal forces. A more interesting piece of news was the report by Boyd of the conversation he had heard between General Seele and Senator May, in which the messenger emphasized the cordiality between them, and the friendly footing on which the Federal general and a young captain accompanying him had been received at the senator's house. And when the messenger further mentioned, that the young captain was now on his way to the capital — bearing, probably, important dispatches to the military governor — escorting, at the same time, a party of relatives, that had for a long time been guests at the senator's house, it was the general himself who promptly ordered the capture of the whole party, directing them to be brought before him as prisoners of war.

“ You may take a corporal's guard of picked men,” he said, “ whom I put under your command. Proceed at once, so as not to miss them at the inn of which you spoke. And as to Senator May,” he added thoughtfully, “ why, his conduct will bear looking to. I suspect that he is but a lukewarm supporter of our cause.”

“ He is a firm believer in the policy of restoring the old Union,” Mr. Boyd volunteered to suggest. “ He is different from his son in that respect, who is a rampant rebel. He has

raised quite a company of volunteers, — active, enthusiastic fellows, who are burning for a chance to drive out the foreign invaders from our State.”

“They shall have that chance,” said the general. “I shall gladly welcome so valuable an addition to our forces. — Has the general any other children?”

“Only a daughter.”

“Why, yes; I remember having heard of her at Washington. She was mentioned as a lady of great beauty, who played havoc with the hearts of her numerous admirers; and as being an ardent supporter of the Southern cause.”

“There is no mistake about her beauty,” Boyd admitted, adding with apparent reluctance, “but as to her Southern sentiments there may be room for doubt. She seemed to me to be rather partial to the Federal officer that was with General Seele, during the few minutes that I saw her.”

“Coquetry, I dare say,” the general replied with a smile, and graciously dismissed Mr. Boyd, to select the men he wished to take with him.

And so, while the general and his staff proceeded on their way toward Brookfield, Mr. Boyd and the guard he had selected galloped across the country toward the Rollaville road, to the place appointed for the meeting with Payton. He chuckled on learning from Orlando Jones, whom he gladly welcomed as an addition to their number, that Jeffreys, Captain Waldhorst’s implacable enemy, was among the guards of the other party.

“It bids fair to be easy work for us,” he remarked to Payton, “if we should happen to reach there while Jeffreys is on duty as sentinel. We may bag the whole lot of them, women and all, before they can rub the sleep out of their eyes.”

* * *

Instead of one, Yahkop found two women waiting for him at the appointed rendezvous, both closely veiled, mounted on steeds which the practiced eye of the teamster recognized, notwithstanding the darkness, as the finest out of Colonel May’s stable. One of these he knew must be the slave-girl Cressie,

though he could not distinguish which. The other, then, must be Miss May herself. It puzzled him to imagine what weighty reason could have induced the daughter of Senator May to brave the howling storm at so late an hour of the night, merely to see her slave safely off in the company of a white man. For darkness had indeed set it. Not a star twinkled in the sky; an inky canopy of dense clouds spread from horizon to horizon in every direction. The storm of the afternoon, which had occasioned Cressie's misgiving, had increased to a tempest, sweeping over the land with terrific fury. No sound was audible save its dismal wails, swelling into angry howls as it vented its wrath upon the writhing tree-tops, and now and again the crackling crash of a branch or limb wrenched from its quaking trunk. It hardly needed Yahkop's urgent warning to apprise them of the danger from the proximity of the storm-tossed trees, and caused them to pass through the grove as speedily as possible. Out in the open prairie, though exposed to the full fury of the storm that now raged with the violence of a hurricane, they breathed more freely, as though they had left danger behind. Still it was difficult to converse. The fierce blasts of Boreas shrieked about their ears, and cut off, as with a knife, the words as they left the lips of the speaker. But Nellie managed to make Yahkop understand, that, to his great astonishment, she meant to be one of the party proceeding toward Shackleford's that night.

As yet, not a drop of rain had fallen. But soon the distant roll of thunder added its diapason to the shrill treble of the piping wind, and sudden flashes of lightning, playing in the far off clouds, made visible the intense blackness of the night. The weather-hardened teamster shook his head, marveling at the pluck of a young lady whom he had regarded in the light of a pampered pet, and who now calmly and serenely braved an uproar of the elements calculated to strike terror into the hearts of boldest men. Her conduct was an enigma to him, which he finally dismissed with another shake of his bothered head.

But Cressie, though her anxiety was not less keen than that of her mistress, and though she would, to serve the man whom she secretly worshiped, unflinchingly brave danger and death, had inherited from her remote African ancestry an intense fear of thunderstorms, and now trembled like an aspen leaf. She kept as closely by the side of her mistress as she could. Indeed, it was necessary that the nocturnal travelers should separate from each other as little as possible, else there might be danger of missing each other entirely, on account of the intense darkness.

Under the circumstances, their progress was but slow. Before they reached the woods, through which the remainder of the road lay, the rain poured down in torrents. The wind abated somewhat, but the lightning became more vivid, and the peals of thunder grew louder, and succeeded each other more rapidly, to the terror of poor Cressie. They were rather glad when they reached the wood; for the trees afforded some protection against the driving rain. Yahkop proposed a halt for a while, if they could find a sheltered nook; but Nellie would not hear of it. After proceeding for some distance in the wood, Nellie's horse came to a halt, and refused to go on. She was slightly in advance of the others, and when Yahkop came up, he dismounted, leading his horse by the bridle to reconnoiter. He found the road obstructed by a large tree, extended entirely across it, having evidently been blown down by the storm. While communicating the result of his examination to Miss May, the sky was suddenly illumined, turning the blackness of the night into the glare of the midday sun. A bolt of fire shot from the clouds, striking the ground apparently within a few feet of the road. Simultaneously with a shriek of agony from Cressie, a terrific clap of thunder shook the very earth, and was echoed in a deafening roar reverberating through the woods.

Nellie now saw what Yahkop had been at some pains to describe to her. But Yahkop himself took advantage of the momentary light to scan the surroundings. His quick eye dis-

cerned at once that it would be impossible to lead or urge the horses across the fallen tree. But he also noticed traces of horses' hoofs in the down-trodden grass around the stump. It was evident that some persons had passed this way since the tree had fallen; and the teamster communicated this surmise to his companion.

"Oh," exclaimed Miss May, "we shall be too late! Who else could it be that traveled in a night like this, but Victor's enemies?"

And she became more urgent in her demand for the utmost speed possible to them.

Yahkop, accordingly, led his horse and carefully felt his way around the stump, insisting that the ladies should dismount also, and lead their horses; for the darkness, more dense than before the vivid illumination, made it dangerous to venture on horseback into the thick growth of trees that lined the road on both sides.

When they had gained the other side of the fallen tree, Yahkop assisted them to mount again, and they pursued their way as rapidly as was prudent under the circumstances. Presently, the rain ceased, and the storm abated its violence. The sky began to clear up, and the moon, just past its full, was dimly visible by the time they reached the vicinity of Shackleford's inn. They halted in a thicket some distance from the house.

No light was visible in any of the windows. Yet Yahkop thought he saw a shadow moving away from the door, followed by another and another. "Yes," Miss May replied to the whispered communication of his suspicion.

"I guess, mehbe, seecesh fellers be 'round. Odder mehbe Bop Rountree, odder Mishter Pehton. Cressie, shneak you up and see, und gum und seh, who ish dere."

Frightened as Cressie had been by the lightning, she now wished for a vivid flash, and would have welcomed even the clap of thunder, if she had been able to see what was going on at the inn. But when her mistress seconded the suggestion

of Yahkop, she took it as an order, and proceeded to obey. The storm was about over, and the flashes of lightning too far off to afford much illumination; but as she stealthily approached the building, she distinctly saw a number of men moving toward the woods in the rear of the house. She quickly removed her veil, and thought she saw too, that some of the men had their hands tied behind them, and that these were being led by the others. But even as she gazed after them, they disappeared in the woods.

Cressie crept softly toward the outbuilding in the rear of the house, where she hoped to find one of the negroes. Before she reached it the sight of two men rooted her to the spot and curdled her blood. Distinctly visible in the light of the moon that had broken through the clouds, she saw Payton and — Jeffreys, approach from the woods. Pressing closely to the wall of the house, she was unobserved by the men, who whispered energetically to one another as they passed her.

“Wait till Boyd gets back with the guards,” she heard Payton hiss out.

“Make sure of the young Dutchman fust!” Jeffreys answered. “You ’n’ me ken gag ’im an’ tie ’im in a jiffy. I know the room ’at ’e sleeps in.”

But Payton seemed averse to proceed in the absence of Boyd. He stopped at the door, looking back in the direction they had come from. “They must be here in a minute,” he whispered. “One or two of the guards can watch the Feds, and Boyd and Jones will soon return, and then we will be sure of our game.”

Jeffreys ripped out an oath of impatience, but acquiesced. As he looked about, surveying the surroundings by the light of the moon that now shone brightly, he detected the figure of a woman standing in the shadow of the building. Nudging his companion, he clutched his revolver, and moved slowly toward the dimly visible figure.

Silent as death stood Cressie, leaning closely to the wall. But when she saw him approach, and knew that he must recog-

nize her, she uttered a piercing scream that rang out loudly in the deep stillness of the night, and darted away with the swiftness of a frightened doe.

“Stand!” he shouted frantically after her, as he rushed forward in pursuit. “Stand, or I’ll send a bullet after ye, at’ll fetch ye!”

Cressie, however, was less afraid of his bullet than of falling into the power of the brutal overseer, and ran, as if her life depended on her speed.

For a moment it seemed as if the frightened girl would distance her pursuer. Her outcry had stirred up quite a commotion. Yahkop had heard it, and he rushed to the rescue. From a different direction Orlando Jones and Boyd sped toward the flying girl, followed by two of the Confederate guards, who had stowed away the Federals whom Jeffreys had betrayed to them in their sleep. Cressie had not, in her terror, noticed the two men running at her, and before Yahkop had reached the scene, Jones had suddenly grasped her by the arm, and in the next instant she was seized by Jeffreys, who held her in a vice-like grip.

“Aha!” he shouted, with a grin of diabolical triumph, “I’ve got ye at last, me sassy wench! Jist come ’long o’ me, Honey; I mean to freeze to yer, this time!”

Jeffreys was about to drag her to the woods, where they had left the Federal soldiers under guard of a Confederate sentinel, when Yahkop caught up with him.

“You let go dat lehdy!” he thundered out, at the same time hauling off with his mighty fist for a blow that would have effectually cooled down the kidnaper’s ardor, but for the interference of Jones and Boyd, both of whom grasped the teamster’s arm, and thus gave Jeffreys an opportunity to tear himself and the girl away, while the struggle between them and Yahkop raged fiercely.

But the girl’s desperation lent a strength to her limbs that effectually baffled him in his design of carrying her off, and before he had dragged her many steps, Captain Waldhorst

appeared on the scene. Having been awakened from his sleep by Cressie's scream, he leaped out of bed, struck a light, and donned his nether garments. Too eager to learn the cause of the strange outcry to take time to dress, he rushed out in shirt sleeves. Seeing the wrestling between Yahkop and his assailants, the Confederate soldiers approaching them, his first thought was to run back for his weapons. But recognizing the girl Cressie in her struggle with Jeffreys, he lost no time, but ran to her assistance at once.

Nellie May, on hearing Cressie's scream, had followed Yahkop for some distance. But when she saw Victor plunge out of the house, she shrank back, abashed by the thought of betraying her presence to him. Instinctively she sought a place to hide herself. But her interest in the development of the scene before her was too intense to permit her to lose sight of the actors for a single moment.

Victor, half clad as he was, rushed upon Jeffreys. "Let go that girl!" he commanded, using almost the same words that Yahkop had addressed to him. Jeffreys, holding on to the girl with his left hand, used his right arm to parry the blow that Victor aimed at his face. In the rough-and-tumble fight that ensued, Jeffreys was compelled to unhand Cressie. But even then he was no match for the vigorous young captain, notwithstanding the fierce passion that infuriated him. In a second he lay sprawling on the ground, and Victor, holding him by the throat, shouted to Cressie to run into the house.

From her hiding place, that served her as a point of observation, Nellie looked eagerly on. A thrill of admiration swelled her bosom as she witnessed the dexterity and ease with which his sinewy arm bore down his infuriated antagonist. But her exultation over Victor's prowess was speedily dispelled by intensest anxiety; for Payton, who had gone to meet the Confederate guards, returned, leading them to the assault on Victor. Again she remembered the words of the conspirators: "Make sure of the young captain first!" and they caused her heart to beat in dire apprehension. Their verification seemed

inevitable: three, — four to one was odds enough to make sure of any man, though armed to the teeth; and Victor had no weapon.

A ray of hope relieved for a brief moment the intensity of her fear. It was when she saw Woldemar Auf dem Busch emerge from the house, followed a moment later by his father. Cressie's cry had awakened them from their sleep. Woldemar had jumped out of bed, hurried on his clothing, snatched up his revolver, and dashed out of the house to ascertain the meaning of that outcry.

But she reflected that Woldemar was barely convalescent from his wound, and that his father was little better than an invalid. Of what avail would they be in a fierce fight? There was little of comfort in the reflection.

As soon as Jeffreys had quitted his hold of the girl, Victor called out to her to make good her escape, and released his discomfited opponent, who, as soon as he had regained his feet, again pursued Cressie, but did not reach her before Woldemar was at her side.

A sharp altercation ensued for a moment between Woldemar and Jeffreys, interrupted by the girl herself, who pointed toward Victor, now defending himself against the attack by the soldiers, and said, in accents of the deepest solicitude, "Oh, see, what they are doing with Master Waldhorst!"

"Take care of this fellow!" Woldemar shouted to his father, and ran to Victor's assistance.

Old Auf dem Busch, nothing loth, pointed his revolver at Jeffreys and said: "Quiet, now, my comrade! You have a blue uniform on; also I. So we will not fight. If you show me your hands, and reach not for your pistol, I shoot not. If you reach for your pistol, you are a dead man before you reach your pistol."

Jeffreys fumed and raged; but he saw cold determination in Auf dem Busch's eye, and made no attempt to draw his weapon.

Nellie, looking on with keenest anxiety, was horrified to see

another Confederate soldier emerge from the woods, and making straight for Yahkop, who was still wrestling with Jones and Boyd. She was sure, then, that the sturdy teamster could hold out no longer, and that Victor would be attacked by the united force of the enemy.

Nellie's soul was wrapped up in watching the fierce struggle. It escaped her notice that Cressie had darted away toward the woods, and that Jeffreys was only prevented from running after by *Auf dem Busch's* ready revolver. It was Victor that concentrated her attention. He was fighting with the fearlessness of a lion, keeping his assailants at bay with mighty blows to the right and left. The strength displayed by his muscular arms amazed her, while the lightning-like rapidity and easy grace of his motions compelled her admiration. His valor kindled a glowing enthusiasm in her wildly beating heart: for the man that was holding his own against such heavy odds was the man that had conquered her love.

What a contrast between him and her Southern beau! A hot blush of shame she felt on recalling that a few brief hours before she had idealized the latter into the "conquering hero" of her dreams, — him, who stood there, at a safe distance beyond the reach of Victor's brawny arms, cavalierly baiting his subordinates to the attack. She shuddered at the thought how near she had come to give her life into the keeping of this sham hero.

But it is not a time to indulge in reflection. The report of fire-arms rings out — two pistol shots in quick succession. Jeffreys has broken and run; for there is Cressie, returning from the wood, followed by the two Federal guards, whom she has freed from their fetters. *Auf dem Busch* has fired and missed; but a bullet from *Woldemar's* revolver, who has turned upon seeing his father in danger, takes fatal effect. At this moment, when *Woldemar's* back is turned, *Payton* suddenly covers Victor with his revolver and calls out to the guards: "Make sure of him now!" This rouses Nellie to the highest pitch of excitement. Forgetting all else in the intensity of her

fear for Victor's life, she rushes forth into the midst of the combatants, uttering, in a voice blending ineffable tenderness with the anguish of alarm, the single cry :

“ Victor ! ”

The sudden apparition causes awe and consternation. Payton lowers his pistol, and gazes in mute astonishment. Even the guards are startled, and for a moment stand inactive, while Jones and Boyd, who have approached, stand agog.

But on Victor that cry has a magical effect. He, too, gazes for a moment in bewilderment. He is utterly at a loss to comprehend the meaning of Nellie's presence. Then suddenly the thought flashes into his mind, that Nellie must have been advised of the contemplated midnight attack, and has come to save him ! The deathly pallor of her face, the look of energetic defiance with which she rushed between him and his assailants, is compatible with no other theory, than that she is there for his sake — that she loves him !

For a second the too sudden revelation dazes him with its dazzling brightness. But as he realizes the truth, every fiber of his body thrills with ecstatic joy. There is no time for words ; for one of the Confederate guards, taking advantage of his bewilderment, rushes in upon him. Nellie has seen the motion, and would have thrown herself in the way of the threatened blow, but that Victor, electrified by the sight of Nellie's peril, springs upon his assailant with the vigor of an infuriated tiger.

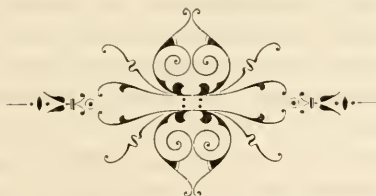
The melee has now become general, but is ended by the appearance of the two Federal guards, whom Cressie has released, and who, with the aid of Yahkop and the two Auf dem Busches, quickly overpower the Confederates. Jones is the first to seek safety for himself in flight. Boyd, in terrible wrath over his defeat, follows ; and Payton slinks away, cowed and deeply mortified to witness Victor's triumph.

Victor, as soon as he finds time to breathe, looks about for Nellie, whom he longs to embrace. She is in deep conversation with Yahkop. He is horrified to find himself in his shirt-

sleeves, and runs hastily into the house to complete his toilet. As he passes Woldemar, he is a little surprised to see the redoubtable warrior actually bend his knees before the slave girl, who looks deeply distressed, and is evidently trying to disengage her hand from his grasp. But he passes on, his heart beating violently in anticipation of his meeting with Nellie.

He finishes dressing in a wonderfully short time. But when he reappears, he finds no Nellie; and Yahkop and Cressie have disappeared as well.

To his eager questioning, Woldemar makes answer, with a sad smile, "Yes; she is gone. And she has taken Cressie with her!"



GLIMPSES OF WAR.

MAY MEADOWS is gay with military pageantry. General Ciper and staff made it their headquarters while the army under his command are marching through Brookfield in pursuit of the Federals, who have a full day's march the start of them. Now has come the long looked for opportunity for Leslie May and his company of volunteers to join the army of the Southern Confederacy. The general has graciously consented to review the eager recruits. It is a proud day for the young captain, as in realization of his ardent ambition he finds himself in command of as gallant a body of young patriots as ever swore allegiance to the Confederate States of America.

It is a proud day, too, for his sister Nellie as she gazes, with adoring eyes, upon her brother, who is gravely marching at the head of that band of chosen heroes. She notes the hearty good will and confidence beaming upon him from the faces of subordinates; nor do the approving glances of the reviewing officers escape her observing eye. Leslie May is the center attracting all eyes.

Not less proud a day is it for the patriotic belles of Brookfield, assembled there to do honor to the young aspirants for military fame, and to feast their eyes upon the martial spectacle presented by the soldiers in their natty gray uniforms, marching, countermarching and deploying before them, their bayonets glittering in the bright October sun. Right well do these deserve the praises lavished upon them by the officers of General Ciper's staff for their soldier-like bearing and their veteran proficiency in drill. But appreciation more precious smiles upon them from the ruby lips and sparkling eyes of

that galaxy of beauty, arrayed, in honor of the occasion, in the colors of the new republic. They make a charming picture in their robes of white, relieved by scarfs of brilliant crimson.

For the ladies of Brookfield have not been idle while its young men were assiduously striving, by dint of constant drill to acquire the rudimentary accomplishments of soldiers. They have, with their own cunning fingers, embroidered a beautiful banner in red, white and red, — the colors ordained by the Confederate Congress to be the symbol of the new nation; transmuting the stars and stripes of the old flag into the stars and bars of the new. If any there be, who look upon the transmutation as puerile plagiarism, or as a sacrilegious mutilation of the time-honored star-spangled banner, there are certainly none here at May Meadows on this sunny October afternoon, who permit such scruples to dim their jubilant mood. The fair artificers, at any rate, take commendable pride in their handiwork, and in their enthusiastic patriotism it is glorified into a work of fine art. Their faces are wreathed in radiant smiles, and eager in expectation of the things to come.

For Nellie May, as was her due in consideration of the leading part she has taken in the enterprise, has been deputed as spokeswoman for the presentation.

At the appointed time the young captain draws up his company into a semi-circle facing the reviewing officers and flanking the line of the white-robed ladies arrayed on either side of them. Nellie stands in front, steadying with her left hand the pole upon which the flag is furled, and raises her right hand as a signal for silence. In a moment all eyes are focused on the fair speaker.

“Soldiers!” rings out, in a musical, bell-like voice that thrills the men addressed. “The women of Brookfield hail in you the champions of our country’s cause, the defenders of our honor, and the protectors of our homes. We are here to tender you a pledge of our firm faith in your steadfast loyalty

and gallantry. We entrust to your keeping our country's sacred banner — the glorious emblem of the Confederate States of America, destined, we firmly believe, to take a high place among the nations of the earth. To this our hope we have given emblematic expression on this banner; each one of us has, with her own hand, embossed upon it the sentiment of her own heart. In presenting to you the colors of your country, we also invest you with our own colors, — each one of us to each one of you — and dub you our doughty knights in the struggle for our independence and liberty. Look upon this banner, as I unfurl it to the breeze, and let it ever remind you, that you are our, as you are your country's, hope! ”

Suiting the action to the word, she draws away the cord that holds the folds of the flag; then, swinging it gracefully to and fro, she displays the suggestive symbol — a crimson anchor in the middle white bar, enwreathed by the legend

“ IN GOD WE TRUST, AND IN OUR BROOKFIELD BOYS! ”

Her words have been listened to in deep silence. But now, at a signal from Captain May, the color guard advances amid the lively rattle of drums and the martial piping of fifes playing “ Dixie; ” a flush of exultation tinges her cheeks as she surrenders the banner into the keeping of its new custodian. Her eyes, shining with the subdued fire of reverential enthusiasm, are fixed upon the fluttering flag, while the general and his officers raise and lower their swords in salutation, the company present arms, and from the lookers-on, of whom a goodly crowd had collected at May Meadows to-day, a frantic shout of applause goes up. There is shaking of hands, tossing up of caps, and vociferous shouting and hurraing.

In the evening May Meadows presents a desolate appearance. The gay multitude that had enlivened it, has vanished. General Ciper and his staff have followed the army; the newly enrolled company have marched with it. Its gallant captain, inspired with patriotic ambition, had taken leave of home and friends in buoyant spirits. Leslie's mother, like a

loyal Southern matron, had dismissed her son with the injunction to come back to her a general, or at least a colonel. His sister Nellie had borne up bravely as she kissed him good-bye, masking her heart ache with a bright smile. Colonel Mayalone—although he, too, tried hard to put on a cheerful face, looked sober as he pressed his son's hand, and said, in a sober voice, " God bless you, my son! "

And so the Confederate army has marched through Brookfield in determined pursuit of the enemy, leaving the town deserted and lonely. So many of its young men have gone off to the war, — some with the Confederates, some with the Federals — that their absence left a noticeable void.

At May Meadows there were not so many visitors now. Nellie found leisure to devote herself to gentle ministrations to her father, for the brief space before his and her mother's departure for Richmond, and, now and then, for indulgence in self-communings. Not but that the visitors who did come were entertained in her usual sprightly manner, exhibiting unabated enthusiasm in the Southern cause, and abiding faith in its triumphant vindication. But when no visitors were present she found a strange fascination in the talks with her father; instead of the spirited and hopeful mood she displayed in the drawing-room, she listened soberly to his speculations upon the possibilities attending the success of the Southern arms, and the terms upon which the new Union was to be built up, — mightier, far, and more glorious than the old: for it would be cemented with the blood of the best and the bravest of both the North and the South. And Nellie learned, with a patience begotten of the new faith in her father's wisdom, that he had never, from the beginning, believed that the civil war would result in the establishment of a new nation, or even in a permanent new government; but that he looked upon it as simply the determined effort of the South to compel from the North such guaranties, in the negotiations of the peace to be conquered, as would secure their rights. She learned, too, that he realized the fearful price the nation was paying for the

experiment, and how sadly uncertain was the outcome. No wise man was there to presage, no prophet to foretell the end, save as faith in the justice of their cause turned hope into certainty in the breasts of the thousands and hundreds of thousands who staked their lives and fortunes, and the fortunes of those dear to them, upon the issue, — strong, every one of them, in the conviction, that their side was right and must win.

Reflections of this kind recalled to Nellie the parting words that General Seele had spoken that day on his farewell visit. She dwelt upon them with a new, if unconscious, toleration, resulting from a dawning doubt, whether the appeal to arms to settle the quarrel between the North and South had been an imperative necessity, or even a serious duty. “That men,” he had said, in tones of sincere sorrow, “having a common aim, and inspired by the most exalted of motives, should stand arrayed against each other in combat!” — And, strangest of all the novel experiences of those days, she took real comfort in remembering the serene confidence with which he had announced, as an indubitable truth, that, whichever side should win, it would be the triumph of RIGHT and JUSTICE. The tender regret expressed by him for her disappointment, if the God of Battles should smile on his side, which at the time had seemed an empty phrase, assumed to her a new meaning, affording a glimpse of something higher than even victory in battle. If the South conquered — and oh, it must, it will! for surely it is in the right! — then all these earnest, misguided men, who are fighting for the North, will see that they are wrong! It is easy for her to understand that the *Auf dem Busches*, and General Seele, even, are in the wrong, because they do not understand the subject of slavery at the bottom of the quarrel. But Victor, whom she knows to be at one with the South on the slavery question, — at one, in fact, with all of her father’s political views, save this one of secession — will he see the error of his course? Will he accept at the hands of the relentless war-god the utter demolition of the granite

edifice of his conviction, hailing the havoc of his faith as the vindication of Justice and Right?

She begins to find it a bewildering problem, this question of the right and wrong of the rebellion. She shrinks from attempting the solution, for on either alternative cruel disappointment and humiliation attend. Whatever of glory and exultation victory may afford is conditioned upon the bitterness of shame and defeat to the vanquished.

And now her parents have left for Richmond. It has been a sadder parting between father and daughter than either of them have before experienced. All the more trying to Nellie, because she has so well guarded her secret. Her father has been reconciled easily enough with the peremptory rejection of her lover's suit. He has even lauded the wisdom of her decision. "For," he remarked, "he who turns a deaf ear to the call of his country will have but small regard for duty to his family." Her mother, she knows well, is grievously offended, and will never forgive her for wantonly declining an alliance with one of the very oldest families of Virginia.

Harder has it been to hide from the loving solicitude of her father the master-passion, which had furnished her the criterion before which Ralph Payton's showy figure sank into insignificance. But she has succeeded. Neither her mother, who would scout the idea of her daughter's possible marriage into a family of German emigrants, nor her father, suspects that her regard for Victor Waldhorst is other than gratitude for his standing between her brother and an ignominious death, or perhaps a lingering interest in one who had been patronized and befriended in his youth by the whole family.

She is sole mistress, now, at May Meadows, and settles down to this new phase of her life. Her father had secured the services of a trusty man as overseer, who keeps the negroes to the out-door work, while she, with the faithful assistance of Cressie, manages the household, much, indeed, as she had done before her mother's absence. Her duties keep her fairly busy; still, she finds time to think often and anx-

iously of her absent ones. Of her father, in the far-off capital of the young republic: she thinks of him as a leading spirit in President Davis's cabinet; and she wonders, how it is, that she feels so little enthusiasm over the distinguished honor that has thus come to him.

But her sisterly heart swells with pride when her thoughts recur to her brother Leslie. He is ever present to her as the gallant soldier he looked that day when he marched Brookfield's contingent to the Southern armies in review before the commanding general. Her vivid imagination always pictures him in the thick of battle, leading his gallant Brookfield boys on to victory and glory. The romantic halo she weaves around him is dimmed, however, at least temporarily, on receipt of short messages from him, — mere notes jotted down on the march or in camp, informing her of the whereabouts of the army, and also of his impatience over the Fabian policy of General Ciper, which condemns the eager soldiers to utter inaction, save by marching and countermarching, and, as he disrespectfully terms it, "dodging the enemy." There has been no decisive engagement since the army have left Brookfield, nor is there prospect of any in the near future. Nellie sympathizes with him in his disappointment, and hopes for better news soon.

From Leslie her thoughts glide naturally to Victor, as, indeed, they do from almost any subject; and never without stirring the depths of her soul. She remembers him, at times as the gentle lover, laying at her feet his loyal, faithful heart. And with that memory comes another: how, in her wanton ignorance, she has spurned the priceless treasure, and brings even now the blush of shame to her cheek. And again he stands before her mental vision as he stood that day in the committee room of the capitol, immovable as the eternal rocks amid the seductive billows of temptation, revealing to her wondering gaze the grandeur of a man whose will is mightier than the mightiest allurements of passion. To the admiration of his courage is joined deep gratitude as she sees him, in memory,

boldly confronting that frowning tribunal, mighty in its power over life and death of the accused. His voice still rings in her ear, pleading her brother's cause with an earnestness that lends eloquence to his words and carries conviction to unprejudiced judges. The memory of his flashing eyes and stern face, as he hurls defiance and scathing rebuke at the tyrannic colonel, still quickens her pulses with exultant triumph, and she never wearies of recalling to her thoughts Victor's glowing vindication of Right against despotic Might.

But sweetest of all her meditations is the reflection, chasing the blood through her veins in thrills of rapture, that as the sovereign queen of his adoration she has no rival in Victor's heart. She knows, that he is hers, and that she is his, forevermore. What though a Southern woman can never wed with her country's enemy? What though he know her to be a rebel and a traitress? In their souls they are one! Of this she is sure, albeit cruel fate decree them to live separate lives. Is it not enough that his love is hers? And does she not exult in her own love as the crowning glory of her womanhood? Thus she rejoices, and looks back with pitying contempt upon the girl that could soberly contemplate a life-long union with a — Ralph Payton!

The days pass, and grow into weeks, and the weeks into months; and Nellie hears little of parents or brother. Communication with Richmond has become difficult; the post-office no longer mediates between the belligerent countries. From Leslie, brief missives reach her at long intervals, bringing little of comfort. Stripped of the sportive garb in which he serves up such news as he finds to communicate, they tell always the same story of wearying delay, — marching, maneuvering, and wonderful success in eluding the enemy — never an action to satisfy his aspiring ambition. His grim jokes upon the inscrutable ways of Confederate strategy are due to his blissful ignorance of the knowledge which General Ciper possesses of the overwhelming forces at the disposition of the Federal generals, sufficient to annihilate General Ciper's corps,

were he rashly to offer battle. He cannot afford to gratify the eager demands of such hotheads as Leslie May, and thousands like him, for he, brave and undaunted by the danger confronting him, seeks success rather than glory at the cost of the cause he is serving. But Nellie sympathizes with her brother, and hopes for better news soon.

Although no battles of decisive importance are being fought, it is not to be supposed that the State is to escape the calamities inseparable from civil war. Brookfield is a rather important strategic point, and as such is occupied in turn by Federals and Confederates. The Union troops are well supplied, usually with the salt meat and hard tack provided by the commissary department of the army; but gladly accept contributions of fresher provisions from the loyal people of the town and surrounding country (mostly women, now, so many of the men having themselves become soldiers): Nor are they at all backward to help themselves if voluntary offerings, in their opinion, come too slowly. The commissariat of the Confederates is not, in the border States, so thoroughly organized, as to relieve even their regular troops of the necessity of collecting supplies from the inhabitants of the country through which they pass, — by impressment from those friendly inclined, with promise of compensation in the future; without such promise, by right of the strong arm, from those suspected of sympathy with the Federals. Nor is there immunity from the plundering tramps, roughs and marauders that follow in the wake of armies, and commit ravage and spoliation on their own account.

May Meadows is not exempt from the common fate of Brookfield in this particular. Whether the town is occupied by friend or foe, the raids on Nellie's larder, as well as on the corn cribs and warehouses, are equally damaging. Nor are the stables safe from prying quartermasters, who ruthlessly impress Colonel May's thoroughbreds for the Confederate service, to the great disgust of the faithful overseer, who is ambitious to maintain the reputation of May Meadows for the superiority of its live stock. But Nellie chides his impatience and calls it lack

of patriotism to grudge what little aid they can bring to the Southern cause. "And do you see," she smilingly consoles her trusty assistant, "that for each of the animals carried off there will be one voracious mouth the less to feed from a stock of provender that is growing distressingly scant?"

Of the two newspapers which Brookfield once boasted, one only now survives. The *Brookfield Standard* has succumbed to the pressure of the times. Mr. Farmer, its Yankee editor, has suspended its publication and joined the Union army, rather than to witness its death from inanition. The *Ozark Argus*, however, ekes out a precarious existence. He keeps his hundred eyes wide open for what is, or might be, happening at the theater of war. Mr. Huffard is now, in very truth, the factotum of his printing office, uniting in his own person the capacity of editor, proprietor, compositor and pressman, with his little son for a devil to ink the forms at the press. His list of Southern exchanges has dwindled into a very small compass; but the equally small number of subscribers that remain never want for stirring accounts of battles fought and victories achieved by the Southern armies. It is this feature of the *Ozark Argus* that secures Nellie's attentive perusal. It furnishes to her the chief source of information of what is going on in the world. To it she turns with ever new hope of finding therein the announcement of the final success of the Confederacy and of the expulsion from the sacred soil of Virginia of all its ruthless invaders. For Mr. Huffard is indefatigable in extolling the invincible prowess of the Southern troops, and the Napoleonic genius of their generals. According to him the world has never seen such brilliant achievements on the field of glory. It has become a certainty that France can no longer withhold her recognition of the Confederate States of America as an independent nation; and England, impatient of the blockade of the Southern ports, is going to take a hand in that game herself. It is now, indeed, a question of days only, or of weeks at the outside, when the Union forces will be vanquished, and the tyrant Lincoln laid low.

But again the days pass, and grow into weeks and months; and the end is not yet.

One dreary Saturday afternoon the wind was moaning dismally and dashing pattering rain-drops in fitful gusts against the window panes, and Nellie waited for the paper, for which she had sent Xerxes to the printing office. She was hungry for news from General Ciper's army; for the *Ozark Argus* had for some weeks been entirely silent on the subject, nor had Leslie sent the slightest token of his being still alive. She watched with some anxiety, growing impatient as Xerxes, on his return, went into the kitchen, instead of bringing his news directly to her. Just as she was about to call Cressie, that girl herself entered with smiling face, holding up not only the newspaper, but also two letters.

"What do I get for bringing good news?" she said showing the letters with a triumphant air.

"Good news?" Nellie asked. "How do you know there is good news?"

"Look at the post-marks," Cressie suggested. "They are both from the city."

"Why, so they are," Nellie exclaimed with brightening face. "One seems to be from Pauline Waldhorst —"

"And the other from Master Leslie," the octoroon broke in. "If master is in the city, I guess he has been to see Miss Pauline and her folks, and maybe —"

She did not complete the sentence, but blushed beneath the searching glance of her mistress' eyes, as she stood regarding her with a good-natured smile of amusement.

"Victor Waldhorst, do you mean?"

Cressie's answer was an affirmative nod of the head, while the color on her cheek deepened.

"That would indeed be good news, Cressie," said the mistress, smiling with affable condescension, and a touch, withal, of genuine sympathy. For great as was the disparity between the lowly bondwoman and her aristocratic mistress, yet in the sphere of woman's supreme aspiration they meet as equals.

Though separated by the whole realm of social distinction, in their love they stand on a common level.

When the mistress had first discovered Cressie's secret, she had smiled at what appeared to her a romantic infatuation, the tragic pathos of which appealed to her less strongly than did the absurdity of its utter hopelessness. But is not her own love as hopeless? Is the barrier of caste really much more formidable between the slave and the freeman than the gulf which the war has opened between the Southern maiden and the ruthless assailant of her country's rights?

And as she looks upon the blushing woman standing before her, her heart goes out to the loving octoroon in gentle sympathy. "Let us see," she said, in a tone so cordial as to send a thrill of joy to Cressie's heart, "how well you can guess. Shall I open Pauline's letter first?"

"Unless you are anxious about Master Leslie," Cressie suggested.

Nellie opened Pauline's letter, and read, pausing at times to impart to her servant such of the contents as she thought would interest her.

"Just listen to this!" she suddenly exclaimed, and read the following passage from Pauline's letter:

"We are beginning to feel the iron heel of war in very truth now. Our city is in a panic. The rebel army, they say, is marching upon us, threatening to take possession of the city, and if it is not surrendered to bombard it and set fire to it with red-hot cannon balls. Uncle says there is no danger, for that General Seele has been sent to meet them with an army twice as strong as theirs; and that at any rate there will be no fighting in or near the city. But I fear that he only wishes to conceal from us the real extent of the danger. For thousands of soldiers are busy in fortifying, — digging trenches, and throwing up what Uncle calls parapets all about the suburbs. They are building a fort just back of our house, not a hundred yards away. They have put the city under martial law, — sword-law, so Uncle explains, the entire government of the city being

in the hands of the military, under a provost marshal. Oh, Nellie, it is dreadful to think what may happen to us all! ”

Cressie listened with eager interest. As Nellie paused, she ventured to suggest: “ Is there nothing in the letter about her brother? ”

“ Very little, Cressie. Here is what she writes :

“ “ We see little of Victor these days. You know, I suppose, that Governor Rauhenfels has been succeeded by a regular elected governor, so both he and Victor have come back from the capital. The professor wears epaulettes, now, with golden fringes, and a silver star on each shoulder strap. That makes him a general, does it not? But, though he pooh-poohs all titles, I suspect that he dearly loves to be styled governor, and so we will keep calling him so. He has appointed brother Victor for his aid-de-camp, and breveted him Major — ”

“ Major Waldhorst! ” Nellie interrupted herself with a pleased expression. “ That sounds musical, does it not, Cressie? ”

“ It would sound very pleasant to him, if he heard you say it,” the slave girl, thus appealed to, replied. “ And so he ranks Master Leslie, now? ”

“ Only by brevet,” the mistress answered. “ But when I was in England, a young officer, who had just been appointed aid-de-camp to an English general, took pains to inform me, that the appointment carried with it the full rank of colonel. So I suppose, Cressie, that we might promote him to a coloneley. And then how would his title sound? ”

“ Colonel Waldhorst, Ma’am! ” Cressie repeated, as if announcing a welcome visitor. And after a sportive courtesy she added: “ But is there nothing more in the letter about — Colonel Waldhorst? ”

“ Yes, just this: ” Nellie said, and continued to read :

“ “ The governor and Victor dined with us last Sunday; and it was a treat to see two such distinguished looking military magnates at our table. For Victor, too, is greatly improved in looks by his new major’s uniform, with the tassels of gold

bullion on his shoulders and the full beard he is now growing. They had a lively discussion about war matters. I felt greatly relieved to learn from them that the war would soon be over, for that General Ciper and his army could not possibly escape without a crushing defeat, and that General Grant was sure to take Richmond, and the Confederacy must collapse. And oh, Nellie! General Rauhenfels is going to take part in the attack on General Ciper, and Victor is his aid-de-camp. They are both to leave 'for the front,' or have already left as I am writing this. And if Mr. May (your brother, I mean) is with General Ciper, as I am almost sure he is, then he and Victor may meet on the battle-field! Is it not horrible to think of? Your brother is so brave, so fearless, so fiery; and Victor, whatever you may think of him, is no coward either —'

"Coward, indeed!" exclaimed Nellie, interrupting herself and casting upon Cressie a glance of proud exultation, "if Lincoln's armies were composed of such cowards as he, there would never, I fear, be a Southern Confederacy!"

In picking up the letter for further perusal, her eye chanced to fall upon the date on the last page. "Why, Cressie," she remarked, in evident surprise, "this letter has been on its way from the city for more than two weeks! The battle, that Pauline dreaded so much, must have taken place days ago." Then she looked at the letter from Leslie. "See," she said, "this letter is five days younger."

Eagerly opening it, she was soon devouring the contents, forgetful of Cressie's presence, and of all her surroundings. Cressie observed the expression of her face as she read, — pleasant, at first, evidently enjoying her brother's playful banter; growing serious, then, and finally betraying anxious alarm.

"ADORABLE SISSY :

You are anxiously waiting for news, I dare say. Well for once I am able to furnish you with food for gossip to do you some days. At last fortune has favored me with the glory for

which I have so long thirsted. It has come to me thick and heavy. You may now look up to your bigger, older, and I trust, wiser brother, as one of the immortal heroes of this our second, infinitely grander war of independence, whose name is destined to go down to posterity on the muster roll of a backwoods rebel company.

I don't mean to waste my eloquence to try and prove to you what a glorious war this is. We have explained that to each other long ago. We have doubled our fists, you and I, and dared Uncle Sam to make himself ridiculous by attempting to coerce us fiery Southerners into tame subjection to Northern tyranny. We used to glory in the prospect of driving the Northern invaders from our sacred soil, and how superbly you used to turn up your nose at mention of the Yankee mudsills! And I — well, you know how I thirsted and panted for just a dash at the brutal invaders of our beloved State, when our Ciperian Cunctator zig-zagged us through marshes and forests, wearing out our patience and our army shoes, like Moses leading the Lord's chosen people through the wilderness.

But the day came at last, — the day of glory, glorious!

I was beginning to fear, that our Cunctator meant to turn the war into a game of hide and seek, at which we were fast becoming experts, when one day as we were marching through a valley of moderate width, and considerable length, inclosed on both sides by gently rising, densely wooded ridges, our buglers sounded the signal to halt. Halt! What could that mean in our situation, with General Seele but an hour or two's march behind us, with the pick of the Union forces twice our number? It was almost too good to believe — it must be, that General Ciper meant to strike at last, and to give us a sight of the enemy from the front. But so it turned out. Quick as thought came a perfect shower of orders. Our troops were posted on both sides of the road, concealed from the side on which the Feds were approaching, more than one-half the army placed in ambush behind the hills, so that in an incredibly short space of time our whole force must have been as in-

visible from the road, as if it had disappeared from the face of the earth. Our batteries, effectually masked by the dense foliage, commanded both sides of the road for more than a mile back, exposing the enemy, should they approach from our rear, to a sweeping crossfire on both flanks. If old Ciper meant fight, he had certainly chosen the spot for the sport to come off with consummate skill. In my enthusiasm I saw no possibility for the Yanks to escape complete annihilation.

Mars and Minerva! But it was a moment to lash the blood into fever heat! I felt elated, inspired, intoxicated with glory in anticipation of the victory we were going to achieve. Now we would teach them that we knew a thing or two about fighting, besides zig-zagging and dodging!

The suspense for the next few minutes after we had taken our positions, while waiting for the approach of the enemy, was simply terrific. The burning question was, would the Federals discover our ambush in time to avoid the cross-fire of our artillery? Surely it would be the sheerest recklessness and unparalleled imprudence for them to defile into the valley without advancing scouts to reconnoitre. And this it seemed was precisely what they were doing. They were walking blindly into the trap set for them by our crafty commander. Their foolhardiness is explainable only on the ground, that our wonderful success in dodging them up to this time had convinced them that we were neither willing nor able to fight them at all.

The excitement on our side was in no wise abated when their vanguard appeared in sight and came within range of our guns. First, a strong detachment of cavalry, marching in massed column; then the glittering bayonets of serried ranks of infantry became visible, which in turn were succeeded by a long train of artillery. Our gunners sighted their pieces, and eagerly awaited the command to fire.

The moment the signal was given, a dull red flash along the line of our batteries preceded the terrific roar of a hundred cannon pouring death and destruction into the ranks of the unwary Yankees, and a dense volume of smoke hid them for

a time from our view, so that we could not see what execution our fire had done. As the smoke cleared away a scene of wonderful transformation met our view. By a series of military evolutions, the coolness, rapidity and precision of which challenged our admiration, notwithstanding their deadly significance to us, the marching columns of the Yankee troops had been formed in line of battle and a squadron of cavalry, as well as several companies of infantry, were rapidly advancing upon us. This meant work for our company, which had been assigned to the honorable post of defending the foremost batteries against cavalry or infantry attack. For it was evident that the advancing troops were skirmishers detailed to silence our batteries. I fairly trembled with eager excitement; for I felt as if the glory of a lifetime was concentrated in the next few moments. As yet the assailants were within the sweep of our guns, and I noted with savage joy the terrific havoc wrought among them by the iron hailstorm they had to face. But on they rushed, filling the gaps cut in their ranks by our murderous artillery fire as coolly and promptly as if in drill on the parade ground. Presently they reached the foot of the hill on which our artillery was planted, and were safe from the fire of our cannon. In a minute or two they would reach the gunners. Then without waiting for orders from my superiors, I rushed on, sword in hand, calling on my brave Brookfield boys to follow. With a deafening yell we stormed down the hill. If you had seen us, Nell, rushing on toward the enemy, with the increasing momentum of an avalanche, — I in the lead with waving sword on high, my gallant company with bayonet leveled — you would have tilted high your nose in swelling pride over your Brookfield heroes.

Well, there is not much more to tell. At least not by me. But this let me tell you in brotherly confidence: The Yankees are the very devils to fight. For neither the violence of our onslaught, nor our terrific rebel yell (which by dint of diligent practice we had brought to hideous perfection) scared them one bit. Or if it did, the cusses wouldn't let on. They

coolly leveled their muskets, and before we reached them, a flash of light and a little puff of smoke issued from each. The next instant a shower of bullets was singing over our heads. The sound electrified us; we broke into a run. A second volley, fired by the rear rank, was better aimed: It decimated our company!

“Give it to them!” I cried, waving high my sword. “Let us take revenge! Revenge for our fallen comrades!”

It gave me grim satisfaction to note, that we were no longer alone in our dash against the onstorming enemy. A company or two of our brave Arkansas troops — known to us as excellent sharpshooters, every one of them — rushed to our support, uttering that shrill yell, which just now sounded like music in our ears.

It was at that moment that glory came to me in drastic garb. As I ran, a stinging sensation in my right shoulder caused me to drop my sword; a second later I felt a sharp twinge in my left knee, and wondered why, without volition on my part, I suddenly lurched forward, instead of stopping to pick up my sword —

This is all that I remember of my first battle.

When I recovered consciousness the sun had gone down, and the din of battle had ceased. Some one was removing my cravat and shirt collar. The firm, yet gentle, touch of his hands, as he laid bare the wound on my shoulder, convinced me that I was in the hands of a surgeon.

“I wonder, whether this young fellow has blood enough left to stand transportation?” I heard him say to his assistant. “His hurt is not so bad; but he seems to have bled pretty freely.”

I attempted to rise.

“Lie still, sir!” he commanded, in a firm, though not unsympathetic voice.

I gladly complied; not so much in obedience to his behest, as because of excessive weakness and the pain which the slightest attempt to move caused me in my wounded knee.

He must have noticed my exhaustion, for he pulled from his breast pocket a flask and held it to my lips. "Drink!" he commanded. "A hearty swig of this elixir will make you smack your lips and put new life into you."

I begged for water, for I was burning with a feverish thirst. "Of course you shall have water," he said, cheerily. "You don't suppose I would give you a dram — though it be this finest specimen of old rye that ever put spirits into a famishing man — without water to wash it down? But drink it first, and then your stomach will take more kindly to the water."

He was right. I took a copious draught, which infused a generous warmth through my chilled body, and together with the water from his canteen, relieved my thirst. I felt like a new man, and now demanded how the battle had gone.

I need not repeat to you, what you have long since learned from other sources. We had been beaten. I could not understand why, or how. And now two wounds and confinement in a prison represent the glory I have personally achieved in this war. And so, you see, I have new and drastic proofs how glorious a war it is!

The men that found me treated me kindly enough — much more so than I expected, or had any right to expect at the hands of a victorious enemy; but I don't mind confessing to you that the news upset me. I submitted with what grace I could muster. Doctor Behr dressed my wounds; and then they put me into an ambulance and hauled me an interminable distance to the city, where they landed me at a hospital filled with hundreds of Federal wounded, — for the battle had been a bloody one, the wounded on both sides numbering by thousands. Oddly enough, they call this place a college, — McDonald's College — and it served as a prison, until the arrival of so many damaged heroes from the sanguinary fields of glory made it necessary to turn it into a hospital for their accommodation. I believe I am the only rebel soldier here: but there are a number of former inmates left, — political prisoners, who

are immured, not for anything they had done, but for fear of what they might do! Among them is an odd genius, whom they call by the name the prison bears, Doctor McDonald; a surgeon, who is very popular among the patients, though as crabbed as an unripe persimmon, and a rebel to the core. He has taken quite a fancy to me. He is treating my wounds, and I am doing very well, — so well, that I hope I may soon be exchanged for an able-bodied Federal, and put in the way of being treated to another dose of glory.”

Nellie dropped the letter in her lap, and folded her hands, looking straight before her in deep thought. Cressie, seeing her mistress in distress, asked her in a voice of anxious sympathy, whether her master was in trouble.

“Oh, Cressie,” Nellie broke out, the tears gathering in her eyes, “your master is wounded, and a prisoner! And I must visit him. You must help me get ready. Do you think you can manage, so that I can get off?”



XLIV.

A REBEL DOCTOR.



McDONALD'S COLLEGE was a curious specimen of ante-bellum metropolitan architecture. Boldly circular in its outline, supporting upon a wall of unbewn limestone, laid in rubble-range, a hemispherical, dome-shaped roof, crowned, in turn, by a semi-elliptical cupola resting on six slender columns, it challenged attention from afar. The main building was connected by an arched passage way with a tall, narrow side building, which, to a beholder not entirely void of imagination, might suggest a minaret along with its mosque. Its daring architectural style was not, however, its chief claim upon public notice. Its founder and owner, Doctor McDonald, was famed, even beyond the limits of his State, for his surgical skill and profound learning. His colleagues admired, envied, hated him. Hated him because of the relentless war he waged against what he called the antiquated superstitions of the medical profession. For he denounced blood-letting by venesection as a cruel assault on the vitality of a patient, destroying just so much of nature's recuperative energy. The use of lint in the treatment of wounds and sores, he combated, designating it as the most mischievous propagator of infectious diseases. So he regarded the withholding of cold water from thirsty fever patients, and of fresh air from the sick-room of languishing sufferers, as wanton barbarity, thwarting, rather than assisting, nature in her healing process. Such and similar "learned stupidities," as he termed them, he combated with persistency and vigorous zeal; and McDonald's College owed its existence to the philanthropic purpose of founding a medical school for the tuition of the science upon a rational basis. He meant to place the

tuition fee at a low figure, so as to induce as many students as he could to attend, or even in case of necessity, to open the college for free attendance. His ample income from a lucrative practice enabled him to indulge so charitable a hobby.

The public at large took little interest in the medical quarrels with the doctors, but all the more in a rumor that had gained currency in relation to the cadavers which he was supposed to furnish to his students in the dissecting room. It was said that he required a fresh subject to be delivered at the college every night or two. This was not pleasant news to the dwellers in the neighborhood; but the rumor, in spreading to wider circles, had taken on a more serious aspect. It was whispered about, and finally boldly asserted, that for the want of corpses, and for the furthering of anatomical studies, living subjects were sometimes captured by the doctor's emissaries, and taken to the dissecting room for experimental vivisection. The very absurdity of such assertions gave them extensive circulation. The doctor's well-known character as a man of iron nerve and sovereign contempt for the opinion of the public, his very devotion to the cause of medical reform, as well as his numerous eccentricities, gave color, in the minds of even well-educated people, to the theory that he would not scruple to sacrifice individuals for the benefit of the human race in general. No wonder, then, that timid people hesitated to venture alone, in the night time, into the neighborhood of the college, and gave it a wide birth even by day.

At the breaking out of the rebellion the doctor's pronounced partisanship in the Southern cause furnished new food for gossip; public rumor was so busy with the fantastic and quixotic plans for destroying the Union armies ascribed to him, that the horrors of the dissecting room were gradually forgotten.

Doctor McDonald was a fierce and fearless rebel. He laughed to scorn the idea of coercing a sovereign State to remain a member of the Union that had become distasteful to its people. The employment of military force to that end he

pooh-pooed as a ridiculous and wicked farce. "A million of Dutch hirelings and mercenary Yankee abolitionists," he prophesied, "will run before the freemen of a single Southern State when rising in her majesty to vindicate their liberty and independence." The taking of Camp Jefferson he stigmatized as a dastardly outrage, and for the military governor he had no name but that of Dutch Dictator, although a personal friend of Professor Rauhenfels. He gave loud-mouthed utterance to his hatred of President Lincoln, whom he persistently called a usurper of tyrannical power, and an enemy of the American people.

It was not strange, under these circumstances, that Doctor McDonald was lionized by the Southern sympathizers, and cordially hated by the loyal element of the population.

At first, this mutual animosity found vent in hard talk on either side; but when martial law had been proclaimed over the city, one of the first acts of the provost marshal had been to take possession of McDonald's College, and convert it into a prison for the incarceration of such of the notable rebels as were deemed dangerous to the government interests. And so it came about quite naturally that Doctor McDonald became one of the first inmates of the new Bastille, — a prisoner in his own castle; and he was there when, after that bloody battle, the prison was converted into a hospital, and when there was plenty of work for all the army surgeons, and for as many of the practitioners of the city as volunteered their services. Cordially as the doctor hated soldiers in the blue uniform, his professional instinct to serve suffering humanity got the better of his partisanship. Without asking questions or waiting for consent of the authorities, he fell to and rendered such effectual help as secured him the blessing and deep gratitude of patients and the hearty good will of his jailers. Many precious lives and limbs owed their preservation to his skill and unwearying devotion. Rough and pugnacious as was his general deportment, to the bedside of his patients he brought a manner as gentle and winning as that of a woman. His *bonhomie* was

irresistible. His simple presence gave cheer and confidence to the sufferers, who hailed his approach with undisguised pleasure, and felt the magnetism which he exerted over them as a soothing charm, even when painful operations demanded utmost fortitude and courage.

But tender as was the touch of his skillful hand, and cheery as sounded his voice, so long as the relation of doctor and patient lasted, he had no sympathy for the convalescents. Gruffly, even rudely, he repulsed any manifestation of gratitude or appreciation. "Have done!" he was heard to say on such an occasion. "I know well enough what a fool — aye, what a traitor I have been to my country, to patch you up as good as new, and send another able-bodied enemy in the field against us, instead of sending you to that warm place, where such villainous tools of a tyrant belong."

Among the patients that fell to his care was Leslie May. When he noted the gray uniform, his face brightened. "Hello!" he exclaimed, "who the devil got you into this rat-cage? Been a hotheaded fool and let them trap you while chasing an enemy? For I'll give the odds that you fight like a wild cat, and bet the drinks now, that your captors did not get away without carrying off a souvenir of your regard to remember you by."

The faint shadow of a smile crept into the captive's face as he answered. "Done!" he said. "You are not as good at guessing as you ought to be for a Yankee. I came with my captors as meekly as a lamb, nor crooked a finger to resist."

"Yankee be d—d!" the doctor exclaimed wrathfully. "Don't you call me a Yankee! No man shall do that with impunity, not even a brave Confederate officer, whom I would proudly shake by the hand. But you have fairly won the drinks, though I stand by it, that you fought valiantly before they took you. I am not often mistaken in judging faces. Now do me the honor to join me in a pledge to our better acquaintance!"

Producing from his breast pocket a flask, the top of which

he unscrewed, he used it as a small drinking cup. "These are rather primitive beakers," he said, filling the cup with an amber-colored liquid and handing it to the patient, while he raised the flask itself, ready to drink from it; "but the stuff in them deserves the name they gave it in old times: *Eau de vie!* It comes to us from that spirited, wide-a-wake nation, that, besides this fiery Cognac, has also invented the exhilarating, sparkling Champagne, in which to drown our crotchets and melancholy vagaries. Ah!" he added, stroking his stomach and half closing his eyes as if in a transport of bliss, "this is water of life indeed! This quickens the flagging spirits: this stirs the blood, and spurs the imagination to bolder flights! Sir, this is the best medicine I can prescribe for you; and you see that I am not, like most physicians, afraid to take it myself."

Leslie was, indeed, greatly invigorated by the generous potion administered by the doctor, and readily responded to the inquiries he made, while dressing Leslie's wounds. "This hurt on your knee," he said nonchalantly, "is going to give us some trouble. For a time to come it is going to make graceful waltzing a difficult task for you."

"Never mind," the patient replied, "if I can't dance myself, it will be my business to make the Yankees dance. Just get me on my legs again, and I'll show you what a genuine rebel can do, even with a stiff knee."

Doctor McDonald displayed an amiability toward his Confederate patient which went far to accelerate his convalescence. To all appearances his wounds were healing speedily, and Leslie hoped that he would soon be in condition to be exchanged, and to take a fresh start on the path to glory.

"A deucedly fine constitution," the doctor murmured to himself as he left his bedside. "Sound as a dollar in all the vitals; jolly as an Alabama piccaninny, and brave as Julius Caesar, I'll warrant. It would be a burning shame to let him catch this murderous gangrene that is going to make a pest-house out of my beautiful college inside of a week. What a lot

of d—d asses these military wiseacres show themselves, to cram five hundred poor devils into a place just big enough to comfortably lodge fifty, and expect them to get well! But that is none of my funeral. Let them kill off the d—d Yankees as fast as they please; it will save our boys in gray the trouble of shooting them in battle. But this young hero must be got out of their clutches. Zounds! It would be too bad to let him fall a victim to official asininity after escaping death on the battlefield. I must see what the Dutch Dictator can be got to do for him."

General Rauhenfels, whose command was stationed at the metropolis for the city's protection, was closeted with General Seele at the headquarters, when a message was handed him, marked "Private and Important." Eyeing the messenger for a moment, while opening the dispatch, he inquired: "Is the message from old Sawbones, the college doctor?"

Saluting deferentially, the messenger replied: "It is, Governor." For such was the title accorded to him, generally, in military circles.

"Are you to wait for an answer?"

"I have no order to such effect, Governor."

"Wait, anyhow, till I find out what the chronic grumbler is after."

The messenger touched his cap in token of obedience, and General Rauhenfels read the following note:

"MOST PUISSANT COMMANDER:

Noblesse oblige! Though no longer, thank God, an autocratic dictator, you still hold the city's destiny in the hollow of your hand; ergo, you are responsible for its behavior. Now, I want to apprise you of a wholesale murder in contemplation — no, not in contemplation, for asses do not contemplate — but in prospect. The victims are to be those pitiable tools of the Lincoln tyranny, who hire out as targets for our Southern soldiers to shoot at. They have escaped with their lives, — some of them with their limbs, too, — from the encounter with our soldiers, to be condemned to a surer death

at the hands of their own asinine superiors, who invite gangrene into an overcrowded hospital. *Gangrene*, I tell you! Do you know what that means? And all on account of the stupidity of the asses in authority, among which you may reckon yourself, or not, as the case may be. And now, I wash my fingers of the affair. I ought not, perhaps, to interfere with the killing off of a hundred or two of the d—d abolitionists; but it goes against my grain to see a herd of bullet-riddled cripples sacrificed to the brutal stupidity of supercilious military magnates.

But this *en passant*. What I really want of you is, that you bring about the exchange of a rebel prisoner, who is too fine a fellow to share the fate of the other patients in this doomed pest-house, into which you have turned my Temple of Science. He is badly wounded, but doing well, for he has a magnificent constitution. But if he remains here another week, his life won't be worth the toss of a copper. Mortification is bound to ensue, and not the skill of all the hospital surgeons can save him. Now, I want you to procure his exchange; a week or two of uncontaminated fresh air will set him up, and you will have saved the life of a man worth all the poor cripples that will have to stay here put together.

Don't say, serves him right for being a rebel. His intellect is of so high an order that he really couldn't help it. Besides, you may obtain for him a Federal officer of high grade; for though my protege is only a captain, he seems to have considerable backing among the Confederates. His father, he says, is in Davis' cabinet, and was a United States senator before the war, — Senator May — ”

“Tell the doctor,” the general exclaimed, as soon as he had read this name, with an imperative nod to the messenger, “that I will see him within an hour.” And as the messenger was leaving, he turned to General Seele with the abrupt question: “Do you remember the young rebel whom you court-martialed at the beginning of the war, out at Brookfield?”

“Of course I do,” was the answer. “I remember well the chagrin of Colonel Scheffel over his acquittal, as well as the eloquent earnestness of our judge advocate in his defense, and my own anxiety, lest our court should, in the zeal of mistaken patriotism, commit an act of partisan hatred under guise of sacred justice, which, under the circumstances, would have been not only a wrong, but a blunder fraught with possible peril to our cause. Well, what of him?”

“He is a prisoner in our hands, wounded, and a patient in Doctor McDonald’s College. Old Sawbones thinks he will take gangrene if left there, and suggests his exchange.”

“But what is the young man to do, if liberated? We cannot send him home, and here he will be among strangers, alone and helpless.”

“He shall not be among strangers nor helpless,” General Rauhenfels exclaimed with warmth. “There are those in this city who will be proud and thankful to serve him in any way that may be in their power.”

“You refer to those *Auf dem Busches*, I suppose?” General Seele remarked. “Why, yes! They certainly owe the May family a debt of gratitude. Do you know where to look for them?”

“Certainly: The old gentleman inhabits a perfect little paradise down below the arsenal — just an ideal sanitarium for a convalescent. Now, General, — you know I don’t often ask any one for favors. But in this matter I don’t mind laying myself under obligations to you; I want you to wire to the Secretary of War at once — or can you approach the President directly? — for authority to exchange, or better still, to release unconditionally this Confederate prisoner.”

“Consider it done, my dear Governor: I would cheerfully do so without intercession on your part, and even stretch my authority to order the young man’s immediate release. I believe this to be in the interest of the service. And Doctor McDonald’s savage prediction touching our own patients in his college must be inquired into. It would be an awful thing if

half of what he says about the sanitary condition of the hospital were true."

"I have full faith in what the old crank says about medical matters. Nothing is plainer than our duty to see the patients removed to some other quarters. I hope you will lose no time in taking the necessary measures in this matter, while I prepare the *Auf dem Busches* for the guest they are to welcome. I have an idea that the young rebel will meet with a warm reception in the enemy's camp."

"Let us hope, that the enemy may convert the freedom which we are giving him into more enduring bondage," said General Seele, with a suggestive smile. "The *Auf dem Busches* may open his eyes to the hopelessness of the Southern cause."

"Nonsense, General," was the emphatic reply. "Leslie May is one whom not even the logic of events can swerve from his conviction. Like Napoleon's Guard he can die, but will never surrender. So far from being converted to our side, the danger is rather that he will lay siege to the enemy's citadel and carry off one captive, at least, cripple as he may be."

At *Busch Bluffs* the war had made some changes, as well as at *May Meadows*. The old gentleman, it is true, had retired upon the laurels gained by him in the battle of *Winslo's Run*, and cherished the scars of his wounds as so many trophies brought back from his memorable campaign. But *Woldemar* had enlisted, much to the disgust of his mother, for three years, or as long as his services might be acceptable in the establishment of the government's supremacy, and the liberation of the slaves. He had hailed the *Emancipation Proclamation* of President Lincoln as the sublimest achievement in the history of the American nation, cleansing its escutcheon from the foul stain upon it, and redeeming the people from the rule of wily tricksters and scheming politicians. *Pauline*, too, hoped for the success of the Union cause. She was truly and thoroughly loyal; but more ardently than the defeat of the rebels, or the

triumph of the government, did she yearningly hope and pray for the end of the cruel war. She devoted much of her time to working for fairs and charitable entertainments in aid of poor families of soldiers in the field, and so it came about that she was much absent from home, to the discomfort of her uncle, and the vexation of her aunt, who broadly hinted that charity ought to begin at home. But Uncle Auf dem Busch stoutly defended the girl against any interference with her charitable work, even on the part of the wife of his bosom. "Pauline has right," he would say in answer to some stinging reproof of the unmaidenliness of her conduct in loafing about town, instead of staying at home like a well-behaved young woman. "It is war; and we must have soldiers to fight; and Pauline would be a soldier, but she wears a petticoat, and so she does what she can, and helps soldiers' wives and families. Be you glad that Pauline goes not off for a soldier's nurse in the hospitals."

Uncle Auf dem Busch never dreamt how near the truth he had stumbled, in holding out this threat to his wife. For Pauline was deeply impressed with a sense of duty to the brave men who returned from the field of honor with mangled limbs and shattered health, and had of late seriously contemplated the very step to which her uncle had alluded.

But the task involved, to her, a fearful sacrifice of personal inclination. She had a horror of seeing blood, and shuddered at the thought of witnessing those painful operations that she knew must be common in the hospitals; and she gravely doubted her ability to be of any use as a nurse. Some misgivings, too, she had, whether it would be right for her to act in opposition to the wishes of her relatives. Nor could she take counsel with any of them, knowing in advance what their advice would be.

While in this frame of mind, she bethought herself of Governor Rauhenfels, remembering the implicit confidence which her uncle and brother placed in the wisdom of the professor, and concluded that she would go to him for advice as to the

course she ought to pursue. She therefore prevailed upon her brother to send an escort with her to the general's headquarters.

Pauline, as was her way, came straight to the point of her visit, informing Governor Rauhenfels of the promptings of her conscience, and of her doubts and misgivings.

"And so you want me to tell you what is right for you to do?" he asked, when she had stated her case. "Then let me say to you, that it is always right to do just what you believe to be right. Conscience is to you your safest guide.—more unerring than profoundest wisdom of philosopher. We may call it the voice of God. You want no higher authority for your conduct than the will of God?"

Pauline listened eagerly. But a shade of disappointment flitted over her face as she answered: "Of course not! Only tell me, what is the voice of God? My conscience bids me offer my little mite of service to the suffering heroes; and is it not my conscience, too, that warns me not to vex and grieve the friends to whom I am bound by the strongest ties of gratitude and affection? Whither, now, leads the path of duty?"

"And do you not perceive, that your heart has decided the question? You distinguish between duty, common as such to all mankind,—charity, let us call it—and duty personal to you, which you call gratitude. Let me make it clear to you: Suppose your uncle, or brother, or even your cousin, had espoused the Southern side in this war—instances are not rare, you know, that brother and brother, or father and son, have taken different sides—and were lying wounded and helpless in a hospital of the enemy; would you brave the discomfort, or even the displeasure of the Federal authorities, by going to comfort and assist him?"

"How can you ask such a question!" Pauline replied with a reproachful look.

"Oh," said General Rauhenfels, "do not think that I could for a moment be in doubt what a heroic Antigone you would prove! Though the penalty for high treason stared

you in the face for giving 'aid and comfort to the enemy,' you would not hesitate to obey the law which God himself has written in your heart, in defiance of all the articles of war and drum-head courts-martial. But such a crown of martyrdom awaits you not just yet. You are to be spared all responsibility of deciding between the claims of your friends upon you, and your duty to humanity."

"What can you mean?" asked Pauline wondering.

"I mean to bring a rebel prisoner to your house, who is sadly wounded, and in need of just such attention as you can bestow. Was I right in counting upon your charity?"

"Wounded, and a rebel prisoner?" queried Pauline, regarding the general with keen, searching eyes, and slightly paling cheeks.

"Wounded, and a rebel prisoner," Rauhenfels repeated.

"Do I know him? Is it —"

"Yes, of course it is Captain Leslie May," said General Rauhenfels, as Pauline, turning very red, hesitated.

"And he is wounded? Dangerously?" Her voice was tender with deep concern and anxiety. "Oh, tell me — where, where is he?"

"We will go to him at once, and you shall bring him the news of his release from prison. You may also convey to him the invitation of your uncle to make Busch Bluffs his hospital during convalescence. Use your own judgment about informing him who shall be his nurse."

Though eager to follow General Rauhenfels to wherever Captain May might be, she flinched for a moment at the idea of entering a prison. "He is incarcerated?" she asked, with a timid look.

"In McDonald's College," said the general, smiling at her hesitation. "But you need not fear; the college is more of a hospital, just now, than a prison. Just imagine yourself a hospital nurse on duty, and you will have courage to go anywhere."

Captain Leslie May was made much of at the villa. He was

a prime favorite of Uncle Auf dem Busch ; even Mrs. Auf dem Busch conquered her prejudice sufficiently to conceal, or at least to make the attempt to conceal, her strong aversion. The children had not forgotten him. It was a treat to them to be permitted to go to his room and listen to the stories of camp life and of adventures on foraging expeditions and scouting service, which he knew how to tell so fascinatingly to Cousin Pauline.

The meeting between him and Pauline had been commonplace enough, so far as outward manifestation went. The manner of the captive officer had been cordial and courteous, as his behavior toward Miss Waldhorst, had always been : his voice as pleasant, and his smile as winning as of old. His face brightened as he saw Pauline approach, accompanied by General Ranhenfels and Captain Waldhorst, Doctor McDonald bringing up the rear. The young lady, though her heart beat wildly and the hand she extended to the invalid was rather unsteady, sufficiently controlled herself to avoid the outward show of emotion that agitated her bosom.

“ I am very glad to see you, Captain May,” she said, in a tolerably firm voice. “ Very glad, indeed ; and proud to see you bear up so bravely under the misfortune which has overtaken you.”

“ Ah, Miss Waldhorst,” he replied, seizing and pressing with joyous candor the hand she held out to him, “ surely, that is not a misfortune which has procured for me the exquisite pleasure of this visit from you, and assured me of the sympathy of so fair an enemy.”

“ And you, Victor,” he added, turning to Pauline’s brother, whose hand he grasped in both his own, “ you make me in all things forever your debtor.”

“ Nay, Leslie,” Victor rejoined, “ say not so. What I have done, I did not for you, but simply in the discharge of duty : though all I ever could do for you would not discharge the debt of gratitude I owe to you and yours.”

“ Have done bandying compliments ! ” said the general,

stepping up to Leslie's bedside and taking his turn in shaking hands with him while the doctor looked on, smiling. "To listen to your gushing, one might forget that you are sworn foemen, and wait but the opportunity to take each other's life."

"General," said Leslie, with a sad smile, "it does not look like you to triumph over a vanquished enemy. I am your prisoner."

"You are no longer a prisoner, Captain May," said Pauline blushing. "Governor Rauhenfels has commissioned me to inform you that you are to be exchanged; and that until then you are to be released from custody."

"Not quite that," the general broke in. "Mr. May is a soldier, and understands that he can be released only on parole. You are to pledge your word, sir, that you will not attempt to escape from the custody of Pauline Waldhorst, or such jailer, as Mr. Auf dem Busch may place over you. He is, from this time on, responsible to the authorities for your safety until the exchange may be consummated."

"Nay, Governor Rauhenfels," Pauline protested, with smiling lips and a beseeching glance, "such is not the compact between us. You distinctly authorized me to announce to Captain May his unconditional release. If he will accept Uncle Auf dem Busch's invitation to make our house his home until restored to perfect health, he shall be an honored guest, not a prisoner under espionage."

"The young lady is right," Doctor McDonald broke in, regarding Pauline with an admiring look. "She understands our Dutch Dictator better than to believe him capable of doing things by halves. And I honor her for the graceful interpretation of his rude generosity. As if Captain May could wish to escape from such charming hospitality! — But there is one thing wanting to complete your gracious intention," he added, addressing the general. "I want you to put me under parole, for such a time only as may be necessary for me to continue the treatment of the captain's case. For, you see, I must ap-

pease my conscience for having put so many cursed Yankees on their feet to fight the Confederacy; and I mean to do so by restoring to her a specimen of manhood that some day is going to be her ablest general, — an American Napoleon, sir, that ill encounter no Wellington nor Blucher! ”

So Leslie May has become an inmate of the *Auf dem Busch* mansion. He is waited on by Pauline Waldhorst, whose skill as a sick-nurse excites the admiration of Doctor McDonald, and elicits from him the confession that she is his most efficient ally in combating the patient's ailments. Yet, though lavish in his praises, he insists most strenuously on exactest observance of his minutest directions; whereat Pauline wonders. For Captain May is in the best possible spirits, so that it is hardly conceivable that his wounds, which are healing so finely, should occasion anxiety in the doctor's mind. He tyrannizes over his fair attendant in a masterful fashion, issuing his commands with a peremptoriousness of which there seems no need; for Pauline is but too ready in anticipating his slightest wish, often gratifying his desire before he has formulated it in his own mind. His presence so vividly recalls the memorable days before the war, when the young lawyer was a frequent visitor at *Busch Bluff*, and she was learning from him the astonishing lesson that she could not marry her cousin *Woldemar*, though Leslie spoke to her no word of love. Nor does he speak of love now. But his eyes sparkle when he looks at her, and his smile sends a thrill of joy through her heart; and with all of his exacting tyranny his smiles are frequent and his eyes speak an eloquent language, though his lips remain silent on the subject so near to her thoughts, and Pauline is happy in the joyful discharge of her duties as nurse.

Yet her serenity is not without its soupçon of anxiety. For Doctor McDonald's visits grow more frequent and he spends many an hour at the patient's bedside. Though he entertains both him and his nurse with the pleasantest chat, giving humorous accounts of his experiences at the prison hospital,

interposed, now and then, with characteristic anecdotes gleaned from the lips of the wounded warriors, yet Pauline notes that, though his lips smile encouragingly while readjusting the bandages, there lurks a sober look in his eyes after examining the wounded knee.

One day, during an unusually lively conversation at the bedside, in which Pauline's uncle took part, the doctor turned abruptly to the old gentleman with the question whether he knew Dr. Martell.

"Sure I know Dr. Martell!" the latter replied, with a complaisant chuckle. "Who knows not Dr. Martell? He says, Martell means hammer; and so we call him Sledgehammer in our Skat-club, because he hammers the table hard when he wants to win a trick with a big matador. And on the 'Change we call him Hophammer, because he is always in a row with brewers, who, he says, ruin the reputation of our beer by using a surrogate for hops."

"You don't mean to say that he plays cards, do you?"

"Plays cards? He is king at the Skat-club!" Auf dem Busch exclaimed. "He tells everybody how he must play; and when they don't play like he tells them they win, and he loses, and scolds them because they would lose and he would win if they played right. Oh, you just ask him if he knows how to play skat!"

"Well, I did not know that he is an adept at cards," the doctor rejoined; "but he is certainly the boss in our Medical Society, and is a rough customer if you don't happen to agree with his theories. I mentioned his name, because I would like to get your permission to introduce him to our patient. He is very high authority on surgery, and always eager to augment his stock of experience. It was on that account only that he accepted a commission from the Dutch Dictator to inspect and report to him the condition of our hospital-prison. And as I accompanied him on his round, I happened to mention the case of our captain, here, which presents some points of interest, on account of the marvelous readiness with which a badly

fractured knee-joint yielded to surgical treatment, after a neglect of so many hours. He naturally wished to see for himself a patient of such vigorous constitution; and if no one objects, I mean to bring him with me this afternoon."

"Fetch him along!" assented the patient. "I am curious to see the king of a card-club and the boss of the Medical Society."

"Yes, bring him with you!" said Uncle Auf dem Busch. "But look you out, how he will wash your head, if he finds out that you have cured the captain not by his rule. He will scold you like a fish-woman when you won't buy her stale fish."

"Never fret about Doctor McDonald's getting a tongue lashing!" said Leslie, with a merry twinkle of his eye. "If there is to be any clapper-clawing, I will back Doctor McDonald at liberal odds. Let the Hammer-Doctor look to his laurels."

"Then it shall be the clash of flint and steel," the old gentleman remarked, "and we shall see the sparks fly. Better Pauline have some cotton ready for the captain to put in his ear, if the doctor's consultation be too caustic for his nerves."

Pauline Waldhorst has listened to the conversation with anxious ears. Her heart is heavy. The doctor's amused smile over Auf dem Busch's remarks has not deceived her. She suspected at once that his object in mentioning Leslie's case to Dr. Martell had been to obtain the opinion of the latter touching Leslie's wound, and the casual mention by her uncle of the word consultation struck terror into her heart. But she did not hint to any one the suspicion that troubled her, for fear that if the patient became aware of it, he might take alarm, which would affect him injuriously.

Her worst fears proved too well founded when, in the early afternoon, the two doctors jointly visited the patient. There was no scolding or quarreling between them, nor, indeed, the slightest difference of opinion: but Pauline turned deathly

pale, when she saw the eager look on Doctor McDonald's face as Doctor Martell examined the wound on the patient's knee, and noticed the swift glance of intelligence between them that followed the examination.

"I think you are perfectly correct in your diagnosis," said Doctor Martell, "and I believe there is no time to lose, if his life is to be saved."

Doctor McDonald looked, with a sober face, first at his patient, then at Miss Waldhorst. "You are a brave woman," he said. "And you know the captain to be a brave man. He is going to give you a higher proof of genuine manhood than is required to court the death of a hero on the battle field, by submitting to the inevitable with courageous grace."

"What do you mean?" Leslie exclaimed, belying the doctor's praise of his fortitude by the alarm depicted in his paling features.

"He means," said Doctor Martell, with cruel precision, "that we are going to perform an operation in preservation of your life."

"To save my life!" cried Leslie, in genuine horror, looking from one of the doctors to the other. "You don't tell me, that there is any danger to my life from that scratch on my knee?"

Pauline's pallor increased, if possible, but she neither screamed nor fainted.

"That scratch on your knee," said Doctor McDonald, "is the puncture made by a minnié ball which has fractured a part of the kneecap and torn its way through the ligaments and tendons. It is possible that an overworked surgeon put on the bandage a little too tightly, or awkwardly, — at any rate, necrosis has set in and must prove fatal, unless the affected part be removed. We can do this without much pain to you by putting you under the influence of an anæsthetic."

"Anæsthetic be d—d!" the patient exclaimed angrily. "Am I a paling babe, that I should faint at sight of the surgeon's knife? Cut away to your heart's content, if you've got

to remove that necrosis, as you call it, but don't you dose me with your chloroform, as I've seen you do with some of the poor fellows at the hospital."

Doctor Martell stepped up to the bedside and spoke in a calm but authoritative voice: "Of course, sir, you shall do as you please. But I give it as my opinion, that you had better follow our advice about the anæsthetic. I am quite sure that you are too brave to flinch on the application of the scalpel; but the men are rare indeed with nerve enough to stand the use of the saw."

Doctor McDonald, who had been keenly watching the patient, nodded approvingly, while Pauline, shuddering, covered her face with both her hands.

But Leslie bolted into a sitting posture. "Saw?" he screamed, regarding the doctors with indignant surprise. "What do you want with a saw?"

"Think, sir!" said Doctor Martell. "We cannot sever the femur with the scalpel."

"But why do you want to sever the femur? There is nothing the matter with the bone, is there?"

"There is this the matter with the bone," the doctor answered, incisively, "that unless we sever it above the knee-joint, the mortification will extend until it reaches some artery or vital part, and human skill will not avail to save your life."

Doctor McDonald took his eyes from the patient, and regarded Pauline, who stood as if petrified with horror.

On Leslie, the doctor's words had a different effect. The color, which had for a moment forsaken his face, returned with double intensity. "There shall be no amputation!" he shouted, with angry emphasis. "You doctors are a set of unmitigated humbugs! I don't believe a word of your cock-and-bull-story about mortification and necrosis. There is neither pain, nor fever, nor inflammation, about that wound."

"That is the most alarming symptom of your danger!" said Doctor McDonald, a tinge of regret audible in his voice in spite of his effort to appear composed.



Pauline, kneeling by the bedside, took one of his hands
in both her own.

“Miss Waldhorst,” said the patient, in a voice that blended entreaty with peremptory command, “please bring me my revolver. I give you fair warning, that I will shoot the first man that approaches to take off my leg. Look out for other shambles to do your butchering in!”

“Miss Waldhorst,” Doctor McDonald addressed the young lady, “I am certain, and so is my colleague, that a delay of a few hours must prove fatal to the patient. If I am not very much mistaken, his life lies in your hands. Persuade him to submit to the operation, and his recovery is assured, a human life rescued, a future full of promise to the world and of honor and distinction to our young friend here redeemed from the clutches of the fell destroyer! Will you use your influence to bring about so desirable a result?”

“Don’t give yourself any trouble, Miss Waldhorst!” said Leslie, his eyes beginning to show the sparkle of feverish excitement. “Ha, ha, ha,” he broke into derisive laughter. “The irony of fate, that you, of all persons on earth, should be selected to impress upon me the necessity of having me made a cripple! I imagine myself hobbling into a drawing-room on a wooden peg, making lopsided bows to Miss Shannon, or Miss Matlack, or some other gushing beauty, smiling supercilious contempt, or even pity — faugh! Don’t — don’t!” he cried, waving her off with energetic motion of his hand, as Pauline approached, pale as death, but nerving herself bravely for the effort to be made. “I tell you I will not submit! You might with better grace ask me to commit suicide!”

“That is precisely what you are doing, sir!” said Doctor Martell, with deliberate emphasis: “You are committing intentional, cowardly suicide by your puerile obstinacy. Yes, cowardly, I say,” he repeated as Leslie winced at the stinging reproof. “Who but a coward would slink away from a post intrusted to his keeping, and shirk duty, because it is irksome.”

Pauline, kneeling by the bedside, took one of his hands in both her own, and, looking into his eyes with pathetic appeal,

made eloquent by the unspoken love that moved her, said: "Oh, Mr. May! Why do you deny your own noble nature? Why let strangers suspect your fortitude and lion-like courage? I know you better. I know, that but a thought of your father and mother, to whom you are dearer than life, or of your sister, who idolizes you, will brace your will to smile at the trial before you. Because you know that your death would cast a shadow on their lives far darker than the fanciful troubles you are conjuring up for yourself."

"Oh, Pauline! What a woman you are!" said Leslie, with a look and voice that thrilled her to the soul. "What a hero you make of me, and what a cur I have been to you! But, woman as you are, you would learn to despise me, if I were base enough to profit by your generous sympathy, and most of all I would have to despise myself for the rest of my life. No, no, Pauline! Give yourself no further trouble in this matter: if I cannot be a whole man, — why, then it is better all round that I should make room for one who is."

Notwithstanding the patient's peremptory negative, the doctors interchanged a look of encouragement, as if to say that the prospect was improving. And it is not improbable that the united efforts of Pauline and the physicians might have succeeded finally, even without the powerful influence brought to bear upon him by the appearance of a new guest at Busch Bluff.



SISTERS AND BROTHERS.

UNCLE AUF DEM BUSCH had absented himself from the sick room when Dr. Martell entered it. He sat in the library, reading an interesting article on the war, when the sound of approaching carriage wheels, stopping just in front of the grounds, caught his ear. On looking up he recognized the graceful figure of Nellie May as she stepped from the carriage door, and, followed by the girl Cressie, who carried a formidable satchel, hurried up the gravel path toward the house. The old gentleman rose alertly and met them at the door, his face beaming a cheerful welcome.

“ Ah, Miss May! ” he exclaimed, seizing her hand in both his own and giving it a cordial squeeze. “ It makes me great joy that you honor us with your visit. I am happy to see you safely here, but it frightens me to think how you were in danger to travel through all the military! ”

“ How very kind you are, Mr. Auf dem Busch! ” said Nellie, smiling gratefully. “ You cannot imagine how glad I am to be here, at last, after *such* a journey! I was fully a week on the way from Brookfield, and it will take me a week to recount all the adventures we ran, the rebuffs we met from the soldiers, the difficulties we encountered among our friends as well as among our enemies! Many of the latter were, indeed, more considerate and courteous toward us than our own people. And oh, how relieved I felt when they told me at that horrid hospital that my brother had been brought here among such kind friends! ”

“ Yes, ” the old gentleman replied, with a smile and a sly wink, “ Pauline is good to him. She cares that he misses nothing. She is up in his room now, with the doctors. ”

“Doctors?” Nellie repeated in great alarm. “Oh, tell me, is he so badly off as to require more than one physician?”

“Fear you nothing!” Uncle Auf dem Busch assured her. “It is some nonsense of Doctor McDonald. He is so proud of his patient, and how soon he made him well, that he would show him to his colleague, the boss surgeon. I guess you will like to see your brother; I will call my wife to show you your room, and then Pauline shall take you to the captain, and the doctors, if they be yet there.”

“Oh, please take me to his room at once!” Nellie begged of him, “I am so anxious to see him!”

“Of course!” said Uncle Auf dem Busch. “Just excuse me a moment; I will call a servant to take Cressie to your room. Cressie,” he added, turning to the octoroon, who stood waiting, “it joys me to see you in my house, so I can thank you for your kind waiting on us last year.”

Nellie entered the sick-room just after Leslie's answer to Pauline's appeal. A glance sufficed to make the situation clear to her. Her cheeks paled as she advanced to the bedside, but she smiled bravely as she embraced the patient, and then, after tenderly kissing him, inquired, in a cheerful voice, how he was doing.

“Why, Nell,” the patient answered, “you have come just in the nick of time! Save me from the clutches of these butchers! They want to mutilate me — stop them! Miss Waldhorst — can you believe it? — has gone over to my enemies!” And with an attempt at a reproachful smile he added, casting a pathetic glance toward Pauline, “that is the most unkindest cut of all!”

“I am afraid you have been a naughty boy!” said Nellie, fighting down the tears that made her eyelids heavy. “If Miss Waldhorst has scolded you, you surely deserved it.” Then, turning a cheerful look on the latter, she added, “now, hasn't he, Pauline?”

But Pauline's heart was too heavy to make it possible for her to answer in the vein of badinage. She threw her arms about

Nellie's neck and impulsively kissed her. "Save him!" she sobbed; "oh, Nellie, save him! The doctors say that nothing but an amputation will save him from certain death!"

"The young lady is right," said Doctor McDonald, in answer to the swift look of interrogation Nellie cast in the direction of the physicians. "Nothing but immediate amputation can arrest the progress of mortification, which is swiftly destroying him."

"Is that all?" said Nellie, regarding her brother with a look so cheerfully bright, that it seemed as if she had heard a piece of good news. "Why, Leslie, I am sure that you don't mean to give these two gentlemen the impression that you are afraid of a surgeon, or even of two of them! Somehow I got the notion from your letter, that a whole regiment of hostile skirmishers bearing down on you could not scare you. You can't imagine, how proud that letter made me of my brother! Now you are not going to make me feel that I ought to blush for you?"

"Confound these women!" exclaimed the patient irritably. "They are all alike! Can't you understand that it is not the surgeon's knife that I am afraid of, — nor even of their saw, confound them! — but —"

"Yes, Leslie, I can, and do, understand! And so does Pauline, I know. We both understand that it is not the pain you are afraid of, but the contemplation of the figure you would cut in a ball room. But we also know that your gallantry will never permit you to grudge your country the sacrifice it exacts from a true hero. The courage to look death in the face on the battle-field you have proved: I know, that as a true Virginian you will not shrink from the far greater sacrifice of your personal vanity. Think, my brother, that it is your duty to preserve your life for the protection of the bleeding South! And if it is any comfort to you, remember, that your appearance even in a ball room with an artificial limb will win you the admiration, the gratitude, and the heart of every true Southern woman, whose smile is worth the courting!"

Whether it was that Nellie had touched the right key to which Leslie's soul responded, or whether Pauline's pathetic face was softening his heart, or whether his firmness gave way before the combined assault upon him by the physicians and the ladies, — the patient no longer resisted. "Yes," he said, smiling faintly, "a red-hot she-rebel might smile at me for the loss of my leg in the service of the Confederacy. Miss Matlack would, I guess; and perhaps Miss Shannon. But," he added, "what chance would I stand before a Northern belle?"

Pauline, though the latter words were addressed squarely to her, and accompanied by an eager, though smiling look, made no reply, but dropped her eyes before his, blushing violently. He seemed to accept her silence as a sufficient answer, however; for he turned upon both the ladies with a stern look and cried, in a voice of mock severity, "Clear out, now! Let the doctors begin their bloody work. But I don't want you hanging around, haunting me with your looks of pity and regret. Go, now! Clear out! When the doctors are through with me, you may come back, both of you, and coddle, to your heart's content, what will be left of me."

"When we return," said Nellie, regarding him with a look of sisterly affection and pride, "it will be to pay homage to as gallant a soldier as ever drew sword for the glorious South."

Pauline's heart was buoyant with newly found hope and joy. Her eyes beamed with a new light as they fondly rested, for a moment, on the sufferer's face, before, hand in hand, the two left the room.

"By Jupiter and all the goddesses!" Doctor McDonald exclaimed, as soon as the door closed behind them. "If I were as young a man as I once was, I believe I would storm a hostile battery for such a look and such a kiss."

"That sister is a superb woman," said Doctor Martell. "No wonder that the impressible hotheads of the South are incited to fierce enthusiasm by such alluring sirens!"

"Aha! a superb woman indeed!" the rebel doctor chuckled,

rubbing his hands and smiling triumphantly. "She is a fair specimen of the kind of women the South produces. But that Northern belle, as our young friend here called his sweetheart, — you don't mind my calling her your sweetheart? — (addressing this remark to the patient, then continuing to his colleague) takes my fancy. Our gallant captain had his wits about him when he laid siege to so fair a fortress of the enemy."

"Come, gentlemen, get to your work, if you are going to do it!" the patient growled, frowning, as if not pleased with the conversation, and disdaining to conceal his feverish impatience.

* * *

The operation had been successfully performed. The doctors remained with the patient until late in the evening, prescribing an opiate when they left, and returned early next morning, bringing a professional sick-nurse with them, whom they installed as commander in charge of the sick-room. Conversation with the patient was strictly inhibited, even his sister and Pauline were not to be admitted to the sick-chamber. All the inmates of the house had been given to understand that it would be well for the patient if they avoided it altogether.

Nellie had, at her own request, been quartered in Pauline's room; and the two girls utilized to the utmost the leisure thus afforded for an interchange of experiences and confidences. Nellie learned many facts about the war that were new to her. Some of Pauline's statements and opinions she received with skeptical smiles; and in turn Pauline opened wide her eyes on hearing Nellie's views on the military successes of the belligerent armies, and the probable outcome of the war. But though both maintained strong faith in the justice of their respective causes, there was perfect accord between them in respecting each other's motives, and the sincerity of each other's convictions. Pauline was astonished, on one occasion, to hear Nellie regret that she had ever been secretly pleased at the outbreak of actual hostilities, just because she had been so thoroughly

sure of the superiority of the South, and wished to see the North humiliated before the world.

Conversation, of course, touched upon the respective brothers of the friends. Pauline was eloquent in praise of Victor's improved bearing in consequence of his military training, and Nellie skillfully drew her out, so as to obtain from her the most minute circumstances regarding his surroundings, occupation and prospects, so far as they were known by the sister; and she did this without in the least betraying the depth of her own feelings. Pauline was equally eager to hear about Leslie May, and never wearied of asking questions; but she did not possess Nellie's skill to conceal the passion that engrossed her heart. The latter read her secret as in an open book, displayed in glaring capitals. The only point on which she remained in the dark was how far her brother might have committed himself; and this she failed to learn, because Pauline herself did not possess the information.

Early in the afternoon their conversation was interrupted by the entrance of Cressie, who handed her mistress a card. Pauline observed a nervous agitation in the octoroon's behavior, and a swift change in Nellie's face, — the faintest touch of a blush, and only for half a second — before she turned smilingly to Pauline, her eyes still on the card.

"It is your brother, Pauline," she said. "I suppose you must go down to receive him."

"I?" Pauline exclaimed, emphasizing the pronoun. "The idea! As if Victor would send in a card to me!"

"Major Waldhorst asked expressly to see Miss May," the octoroon explained.

"Of course!" added Pauline. "Run down, Nellie, and don't grieve him by letting him see that his visit annoys you."

"Annoys me!" the young lady repeated, smiling significantly at the slave girl.

Major Waldhorst, meanwhile, measures the parlor floor with impatient step. He had, on hearing of the presence of Nellie May at Busch Bluff, presumed upon the favor of the command-

ing general to the extent of coercing from him leave of absence for the rest of the day, by threatening open insubordination in case of refusal. "Go, then," the general had finally said; "you are bent on a fool's errand; go, and reap a fool's reward." And Victor, though hurt at what seemed to him the general's cynical mood, was too deeply engrossed by the prospect of meeting Nellie to ponder on the meaning of the strange remark, and had set out on his visit without a moment's delay.

Nellie's step was light as she descended the staircase, and noiseless the touch of her fingers in opening the parlor door. But Victor's ear was quick to catch the rustle of her dress. On turning his head she stood before him in the panoply of her wondrous beauty.

"Eleonora!"

A vivid blush for a brief moment suffused her neck and face. This man standing before her is he, — Victor, whom she had last seen in conflict with his enemies at fearful odds, whose deadly peril had wrung from her that outcry, which must have betrayed to him her love. Yes; he has divined her secret! She sees it written in his face, — in that triumphant joy that blazes from his eyes; — in the proud bearing with which he approaches her! This is not the timid lover, who adored and worshiped from afar; not the despairing wooer, whom an unkind word abashed, and whom her refusal had precipitated into the agonies of cruel torture. He comes with the air of a conquering hero, demanding as his due, submission and homage. And the haughty lady, accustomed to rule as a queen of society, feels a strange delight in the thought of belonging to this proud man, and being ruled by him, and submitting herself to him in all things. And she is dangerously near forgetting that the uniform worn by this audacious young warrior is that of the enemy of her country; and, in her forgetfulness, to compromise her dignity and betray her country's cause by treasonable desertion to the enemy.

But the blush recedes swiftly, and with it the momentary

weakness is conquered. She frankly holds out her hand to him, smiling a glad welcome.

Her candor delights Victor, who associates it with the blush that has beautified her face on seeing him.

“ I am so glad to see you, Captain — ah, pardon me, Major — Waldhorst! ” she says, withdrawing the hand which he had pressed until it ached. “ It is so good of you to remember, and take the trouble of calling on, an old friend. ”

She points with an inviting gesture to a chair, and is about to occupy one herself, some little distance away. But Victor ignores the hint. He recaptures the hand before she has time to seat herself, and repeats, in a tone of ineffable tenderness, the one word: “ Eleanora! ”

It has a magical effect. Or perhaps it is the look accompanying the word — that look of deep, unutterable love — that thrills her soul and calls back the color in a mighty flood to her face. She drops her eyes before that intense gaze — for an instant only: for she is fully aware that to be off her guard for a single moment would make him master of the situation and insure him an easy victory. So she bravely fights back the mighty impulse to throw her arms about his neck and rest her head upon that manly breast. Summoning all her skill in conversational fence, she forces her features into a playful expression.

“ Why do you call me by that long, formal name? ” she says. “ Once, you told me you thought the name Nellie the sweetest. ”

“ The sweetest in the vocabulary of love! ” he replies. “ It is the synonym to me of all that is lovable. ”

“ So, so! ” she pouts, in playful reproach. “ That accounts for your using the other to address me by. ”

“ But Eleonora is the woman whom I worship! ” he declares eagerly. “ Tell me, idol of my soul, that you will accept my adoration, — that you will be mine, to reverence, as the lodestar of my destiny! ”

The passionate earnestness of her lover makes it hard for

her to keep up the bantering tone with which she hopes to keep him at a distance. But she returns valiantly to the charge.

“ I should like to compliment you, Major Waldhorst, on your courageous gallantry; for that is a quality on which you soldiers pride yourselves — do you not? — only to me it seems thoughtless temerity: Does it not occur to you that you are addressing a rebel? ”

“ I am addressing a woman! ” he asseverates, vehemently. “ The one woman in all the world to me. What if you are a rebel? I worship in you none the less your divine womanhood. Though you out-Davised Jefferson Davis, I would kneel to you as the embodiment of sublimest loyalty — the loyalty to all that is pure, and just and true! ”

“ It is well, Major,” she responds, still holding herself well in hand, “ that we are alone. Such laudation of a dyed-in-the-wool secessionist might, if reported by some zealous loyal spy, procure you the honor of a *lettre de cachet* from your provost marshal, and quarters indefinitely in Doctor McDonald’s Bastile.”

“ This levity, Madam,” he retorts, frowning sternly, “ ill befits the woman who braved the fury of a midnight tempest to warn against the assassin’s blow the man whom she loves! ”

Nellie starts. Her anger rises at Victor’s words. But she quickly recovers herself.

“ It strikes me, Major Waldhorst,” she replies saucily, “ that you are relapsing into your old trick of magnifying my virtues. Surely I have given you no cause to believe me capable of practicing the Christian injunction to love my enemy? ”

“ Your enemy! ” he repeats, his eyes flashing with indignation. “ How can you, how dare you, Nellie May, speak of me, — to me, or to yourself, as your enemy? ”

His earnest words, and the searching look accompanying them, have called a swift flush to Nellie’s face, which ought to have shown Victor how deeply she feels the sting of his re-

proach. But he misinterprets the emotion, and hears only the flippancy which she has made a strong effort to infuse into her voice as she answers :

“ Why, — does not your uniform proclaim you such ? ”

“ My uniform ! ” he iterates, now with scathing sarcasm. “ Since when does Nellie May read a friend by the color of his uniform ? And how must you judge that woman who, though as pure, and as proud, and as red-hot a rebel as you, challenged the venomous gossip of her rebel friends by interposing her own person in protection of the wearer of this same uniform ? ”

He drops his fierce tone and continues in pathetic supplication :

“ Cease this unworthy trifling with what is most sacred in your life and mine ! I love you, Eleonora ! How deeply, is no secret to you. That you love me, *I* have long known, though your lips have ever disdained to utter the admission. For the eye reveals what the hypocrite tongue would conceal ; and there is a language that speaks in bugle blasts, though the lips may not move. Soul of my life, we have bartered our hearts : Why grudge me the sweetness of the admission ? ”

The smile has vanished from Nellie's face : Love, triumphant, for a moment, transfigures her radiant features. Victor, transported beyond his power of self-control, catches her in his arms and strains her to his breast. She is powerless to resist. Their lips meet : her soft, responsive kiss thrills through and through him with ecstatic rapture.

For a brief time they hold one another in blissful embrace. Then Nellie disengages herself, — softly, though resolutely.

“ You have seen me weak, my Victor,” she says in low, but distinct accents. “ Forgive me ! ”

“ Forgive you ! ” he cries, “ forgive you, — for crowning my life with heavenly joy ? ” And again, in the exuberance of his newly found happiness, he presses her to his heart. But again she puts him away ; gently, but firmly.

As she does so her eyes seek those of her lover with a look



“Soul of my life, why grudge me the sweetness of the admission?”

of passionate entreaty. "Forgive my cruel weakness," she says, "which seemed to promise what I do not mean to grant. For, indeed, it cannot, must not be!"

"Cannot be? What cannot be?" he questions, bewildered, with paling cheeks.

"You and I cannot belong to one another, Victor," she answers, the calmness of her manner, even more cruelly than the bitter content of her words, casting chilling doubt upon the brightness of his hope. "For your people are not my people. What we claim as Right, is to yours an Abomination. Between you and me flares in lurid flame the wrath of two nations, consuming all within its reach. Pause, Victor, lest we fall victims to its fury!"

"Wherein have you or I to fear the nation's wrath!" he exclaims, in a desperate attempt to assail her resolution, which yet, in his inmost heart, he feels to be unalterable as the decree of Fate. "Nor you nor I have challenged it, nor in aught transgressed the strictest military code of either belligerent!"

"Nay, Victor, you surely forget that I am a daughter of the South!" she urges, sadly, yet not without a touch of gentle pride. "And you know, that I have never attempted to conceal my partisanship; and also, that I could not, were I even base enough to desire it, forswear my creed. Is not my presence in this very house a menace to the peace of its inhabitants? Or tell me, what would be my fate, were some craven wretch to denounce me as a Southern spy, conspiring, under guise of a visit to my wounded brother, to furnish information to the Confederate generals? Are you quite sure, that even your eloquence and zeal in my behalf, backed, if you please, by the influence of General Seele, or General Rauhenfels, would, in such case, suffice to bar a sentence of incarceration, or of death at the gallows, at the hands of some truculent court-martial?"

Victor Waldhorst shuddered, in spite of himself. "You rave!" he cried. "You cruelly defame our time and country!"

How can you conceive of such barbarity as possible in the nineteenth century, among a Christian nation! ”

“ How near was my brother to fall a victim to just such a piece of barbarity? ” she says, and adds, with a look of proud admiration: “ And I might not have a Victor Waldhorst as my judge advocate, nor a General Seele to preside over the court.”

He is about to answer; but she puts up her hand in gentle deprecation.

“ If your judgment reject my reasoning,” she continues, “ let me appeal to your great-hearted generosity. See: You have read the secret of my heart; nor do I grudge you the victory you have obtained over me. Your love is the most precious boon of my life, as my love for you is the highest and best part of my nature. Knowing this, my Victor, press me no further. You once taught me, proud man, how far nobler it is to renounce, than to possess unworthily. I would prove myself worthy of your love by renouncing. Then, oh Victor, urge me not to abase myself in my own estimation. If I yielded now, how could you trust, how honor a woman who proves faithless to her family, her people and her country! Disgust would supplant your love, merited contempt be my reward. And, dearest Victor, I could not survive the loss of your esteem! ”

Victor listened with sinking heart. He felt, to a painful degree, his utter inability to refute, by any argument, what appeared to him as the distorted, exaggerated patriotism of this young enthusiast, or to shake her purpose by supplication or entreaty.

There was a soft knock at the parlor door, and Pauline entered, pale, in evident distress. She took no notice of the presence of her brother, but walked straight up to Leslie's sister.

“ He is sinking, Nellie! ” was all she said, as she embraced her friend.

“ Do you come from his room? ” Nellie inquired, and, as

Pauline simply nodded, the sister left the parlor, without apology to Victor. Pauline was alone with her brother.

“Is there danger for Leslie May?” Victor inquired, as soon as Nellie was gone.

“Oh, Victor, he is about to die!” Pauline faltered out, the tears, which she had so valiantly fought back, streaming from her eyes.

“That is sad, indeed,” said Victor, shocked by the sudden information. “I thought he was doing so well! How did this come about?”

“I am afraid that Doctor McDonald waited a little too long before he insisted on the operation,” Pauline explained, interrupted by frequent sobs. “He was so fond of Captain May, and hated so to grieve him by the amputation. When he brought Doctor Martell along they knew at once that the captain had taken the gangrene, and that mortification was killing him. — Oh, Victor, is it not dreadful? So young, so full of vigorous life, so bright, and grand and brave! And now, to die!”

“It is very sad for his sister,” Victor observed. “How do you think Nellie will take it?”

“She loves him to idolatry!” Pauline exclaimed, drying her tears as if the contemplation of her friend’s grief revived her own courage. “But she will be brave and quiet about it. She is almost as brave and cheerful in her disposition as her brother. I wish that I were as good and courageous as she!”

Further conversation between the brother and sister was cut off by the entrance of Cressie, who informed them that Captain May would take it as a favor if Major and Miss Waldhorst would trouble themselves by calling on him in his room.

The patient had fully recovered his consciousness when they entered the sick chamber. Victor noticed even the old, charming smile — a mere shadow, now, of its former brightness, but oh! so touching in its winsome loveliness! — as in greeting his visitors he extended a hand each to Pauline and her brother.

“This is so good of you to humor the whim of a dying

man," he said, in a clear, cheerful voice, though much enfeebled by his late suffering. "For old Sawbones, there, has had the manliness to tell me that he had made a botch of my cure, and that at the next roll-call I would be reported 'missing, but accounted for.'"

"Accounted for, indeed!" said Victor. "It will be a glorious account; and your absence will leave a great void that will be slow in filling."

"Yes, I dare say," the patient replied, "that the sutler of my company will sadly miss my patronage on pay-days; and I suspect that Miss Waldhorst will sigh a sigh of deep gratitude to the skill of Dr. McDonald in ridding her of her most persistent tease and torment. Will you not, Miss Waldhorst?"

"A most sad riddance!" Pauline forced herself to say in the tone of badinage suggested by the patient, although it was difficult for her to repress the tears that were making her eyes heavy. "But you know that I am not one to sigh vainly for what I cannot have."

"Ah! then you will consider my death a loss?" Leslie asked, regarding her with a look of such tender affection as he had never before bestowed upon her.

Pauline made a brave effort to appear unmoved. A pathetic smile enwreathed her lips — a writhing, tremulous smile, more agonizing than heart-breaking sobs — as she answered:

"I shall never lose you, my friend, though Death claim you for his own!"

"Why, Pauline," the sick man remarked, "that sounds almost like some of the Dutch Dictator's philosophy." His eyes softened as he feasted them on her love-beaming face, thinking, perhaps, of what might have been. But with sudden resolution he turned to his sister.

"You, Nellie," he said, his face brightening visibly, "will shed a tear to my memory when I am gone. For we have been good comrades, have we not? But it is mama that will be inconsolable over my shortcomings. She will never forgive me for failing in my mission to smash the old Union and establish

the new Confederacy; or at least to come back from the war with the shoulder-straps of a major-general."

Nellie took and pressed his hand with an encouraging smile. "I will conciliate her, Leslie, when I make her understand that she is mother to as brave and gallant a hero as any the Confederacy can boast."

"If you tell her so, maybe she will believe it," Leslie rejoined. "She has the greatest regard for your judgment, though I was always her pet. And you will comfort the dear old governor? No one would he take comfort from but you."

"Such comfort, Leslie, as a fond daughter can give, be sure, shall be his!"

Then Leslie turned again to Victor, a faint smile recalling to the latter the merry twinkle that was wont to light up his eye when about to utter some pleasantry.

"You and I, Victor," he said, "ought to feel honored in our sisters. They have more profoundly impressed the enemy, than either of us, with all our prowess. Nellie's witchery has enslaved one blue-coat, while the most rabid rebel worships at Pauline's shrine. Nay," he continued, as Victor blushed in deep embarrassment, "I am not alluding to either you or myself. We both surrendered to the fair ones long before Pauline could class me as an enemy, or Nellie became a rebel. I speak of higher game and victories more recent. What do you say to Doctor Martell as a conquest of Nellie's, and Doctor McDonald as an admirer of Pauline?"

"You exaggerate perfunctory politeness into serious attentions," said Nellie; and then to Victor: "You know my brother well enough, to appraise his assertions at their market-value, Major Waldhorst; do you not?"

"Oh, but Victor knows that I never prevaricate — never to him, at least," the patient asserted with mock solemnity. "I am speaking the gospel truth. The learned humbugs declared themselves on this very spot, when alone with me, and thinking I did not hear. At a moment, too, when they were preparing to immolate me on the altar of science."

The effort in speaking seemed to have exhausted his strength. He sank back on his pillow. For a while he closed his eyes as if in slumber. Suddenly he raised himself into a sitting posture. His eyes glittered in feverish excitement as they sought out and rested upon Victor.

“Major,” he exclaimed, “do you hear that bugle call? It is the signal for retreat! We have been doing nothing but retreat! Old Ciper is emulous of Xenophon’s famous Retreat of the Ten Thousand. His name will go down in history as the Great Cunctator for action, and a second Xenophon for Retreat. But it will hardly survive the Confederacy. Retreat is not the way to win in battle, nor to vindicate a cause. To retreat is to run; and we rebels are not good at running. And yet they are running — running! The fools think they can save the Confederacy by running! But I can’t help them in that. I was never good to run from an enemy; and now —”

A faint smile creeps into his wan features, and a scarcely audible chuckle interrupts his words. Then he continues:

“— Now they have stopped my running for good and all!”

Presently he beckoned Pauline to his bedside. “Miss Waldhorst — let me say Pauline to you, — it is such a sweet name — Pauline, you will love my sister, — for my sake — will you not? Because I loved you — you know it, though I never told you. And because I loved you, Nellie loved you. Pauline, I dreamed sometimes, before this foolish war, of you as Nellie’s sister. But we were proud, we rebels, and foolish.”

A fond admiring look now rested on his sister.

“Your pride becomes you, sissy mine,” he said, “and I see it reflected on another face. Our cause may triumph, Nellie, and out of the ashes of the old Union may arise the Phoenix of the new Confederacy; or it may perish, like a sinking meteor in the sky: But your pride will carry you safely through the din of victory, or the dirge over a Lost Cause. Oh, that Pauline and you were sisters!”

“If Nellie will let me!” said Pauline, embracing her friend.

“We are! We shall be!” said Nellie, folding Pauline to her bosom.

“And you, Victor,” said the dying man, “will you be my brother?”

“Yours in heart, in soul, and in spirit!” said Victor, grasping Leslie’s hand, and cordially pressing it.

A smile flitted over the patient’s face, as he sank back into his pillows.

After a brief pause, during which his features composed themselves into an expression of profound rest, he said:

“Ah! Do you hear the bugle sound the tattoo? How mournful, and yet how restful, its cadence charms my ear! It means rest, rest! Rest for me, but it is the dirge of the Confederacy. No, not yet! It will die hard. There is more running to do; there are more ditches to occupy before it reaches the last; and then” — again there was the semblance of a smile about his pale lips as he added: “We always boasted that we would die in the last ditch, before we surrendered! But I will not be there. I have listened to my last tattoo. Put out the lights — they will give the signal directly — we need no lights after tattoo. When they sound that signal, it will be the knell of the Confederacy: They will put out the lights on a Lost Cause!”



BEFORE THE DAWN.

TO the sable descendants of the curse-laden race of Ham has come the Year of Jubilee. That "peculiar institution," that once piped so shrill a discord to the American Hymn of the Equality of Men is now relegated to the past forevermore. At May Meadows the negro cabins stand untenanted; the negroes themselves have left. Of all of them once owned by Senator May, but three — the sturdy Xerxes, feeble Cassandra and gentle Cressie — have resisted the temptation to follow the Federal soldiers into freedom. Their absence is not regretted of Nellie May. For when she was left in sole charge of the plantation, having dismissed the overseer for want of funds to pay him further wages, she found it quite a relief to be rid of the hungry mouths of useless field hands. The scant crops they had raised had been regularly carried off by the soldiery of either army, or plundered by marauding camp followers of friend and foe. To provide food, with purse, larder and granary equally empty, had become a harassing problem. May Meadows, in the dark days before the final collapse of the Confederacy, bore a painful resemblance to the depleted South. Xerxes' skill with snare and angle had furnished many a welcome meal to mistress and servants, and oftentimes the mistress sought her couch not knowing where next day's meal was to come from.

When the end came, it brought new trials and a grief more harrowing than any she had yet experienced.

The death-blow to the cherished cause of the South was itself a disappointment hard to bear. But far keener was the anguish of the uncertainty as to her father's fate.

For well she knew that indictment and trial for high treason

awaited him on his return home. For did not Senator May offer a shining mark to the pharisaical patriots, who loudly paraded their untempted loyalty in justification of their zeal "to make treason odious" by vindictively hunting down all who had participated in the rebellion?

But she bore up bravely, keeping her eyes open to note the trend of public opinion, and to feed hope on the slightest circumstance indicating a change in her father's favor. There was, in those days, much talk about President Johnson's views in regard to the reconstruction of the seceded States. He was known to look on secession as an utter nullity, in no wise changing the relation of the States to each other, or to the Union, so that, legally, no one of them had ever ceased to be a co-equal member of the Union, and that while each individual rebel had made himself guilty of high treason, it was impossible to deal with such multitudes according to the criminal laws. It would follow, that a general amnesty to the political offenders was the only solution to the problem confronting the victorious government.

Here again, bitter disappointment awaited her. The Amnesty Proclamation in terms excluded senators, congressmen and civil officers of high rank from the benefit of its provisions; all such were to be turned over to the criminal courts of the land!

She took new hope on learning that the President had granted special pardons to some of the rebels that ranked high in the list of the proscribed. It occurred to her that if the President were made acquainted with the true facts in her father's case, — if he, the firm champion of an unbroken Union, could be made to understand that Senator May was in reality a compatriot, who, like himself, had devoted his life to the vindication of a sacred principle, he would surely interpose executive clemency. But how convince the President?

Victor Waldhorst would do all in his power, if she asked his assistance. He would enlist the co-operation of General Seele; and Governor Raubenfels might not refuse his aid. They

would prove powerful support in a petition to the President for the pardon of Senator May. But — could she appear before Victor to solicit so great a service? She had peremptorily rejected his suit on the ground that he was the enemy of her people. What would he think of her, if now she came to him as a supplicant! The humiliation and shame of such a course would be more than she could bear. Her proud nature rebelled at the very thought of such a thing; every fibre of her being rose up in protest.

And yet — her father's liberty, perhaps his life, was at stake. And it would be such a happiness to Victor — of this she was perfectly sure — if he were permitted to serve her, or her father, or both! It was this conviction that finally decided the fierce conflict between her love and her pride. She resolved to ask Victor's help in soliciting the President's clemency.

But the letter she addressed to "Major Victor Waldhorst, in care of Governor Rauhenfels" etc., came back to her unopened, with the indorsement "not in the city." She had been waiting for an answer from Victor with feverish impatience; the return of her letter, though a grave disappointment to her hopes in one direction, was yet a relief in another: it settled for her the doubt as to the propriety of invoking assistance from others. Her resolution was promptly carried into effect. The pledge of her jewelry enabled her to raise sufficient funds for her journey to Washington, accompanied by Cressie. She was sorely tempted, in passing through the metropolis, to stop at Buseh Bluff for a talk with Pauline; but an instinctive dread that Pauline would urge her to enlist the aid of her brother in the enterprise prevented her.

It was no easy matter, in those excited times, to gain access to the President. But Nellie had not in vain lived in Washington, and moved in the circles that were no strangers in the White House. She remembered, too, the deference paid to her sex, and counted on the effect of a little hauteur and aristocratic bearing in dealing with waiters and ushers; nor

was she ignorant of the magic shibboleth stamped on silver or gold, before which servants cringed and doors sprang open.

The President received her courteously, when she was ushered into his presence. "This is not the first time I have had the pleasure of seeing you," he said rising, with the card she had sent in his hand. "We have met before; do you remember, Miss May?"

"How should I forget the honor accorded me by an introduction to the lion of Washington society, set agog by the boldness of the Senator from Tennessee? The marvel is, that your Excellency should remember insignificant me!"

"I have cause to remember that introduction," said the President, smiling playfully. "I had some vigorous elbowing to do in escorting our hostess through the crowd of your admirers to obtain it. And when I made bold to ask the star of the evening for the honor of a dance, I came away with a graciously worded, but flat refusal. And think," he added, with smiling pathos, "you were the only lady I asked to dance with me that evening!"

"I remember well," said Nellie, a little puzzled by the meaning smile of the President. "It was at the ball given by the Spanish ambassador in honor of the birth of Alphonso, Prince of Asturia. My disappointment surely exceeded your own, when I found no open space on my programme for your name."

"So you graciously sugared the pill, Miss May. And I fear that even now your conversational skill will make it hard for me to refuse your petition. For you have come to intercede for your father, have you not?"

"Indeed, sir, I have!" she said, regarding the President with a look of appealing solicitude which he seemed to enjoy. "And I hope that you will accord to me the same magnanimous grace with which you have listened to so many petitioners for your mercy."

"So many! So many!" he said, a shadow of sombre regret passing over his face.

As he said nothing more, she continued: "It is your Excellency's divine privilege to temper the vengeful rigor of the law with heaven-born Mercy, and to transmute the bitter tears of wives and children into sweeter drops of joy and gratitude."

"Ah!" he exclaimed, "you have varied slightly Portia's panegyric to Mercy, 'that droppeth like the gentle rain from heaven.' It has been dinned into my ears until I know it quite by heart, as well as any actress. You will not think me flinty-hearted," he said, again regarding her with that strange smile that to Nellie seemed almost as if he were secretly laughing at her, "will you, if I put myself on guard against your seductive eloquence? It is my duty, you know, to give justice, also, a hearing, besides listening to clamorous demands for mercy."

"Clamorous demands?" Nellie repeated, with a little pout of reproach. "I fear that my words have offended you. Portia would more skillfully have reminded you that 'Mercy is an attribute to God himself, and that earthly power doth then show likest God's, when mercy seasons justice.'"

"But remember," he answered, "that the same great poet who spoke these immortal words, also warns us, that 'Nothing emboldens sin so much as mercy.' I knew your father well. He is an able man, and was a shining light in his party. It pained me deeply to see him make common cause with the traitors who conspired to disrupt the Union. Many other wise good men have been misled by his example. To condone his crime would be to share his guilt."

"Guilt!" the daughter repeated with quivering lips and blenching cheeks. "Can that be guilt which springs from the purest of motives and involves the most unselfish sacrifice — staking life, liberty and sacred honor, on the attainment of a high and noble purpose? Oh, sir, I will not clamor for mercy, since the word, by too much iteration, has grown offensive to your ears; but I demand the pardon of my father as an act of justice."

"Of justice?" the President asked wonderingly.

“Of justice!” Nellie repeated in a firm voice, with returning color and growing courage. “He is not guilty of the crime of which you accuse him. He has never conspired to disrupt the Union, but devoted the energy of his life to its preservation. Sir, if my father be guilty, then is your Excellency guilty likewise. You have been — you are at this moment — committing what in him you designate a crime.”

“Ah?” spoke up the President with a show of amused curiosity. “How do you propose to make that out?”

Nellie continued unabashed: “You are waging war against the Congress — are you not? With all the vigor of a man who knows that he is right you combat their attempt to accomplish what your victorious armies have prevented these States from doing.”

“And that is — ?”

“The accomplishment of secession!”

“Indeed? Do you assert, then, that to treat these seceded States as conquered provinces would in itself involve the violation of the constitution?”

“I do, your Excellency! It would be no more lawful for Congress than for a State, to deprive a single State of its constitutional equality in the government.”

“And what follows?”

“That your Excellency is right, and your Congress wrong.”

“Well! And does not that distinguish my case from that of your father?”

“Sir, I am a woman, unskilled in questions of statecraft; and I must not forget that my sympathies in this quarrel are with the South. But your Congress asserts emphatically that you are wrong. If this were so — pardon me for positing such a possibility — and that some tribunal should authoritatively so decide, — then would you not be in the predicament my father is in? With a high and noble purpose, actuated by motives whose purity not even your enemies dare impugn — yet are you accused of betraying the interest of your country!”

“ True — that is what their contention amounts to ! ” said the President. “ But, my dear young lady, it is fortunate for me that there is no tribunal that can so decide. ”

“ Not even a High Court of Impeachment ? ” Nellie ventured to suggest.

“ Hah ! Let them try that on ! ” President Johnson exclaimed, his eyes flashing proud defiance. “ The attempt to impeach me would be but their own impeachment before that still higher tribunal, the American people, and the verdict of impartial history ! No, Miss May, they will never dare drag their absurd contention before a tribunal presided over by the Chief Justice of the United States. ”

“ But, ” Nellie went on, gathering new hope from the resentment shown by the President on the mere mention of a possible impeachment, “ if the Congress *did* persist in their tyrannical course, to the extent of using this weapon against you, — how would you then defend yourself ? ”

“ Defend myself ? ” he ejaculated, almost fiercely. “ What defense is there against fanatical party zeal ? Where prejudice holds the balance, there Justice is blinded indeed, or sees with but one eye, and lets vengeful passion be thrown into the scale to weigh down innocence itself ! ”

“ Oh, sir ! ” pleaded Nellie with an earnestness that might have had its effect upon a more obdurate judge, “ such fanatical accusers are they who thirst for my father's blood ! They who are zealous to pronounce a predetermined sentence against him ! They will do this cruel thing unless your strong arm succor feeble Justice ! ”

“ How speciously you identify your father's case with mine ! ” said the President with undisguised approval. “ Well, ” he continued, regarding her with that strange smile that had puzzled her before, “ suppose I grant your reasoning, if your premises be correct. You wish me, — do you not ? — to accord mercy, rather than law, to your father ? ”

“ I wish your Excellency to be just to him, even as you desire posterity to do justice between you and the Congress. ”

Mercy is justice; and justice is the soul of the law. Even as the new commandment of love taught by the Savior from the Mount, is not the undoing of the law, or the prophets, but the fulfilling of the law, so is mercy the glorious crowning of the law! ”

The President looked at the fair petitioner admiringly, but with a smile for which Nellie was at a loss to account, and which seemed to her hardly in keeping with the earnestness of her appeal. “Your reasoning is unassailable. But how about the premise?” he said. “How am I to know that you have not deceived me, being, perhaps, deceived yourself? Ought I to base my official action on the unsupported assertion of a daughter pleading for the life of a father? What welcome proof my enemies might find in it, that I prostituted my office for the smiles of a beautiful woman!”

For a moment the color forsook Nellie’s face. How bitterly she regretted at this moment that she had not waited for Victor’s return, and enlisted his co-operation in this undertaking. But she rallied quickly.

“Your Excellency will, of course, judge for yourself what credence to give to my statement,” she said. “But of this I am sure, that the man whom neither the frowns or threats of a fanatical mob, nor the yelps of mischievous curs could turn aside from his course is not to be intimidated by the needle-pricks of base slander.”

“But have you no friends who could verify the accuracy of your statements?”

Nellie was about to mention Victor’s name, flushing deeply as she thought of him, when the President, who had closely watched her, said: “You are slow to remember friends, Miss May, to ask service of them. Or is Major Waldhorst less than a friend in your estimation?”

Nellie resented the implied doubt of her loyalty to the young soldier. Her voice rang out clearly, as she said with exultant pride and sparkling eyes: “He is my true and steadfast friend, your Excellency!”

The President's smile broadened into the expression of hearty good will as he answered: "A right devoted knight to you, I should think, and a warm admirer of Senator May."

"Yes, your Excellency, he adores my father," Nellie assented. "You have seen him?"

"It may be as much to the point to say that he has seen me," the President answered. "Nor did he come alone. Do you not remember among your friends one General Seele?"

"I would be proud to be allowed to call him so," said Nellie soberly. "I became acquainted with him under tragic circumstances. He presided over the court-martial that tried my brother."

"And acquitted him," the President added. "General Seele has told me all about it. But you are better acquainted, perhaps, with General Ranhenfels, who once was Governor-General over your State?"

"Rather so, sir. He is a staunch friend of Major Waldhorst."

"And of your father, the senator. All of these gentlemen have interceded for him, and their statements so fully corroborate your own, that for once, Miss May, I take unalloyed pleasure in exercising my constitutional prerogative, assured that in pardoning Senator May I am not defeating but vindicating the law, as you have so earnestly urged. In this case, I am happy to believe, Mercy — glorious Mediatrix! — blends Justice and Law into divine harmony. You may go home, Miss May, and carry with you the pardon that is to restore to your father his liberty and his civil rights. And please say to him for me, that I congratulate him upon the possession of such friends as have spoken for him, — and on such a daughter!"



XLVII.

AFTER THE WAR.

BROOKFIELD is in a whirl of excitement. It is, for the time being, the Western terminus of the great national railway that is to weld together Atlantic and Pacific States. Thus far Pacificward it has been completed, and the auspicious event is now to be celebrated by a grand festival. The preparations, so far as they have leaked into public notice, are on a magnificent scale. The citizens are decorating their houses with silk and bunting in the brightest of the national colors: banners bearing proudly patriotic legends meet the eye on every side, and red, white and blue flags float from windows and housetops. A parade has been planned, in which old and young are going to participate to give public expression to the universal joy over the preservation of the Union, and at the same time to impress themselves, as well as any outsider that may happen to look on, with the grandeur and vast resources of the booming young city, promising a yet greater future. For Brookfield has, during the last few years, leaped into prominence with truly astonishing suddenness, and is now posing as the future greatest inland city of the State.

After the parade there is to be a banquet to which the most prominent people of the community are to be invited; and, to add lustre to the occasion, the whole is to conclude with a grand civic and military ball, at which the veterans of both the Confederate and Federal armies are to appear in full uniform, to shake hands and congratulate their common country on the auspicious event.

The banquet is to be spread in the spacious dining hall of Smith's Hotel, erected on the site of the old building that once faced the court house where the Boonville Road debouched into

the Square. The cupola, with its shrill bell, that once performed the functions of summoning the hotel-guests to their meals, is no more; it has fallen a victim to the spirit of innovation that is busily transforming the good of yesterday into the better of to-day: the town has grown into a city, and loftier towers over its many churches, boasting tuneful belfries of their own, have shamed the saucy little dinner bell out of existence.

Burden's barroom, however, has maintained its proximity to the hotel; though it, too, has succumbed to the vivifying influence of the city's onward march. It is no longer the dingy little groggery, whose chief stock in trade had been rum and whiskey; but a smart looking "Sample Room," wherein Bob Rountree serves its patrons with the choicest of liquors and the most fanciful of fashionable mixed drinks. But chief among its attractions may still be mentioned the readiness with which the chatty barkeeper retails spicy morsels of gossip to all who are willing to listen. Just now he is charged to overflowing with special items of interest touching the salient features of the procession—of the various inscriptions and devices to be displayed on the banners; the tableaux and scenic representations on the floats to be paraded on the morrow. He knows and is willing to confide to his customers, the names of the illustrious guests who have been invited to the banquet, and of the orators who are going to make the after-dinner speeches.

One of the most steady customers now is the ex-honorable Ralph Payton; for the unappreciated statesman has much leisure on hand, and he likes to listen to the barkeeper's recital of the glorious times before the war. But the friendship between these two is not so firm as of yore. Bob Rountree begins to suspect that the ex-congressman is patterned for a chronic failure. He has never forgiven him the miscarriage of the projected capture of Captain Waldhorst and his Dutch companions at Shackelford's Inn,—so brilliantly conceived, and so miserably bungled in the attempted execution. The

projected alliance with Senator May's family — confidently expected at one time — has come to naught, owing, as Bob Rountree diagnoses, to the statesman's astuteness in dodging military service in the Southern cause. He has met with a like rebuff from the lovely Hettie Shannon, who, it transpires, prefers bashful Orlando Jones to the prudent stay-at-home, because Orlando has been to the war and has come back with a trophy in the shape of a permanently lamed limb. He might, perhaps, have tried his luck with Miss Emily Matlack, but that this young lady is openly encouraging the advances of Bob Rountree himself, — not, to be sure, for the patriotic reason moving her friend Hettie to prefer the warlike Orlando, since Bob is as much of a stay-at-home as the ex-congressman; but then she has looked kindly on Bob ever since she played him off against Hettie and Leslie May at that barbecue on the Fourth of July, long before the war. It really looks as if it was going to be a love-match between these two.

The aggressive business spirit of the thriving young city has not spared our old friends of the rival stores. Mr. Barnes, the Pioneer Merchant, has retired upon a well earned competency, being unwilling to enter the lists against new men with new business methods, whose restless activity in forcing trade has put him out of breath. — Mynheer Van Braaken, too, has found his favorite maxim "Competition is the life of Trade" a little too much for him when applied with the vigor now in vogue in the feverishly busy city. He has moved the "Dutch Store" into an adjacent county to which railroads have not penetrated as yet. The sturdy Yahkop, still ruler of a stately team of six, supplies the new Dutch Store with goods, as of old; only he hauls them from — no longer to — Brookfield.

One more change, wrought by the vigorous growth of the self-asserting city, we are to notice. If one were in search now of May Meadows, that so gracefully nestled, once, on the edge of a grove of majestic forest trees, reached by a pleasant walk from the Brookfield Square, it might trouble him to

locate the old mansion. Though it is still there, as well as the tastefully kept grounds surrounding it like a miniature park, yet the rural walks over green fields and shady groves are found no more. The daisy-gemmed fields have been wiped out by streets and houses; brick pavements and macadamed avenues have effaced the foot-paths through the meadows studded with butter-cups and blooming clover, that left no trace, now, save the name by which the May place is still known.

But if one take sufficient interest in the May family to persevere in the search, it will be found infected by the general excitement produced by the anticipated railroad festival. Mrs. May, to be sure, is not pleased with the political coloring taken on by the celebration. She has not yet forgiven the North for so mercilessly defeating the South, and the jubilation she heard on all sides over the regenerated Union was not to her taste. But then it is such an honor to her family, that upon her daughter has fallen the choice of the Committee of Arrangements to open the ball as the partner of Major-General Seele. The pompously worded invitation, conveyed in an official-looking document bearing the seal of the railroad corporation and the signature of its president, operates like a soothing balm upon her wounded patriotism and predisposes her to receive the general and any friend he may bring with him in the spirit of her accustomed hospitality, — the more so, as the general has supplemented the official invitation directed to all the members of the May family with a neatly phrased note to Senator and Mrs. May, soliciting permission to address their daughter, and a deferential request to the young lady herself to grant him the honor of escorting her to the banquet, and for her hand at the opening dance of the ball.

The senator is touched by the mark of respect paid to his family by the Federal general, whom he holds in high esteem, notwithstanding their political differences in the past. He had accepted with serene composure the outcome of the war, though it involved the discomfiture of his own theory of rehabilitating

the Union. Nor did he conceal to himself that now it stands firmer, — grander and more glorious than ever. The war has devastated the South — yes! And laid low the towering ambition of those of its leaders, who had dreamed of strength in division, and of prosperity to grow out of the unremunerated labor of slaves. Now, the slaves have been liberated; the lands lay fallow, and in a hundred thousand homes there is mourning for departed heroes. But for those who love their country well enough to welcome its prosperity at the cost of recognizing their own error, the future beckons with rich promise.

In Senator May's home, too, there stands an empty chair at table, and an unused plate lies on the cloth. A face that once shed sunshine around the board shines there no more. In its stead a hero is enthroned in the hearts of parents and sister whom, it comforts them to know, a weeping nation mourns, and friend and foe honor as an exemplar of exalted chivalry and devotion to his country's cause. In no one respect are father, mother and sister, in more thorough accord, than in the adoration paid to the deified shade of the departed son and brother. No wonder, then, that the senator, in his proud sorrow, attributes to a sentiment of reverence in the breast of a gallant soldier for an honored fallen enemy the attentions paid by General Seele to his daughter. And thus the railroad festival has peculiar significance for the family at May Meadows.

Nellie May is in high spirits. Even her parents notice, with secret rejoicing, the return of something like her former sprightliness.

“Can this be the effect of the invitation to the ball, and the prospect of a dance with a major-general?” so wonders Senator May.

“What is the matter with Nellie?” her mother inquires. “I hope she is not going to throw herself away by flirting with an enemy, if he *is* a major-general!”

But Cressie knows better what is the source of the blushes

that so frequently, now, enrich her color without apparent cause. She traces it to a letter which she herself had taken from the postman and handed to her mistress. The brightness beaming from her face as she opened it had betrayed to the sympathetic maid that it contained pleasant news.

“Is it from Buseh Bluffs?” Cressie had suggested.

A pleased nod had been the answer.

“Is she coming?” the octoroon had ventured to inquire.

Nellie had looked up from the letter, and smiled as her eye had fallen on the expectant face of the maid. “You mean, Is *he* coming?” she had said; and on the impulse of the glad tidings she had added, in a confidentially playful mood: “Yes, Cressie, he is coming! He will attend the banquet, his sister writes, — and I shall see him, Cressie! I shall hear his voice, if even he does not speak to me!”

“Not speak to you!” Cressie had said reproachfully. “Now, you know better than that. As if anything on earth could stop Major Waldhorst from coming to see you, the first thing after he reaches Brookfield!”

“Do you think so, really, Cressie?”

“Of course I do!” had been the prompt reply, given with an emphasis of conviction that delighted her mistress.

Nellie had tried hard to control the ebullition of her feelings, for the mere sake of decorum before her servant. But she had not quite succeeded in suppressing the note of triumph that stole into her voice as she replied: “I believe you are right, Cressie. And what do you want me to say to him when he does come?”

A smile of singular sweetness, tinged with a hint of resignation, had accompanied the octoroon's answer. “You know well what you are going to say to him. And so do I. You ought never to have said anything else.”

“But, Cressie,” the mistress had replied, the glow of joy that still brightened her face softening, as if put on the defensive by her servant's gentle reproach, “it would have been wrong for me to say before, what you want me to say to

him now. He would have taken me away with him to the North. And think — what trouble there would have been for him and me during the war! ”

“ Yes, to be sure, ” the octoroon admitted. “ He and you on one side, and all your people on the other. It would have been an awful mess. But the Good Book says that you shall leave father and mother and cling to your husband. That is what you would have done. ”

“ Yes; that is what I would have done, if I had followed him. But oh, Cressie! He so hates renegades and apostates! And so do I — so do I! He would have despised me! ”

“ Well, you are all on the same side now. ”

“ Yes, we are all on his side now. And isn't it strange, Cressie, that it seems so natural to me to be on his side? ”

“ Of course it's natural! That is where you belong. You are sure to be right, when you are on his side. ”

Nellie had smiled and nodded her head approvingly, and presently said: “ I believe you, Cressie. In fact, I am quite sure of it. ”

The weather smiles propitiously on the railroad festival. One of those glorious autumn days has come, that are enjoyed in such perfection nowhere but in the southwesterly regions of the United States: The bracing breezes of October add zest to the golden sunshine and the Italian blueness of the sky, accelerating the pulse to a healthful beat and toning up the system to a joyful sense of life and vigor. The inhabitants of Brookfield attune themselves to the serene glory of the autumn day, and in festive mood assemble at the new railroad station to await the arrival of the first passenger train that is to bring the railroad officials and invited guests. Visitors have poured in from near and far to be eye-witnesses to the momentous event. Even the little railroad stations along the line of the road are gay with green garlands and festive flags. The Brookfielders have a brass band in attendance and a battery of cannons placed in the neighboring heights, ready to

announce to the surrounding country the precise moment of the arrival of the train, that is now long overdue.

The Reception Committee, composed of notable citizens distinguishable on this occasion by badges and rosettes in red, white and blue, form a not inconsiderable part of the waiting throng. Among them stands a group of gentlemen, all similarly decorated, earnestly discussing the merits and demerits of the Honorable Ralph Payton as a candidate for appointment to a subordinate clerkship in the railroad office. Mr. Huffard, of the *Ozark Argus*, advocates his claim; so Mr. Farmer, of the *Brookfield Banner*, must necessarily oppose it. They are talking at Senator May, who is supposed to rule the local board of directors in all such matters.

The discussion serves to while away the time while the multitude impatiently wait for the train, that ought to have been in an hour ago, but leads to no other immediate result; for the senator has not expressed an opinion, pro or con, when the shout is heard: "There comes the train!" Almost simultaneously therewith the boom of the cannon resounds from the hillside; then the ear-piercing shriek of the locomotive greets the waiting crowd, the brass band plays "Hail Columbia" and the train thunders into the depot.

A lively time ensues as the passengers disembark, and the reception committee take charge of the guests amid much shaking of hands and promiscuous introductions. Senator May accosts a party from the metropolis, the particular guests he has insisted on quartering in his own house. General Seele and Rauhenfels readily accept his invitation. "And these gentlemen," he addresses himself to the Auf dem Busches, father and son, "will be generous enough to afford us the opportunity — not of paying off, for that were out of the question — but of simply showing our appreciation of the deep obligations for their kindness to me and mine."

"Senator May," is the answer of Auf dem Busch Senior, "I hold for a grand senator and wise statesman, when he is in the Senate. But for a merchant I fear he would soon make

bankrupt, if he keep not better book. He should know that he is not in our debt; contrary, we in his. But Woldemar and I understand business better: we take all we can get under the market price: and so we thankfully accept your offer. What, Woldemar?"

"So it seems," says General Rauhenfels, "that we are all bound for Senator May's house. Unless," he adds with a sly wink, "my adjutant, here, should prefer to stay at a hotel. What say you, Major Waldhorst?"

"I have followed you too long, General, while I was your adjutant, to hang back now," is the prompt answer. "Count me in for May Meadows, if Senator May will include me in the invitation."

"That goes without saying," the senator answers. "But will we not stay to see the parade first? I see that they are impatient to start. It is a pity that the ladies are not here; but if we wait until you can pay your respects to them at the house, we shall all miss the sights. So we had better take our seats on the platform erected for the guests."

The party sets out to view the procession. All, except Major Waldhorst. He, in shameful disregard of his pledge to follow his old commander, slips away, and starts off in a different direction.

The boom of the cannon announcing the arrival of the train, had been heard at May Meadows. To the ladies there, the belating of the train beyond the scheduled time had been most welcome; an earlier arrival of the guests would have found them not ready, as will sometimes happen to ladies. Not but that Nellie, on this occasion, had ample excuse for tardiness: she had, in honor of the festival at which she was to be General Seele's partner (and whereat Victor Waldhorst was expected to be present) arrayed herself in a spick-and-span-new costume, fresh from the hands of her modiste; and had been assisted at her toilet by her mother and the maid Cressie. Under such circumstances it could hardly be expected that the ladies should be ready at the appointed time. It must be

admitted, however, that Nellie felt ill at ease when the hour arrived at which the guests might be expected before she had half finished her toilet, and correspondingly elated when she had put on the finishing touches, and they had not yet shown up. "It would have been too bad," she said to her mother, "if General Seele had come sooner, and been made to wait. He would have set me down for a dawdle, and wanting in proper respect toward him. Now," she added, as she complacently nodded toward the elegantly gowned figure in the mirror, "I have got safely through with primping; and I dare say that not even a major-general of the victorious army need be ashamed to appear with me on the street or at the banquet."

"I don't see what makes you so crazy about this major-general!" the mother growled. "Time was, when my daughter scorned all bluecoats; now it seems as if there was not finery enough in all Brookfield for you to do honor to one of them."

"To several of them, Mama, unless I am mistaken," Nellie remarked, exchanging a meaning glance with Cressie. "Yes; time was. But time has changed and bluecoats have come into fashion. You would not have me be behind the fashion? Besides," she said more soberly, "think what *these* bluecoats have done for us all! *Could* we do too much honor to any of them?"

Mrs. May was proud of her daughter, and it pleased her to indulge in the fancy that she would be envied as the finest dressed lady at the banquet. For the combined skill of her dressmaker and Cressie's deft fingers, directed by Nellie's exquisite taste, had produced a dream of loveliness in the shape of a ball dress that even Worth of Paris might have been proud of as a *chef d'œuvre* of his art. So she forgave her daughter's misguided respect for Union officers, and murmured a reply in so low a voice that Nellie, whose attention had been caught by the sound of the door bell, did not hear it at all.

"There is the general!" she exclaimed a little excitedly.

“ He has made good time from the depot here. Run, Cressie, and show him into the reception room. Tell him that I will be down immediately.”

Then throwing another glance at the mirror, adjusting a ribbon here and there, and giving a last affectionate pat to her coiffure, she followed the maid, composing her features on the way into a radiant expression of cordial welcome.

But the hand so cheerfully extended was grasped in a different fashion from what she expected of General Seele. It was Victor Waldhorst who stood there, and who was transported with joy by the eager welcome he read in Nellie’s face.”

“ Eleonora!” he exclaimed in jubilant voice, and was about to embrace the ravishingly beautiful apparition, when the sudden change in Nellie’s features and the withdrawal of her hand arrested his motion.

“ I — oh, — I thought it was General Seele!” she gasped. “ I expected him.”

“ And it is only I!” he said in tones of gentle reproach and regret, “ And I have startled you. Am I, then, so little welcome?”

“ Oh, pardon me, Major Waldhorst!” said Nellie, quickly recovering her composure. “ It was such a *quid pro quo* to find you here instead of General Seele, whom I was so sure of meeting.”

“ And are you disappointed that it is not he whom you welcomed so cordially?” he asked, in a voice trembling with eager expectation, yet triumphant in his hopeful assurance that her answer would be a negative.

“ Disappointed? Yes. I fully expected to meet General Seele, who is to take me to the banquet. But — ”

“ Yes? But — ”

A vivid blush dyed Nellie’s cheeks as, for a moment, she cast down her eyes; then raising them and regarding Victor with a look that electrified him, she said:

“ But I have been expecting *you*, — oh, so long!”

Victor caught her in his arms, and was not repulsed. His lips sought hers, and she turned not away. In a kiss of mutual rapture they plighted their troth.

“ You will be mine, Nellie? Mine — my very own? ”

“ Yes, Victor, yours — if you want me. Oh, how my heart has yearned to tell you! ”

“ And at last you have told me, and all is well! But have you not been cruel, my Nellie, to deny me so long? ”

“ You will forgive me, Victor, now that you know how I love you. I believe I always did love you, only I did not know it, until — ”

“ Well, dearest, until — ”

“ Until I read in your face contempt for the coquette you thought me. ”

“ Coquette? ”

“ You believed me a coquette — did you not? — when Mr. Payton asserted over me a protectorship which you thought I had authorized. ”

“ He was not worthy of you, ” said Victor, sternly, though in a low whisper.

“ No! ”

“ Nor am I, dearest, but for your sweet grace in according me your love! ”

“ Is it not strange, Victor, that not your sterling qualities, nor even your passionate devotion to me, had impressed me? You see, you hid your merits under a mountain of modesty and diffidence. In rare moments only did you permit a flash of your true nature to pierce my dull perception. It was not until you turned from me in disgust at my ingratitude and shallowness, — flirting, as you believed, with a man so far beneath you — that I woke up to the knowledge that I could not bear your contempt, and that I should never love any man but you! And now, Victor, you understand how hard it was for me to give you up when you wooed me so stormily — just before my brother's death; and for the sake of my love you will forgive me! ”

“Forgive you, oh Idol of my soul? Why, this moment’s rapture outweighs an age of heartache, and richly compensates for a lifetime of waiting. In giving me yourself, you have enriched me beyond appraisement. For not another gem in all the universe compares with you. Though sun and stars dropped from the firmament, your radiant smile, your lustrous eyes were sun and stars to me!”

“Hush, Victor!” she commanded, playfully laying her rosy fingers on his mouth. “Your extravagance puts me to the blush. But now that you have forgiven me, let me make confession how meek and humble my great love for you has made me. And yet how proud! For while my life henceforth shall but reflect your own, my task and joy to honor and obey you in all things as my lord, — I would not yield my place at your side to share a monarch’s throne!”

“Would I had a kingdom to lay at your feet! But as the planet’s light is borrowed from the sun, so all my wealth is but reflection of your own: the crowning merit of my life being that you, my Nellie, have given me your love.”

“Yes, Victor, you have conquered that. And let me tell you, sir,” she added archly, “that is something! For I hold myself not cheap.”

“So precious do I hold you, that my life shall be one unremitting effort to prove not ungrateful. Your own appraisement of yourself falls short of your worth to the full extent in which your regard exceeds my merits.”

Nellie pursed her mouth into a pout of mock severity, which Victor thought exquisitely droll. “How dare you, sir!” she scolded, “impugn my good taste in such fashion, and belittle the man whose name I am to bear? Don’t you know, sir, that that is very bad form?”

“But this is the divinest form!” he exclaimed, attempting to clasp her in a new embrace.

“Nay, sir, have done!” she said, warding him off with both hands. “Have you no regard for my lovely new dress? What will General Seele think of me when he comes

for his partner to the banquet and finds her in a tousled dress? ”

Victor looked in vain to discover the damage he had wrought on the wonderful dress, and gave it as his judgment that the general would be the proudest man in the county to be allowed the privilege of attending her. “But,” he inquired, crest-fallen, “*are* you to be his partner? ”

“With my lord’s gracious permission,” she answered, courtesying before him with a mischievous smile. “For this once the major will yield precedence to his superior in command. But don’t look so woebegone about it. If you behave sweetly, I dare say that I may manage to keep one place open on my dance programme for you to write your name in. What say you, shall it be a waltz? ”

“A waltz let it be, by all means! ” Victor decided, as the memory of the heavenly hour at the Governor’s Inauguration Ball set him aglow and threw a dazzling light on his present happiness. The piquant face of Nellie, upturned to his with so roguish, yet loving, a smile, was too tempting for Victor’s power of resistance. He rushed forward and was about to repeat the offense for which he had been chidden, when a knock at the door arrested him in his rash purpose, and for the time being rescued the “*Dream of Loveliness* ” from further peril.

Cressie ushered in the visitors, who were followed by Senator and joined by Mrs. May.

General Seele happened to be the first to enter. Nellie stretched out both her hands to him, greeting him with her brightest smile.

“Welcome to May Meadows! ” she exclaimed. “Though you have honored this house but once before with your presence, your generous deeds and kind words have made you familiar to our hearts and memories.”

“To be so kindly remembered of you, fair lady, were richest recompense for any service, if even it had been my privilege to render you such, and leave me still your debtor.”

“Look here, General,” said Governor Rauhenfels, taking

forcible possession of one of the lady's hands, "you are abusing good nature to an unwarrantable extent! The lady certainly meant one of these hands for me. Now did you not, Miss May?"

"Why, Governor, the welcome certainly extends to you!" she said, cheerily. "and you may take both of my hands for a friendly shake, if you like, to make you even with General Seele."

"Oh, I have the advantage of him," the governor retaliated. "We have had the thrilling experience of a quarrel with each other. Do you remember?"

"Don't I!" she answered saucily, and turned to the Auf dem Busches, father and son. "But here are two gentlemen that are more at home with us; and we have never quarreled, have we?" After shaking hands with Woldemar, her eyes rested for a moment on the benevolent features of the old gentleman beaming with heartfelt pleasure on seeing Nellie, and then stepped forward, put her arms about his neck and hid her face upon his shoulder. When she raised her head, she dashed a tear from her eyes.

"Pardon me, gentlemen," she said, making a strong effort to regain her composure, "for giving way to my emotion. You have all been good to my brother, and will understand my grief for his loss. He died in the house of Mr. Auf dem Busch. It was through his kindness that I was permitted to perform for him the last kind offices, — that he died among those whom he loved; and from his house he was carried to his silent home. And now, when I wished to thank him for his great kindness, to my brother and me, the memory of those sad days overcame me."

Mr. Auf dem Busch was visibly affected. He took the hand she offered him and gently patted it. "I loved your brother, Miss May," he said. "He was a whole man. And I have all esteem and honor for you, because you loved him, and sweetened his last days for him like a loving sister."

General Seele stepped up to the two and said: "We all

honor Miss May, and we honor friend Auf dem Busch for his kindness toward her and her brother. They were both enthusiasts in the Southern cause; but we appreciate the sincerity of their conviction. And we admire the fortitude with which Miss May bears up under the burden of her sorrow. Let us not grudge her a tear wept to the memory of a dearly beloved brother, as well as to the memory of a lost cause."

"I thank you for these words, General Seele," said Nellie regarding him with a grateful look. "And I wish to tell you, that your generosity as an enemy went far to help me understand the lesson which you said the war would teach me. The star of our beloved South has set; the god of war has prospered our enemies. But I am trying hard to believe that what Might has established, is Right."

"That is a lesson, my dear young lady," said Rauhenfels, "which your father has thoroughly learned, though he must have found it infinitely harder than it can possibly be for you. Am I right, Senator?"

"No one knows better, perhaps, than you, how hard the lesson has been," the senator admitted. "But the logic of events is unanswerable, and fortune has, after all, dealt gently with me. It has left me the partner of my bosom, the respect of highly prized friends, and a daughter whose love is dearer to me than all earthly possessions."

"You may well be proud of her," said the whilom professor. "But if you count on keeping her, you are doomed to disappointment. There stands a youngster — I mean my old adjutant, Major Waldhorst — who is going to teach her that lesson that you found so hard. And she will find it delightful and easy, under his tuition, for he is deeply interested in the job, and will put his whole heart into it." Then, turning to the major, he commanded: "Report, now, you rascal, why you gave us the slip this afternoon; and what progress you have made in your siege upon this fair citadel."

Saluting in military style, the major answered: "The garrison is able to report for itself."

“ Well, Miss May,” the governor demanded, “ what is your report in the matter? ”

A rosy blush suffused her cheeks. But a roguish smile brightened her features as she answered: “ I followed the impressive example set me at Appomattox Court House. It would have been a reproach to General Lee, if I had held out against a Northern soldier, when he surrendered the whole Southern army to the Federal commander. And I had not the heart to shame him.” Running to her father, she looked into his face with appealing solicitude and said, “ Did I right, dear father? ”

He pressed her close to his heart. “ You could not have given me a dearer son to fill the void left in my heart by Leslie’s death,” he said. Then, beckoning to Victor, he laid her hand into his and continued: “ Take her, my son, and be as loyal to her as you have been to all that is true and right and noble.”

Mrs. May was wiping a tear from her eye when Nellie approached her and said: “ Mama, you will give me your blessing? ”

“ God bless you, my child,” the lady responded. “ I hope you will do well; though you might have done so much better.”

“ Madam,” said Governor Rauhenfels, bowing courteously before Mrs. May, “ you have given birth to your daughter, and thus entailed upon her the honor of descent from one of the first families of Virginia. Now Miss May is about to square the account by allying you with one of the first families of the American Renaissance, — a *Renaissance* more truly epochal than was that of the medieval Europe. You will lose no prestige by smiling upon the new Union.”

Mrs. May was at a loss how to take the Governor’s sarcastic words. But Mr. Auf dem Busch felt really uncomfortable at the prospect of a disagreement, and essayed to pour oil upon the troubled waters by cutting off further parley between him and Mrs. May. So he pulled out his watch and exclaimed:

“It is the highest time that we break up for the banquet! If we start not soon, we will be too late for the soup!”

General Seele also consulted his watch. “Our friend is right,” he said. “We should be going. However, it grieves me, Miss May, to interfere between you and Major Waldhorst, I must remind you of our duty to Society. We are expected at the banquet. Nor can I abate one jot of the privilege, accorded me by your kind promise and the official program, to your company for the rest of the day. The major will not, I hope, grudge me this pleasure.”

“I do envy you every minute of her society!” said Victor. “But I know how ample you have earned her gratitude, and how eager she is to show it; and shall not complain.”

“Oh, you need not mind him,” said Nellie, taking the general’s arm with a mischievous smile at Victor. “I have bought him off with the promise of a dance. You won’t mind my giving him a waltz?” she added, turning her bright face to the general. “Waltzing is the delight of his life.”

“I believe it,” said the general. “With you for a partner.”

The company had filed out, on their way to the banquet. Woldemar lagged behind; he looked at Cressie, whose gaze was fixed upon the door through which Nellie had disappeared, on the arm of General Seele, but talking animatedly with Victor, who walked at her other side. There was a wonderful expression on the octroon’s face. Eager longing, radiant joy, blissful resignation — Woldemar thought that he read them all in that singularly beautiful countenance, gazing at the door through which Victor had gone by the side of her mistress.

Woldemar wondered at the girl’s strange behavior. But he had come to speak to her, and now was the opportunity.

He softly spoke her name: there was no answer. She stood as if in a trance. Then he repeated it, a little louder.

Cressie started and blushed scarlet.

“Miss Cressie,” he addressed her, “I have never properly

thanked you for your devoted kindness and attention to my father and me, when we were invalids in this house. I wish to do so now —”

“Oh, sir, please do not!” she begged with such eager earnestness as surprised Woldemar, and increased his wonderment.

He did not complete the sentence she had interrupted, but asked her instead: “Are you quite happy here. Miss Cressie?”

“Happier here, with my mistress, and as the servant of Major Waldhorst, than I could be anywhere else on earth!”

She spoke in a voice of such sincere conviction, that Woldemar could not doubt. Whatever else he had wished to say to the octoroon remained unsaid. Her words, and the rapt look on her face, brought a revelation that sealed his mouth.

“Then let me say good-bye!”

“Good-bye, and let me thank you for your generosity!” said Cressie.





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